



Legislative Update

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CAPITOL ACTION DAYS BEGIN!

Capitol Action Days are part of the Association's plan to promote positive policy for public education. MNEA's Capitol Action Days occur regularly on Wednesdays during legislative session and began this week on February 8th! For more information and to register for your Capitol Action Day, please visit <https://www.mnea.org/CAD>

STATE OF THE JUDICIARY

Missouri Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul Wilson delivered the annual State of the Judiciary address to a joint session of the legislature convened in the House chamber on Feb. 8, 2023.

LOCAL CONTROL OF SCHOOLS

The Senate-Education and Workforce Development Committee approved SCS/SB 85 (Carter) on February 7. The SCS seeks to exempt all school districts from accreditation and from all requirements of MSIP, APRs, school improvement plans, MAP testing and certain individual student data reporting requirements. School districts and charter schools would adopt and use locally developed assessments aligned to district or school curricula in academic subject areas. The Association supports greater local control on assessment and accreditation and supports the bill.

HONESTY IN EDUCATION/PARENT INFORMATION ACCESS

The Senate gave first round approval to SS/SCS/SBs 4, 42 and 89 (Koenig) on February 8. The perfected version of the bill includes significant additional state cost for additional per pupil funding and must be approved by the Senate Fiscal Oversight Committee before it can be taken up for final approval vote. The Association opposes the bill.

The previous floor substitute makes some changes regarding parent information access and school data access through the state and district websites. The Association remains concerned that the bill will adversely affect the freedom of teachers to provide the honest education our students deserve.

The perfected version of the bill includes many provisions, including some that were not contained in the original bill. The bill requires schools to adopt curricula at least two months prior to the school term, revises and updates the school report card provisions, creates a state transparency portal for all

school curricula, textbooks, source materials, and syllabi, and adds regulations regarding school-issued devices.

The perfected bill also increases the school formula per pupil weight factor for poverty from 25% to 30% and exempts magnet schools from desegregation programs from inefficiency penalties for transportation aid. The bill also includes a revised version of SB 137 (Eslinger) regarding civics education training.

STATE BUDGET

The House-Appropriations-Education Committee met on February 8 to hear additional public testimony. The committee also went into executive session to work through HB 2, the K-12 education budget bill and HB 3, the higher education budget bill. Unlike previous sessions, the subcommittee is actually amending and voting on the bills rather than merely making recommendations to the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee will still be able to amend the bills before they go to the House for floor action.

The committee adopted several amendments before voting to approve HB 2 and HB 3. Notable changes included in Chairman Lewis' amendment are an increase of \$800K for the Urban Flight and Rural Needs scholarship program, \$350K for Missouri Scholars Academy. Rep. Hurlburt's amendment added \$1.3M for a new Transparency Portal as contained in the perfected version of SB 4 (Koenig). Rep. Proudie's amendment added a total of \$2.5M for the Grow Your Own Program for teacher recruitment, including additional funding to community colleges, teacher preparatory programs and school districts.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

The Senate moved SCS/SB 5 (Koenig) to the informal calendar on February 6. The bill could now be taken up for debate at any time the Senate goes to that order of business. The bill primarily allows students to transfer between school districts and charter schools under certain conditions. The Association opposes the bill.

The Association believes that public school choice plans with state funding may harm students and our public schools unless essential criteria are in place for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating their effectiveness. SCS/SB 5 lacks essential provisions regarding equal educational opportunity and facilitating better racial and socioeconomic balances in the public schools. SB 5 also allows students to open enroll into charter schools from other districts.

FULL-TIME VIRTUAL SCHOOLS

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee heard HB 827 (Christofanelli) on February 8. The bill makes minor revisions to the new structure of accountability, enrollment, participation and finance created for full-time virtual schools last session in SS/HCS/HB 1552 (Richey). The bill includes additional clarifying language regarding attendance and payment provisions and enrollment policies. The Association supports the bill.

DON'T SAY GAY BILL

The Senate-Education and Workforce Development Committee heard SB 134 (Moon) on February 7. This bill has been dubbed the "Don't Say Gay" bill by opponents. The bill says that no public school or charter school staff member may discuss sexual orientation or gender identity with a student unless the staff member is a licensed therapist and has parental permission. Under the broad definitions of this unworkable bill, teachers would not be able to discuss any literature, historical topic or question involving human relationships or any person's gender identity or sexual orientation. The Association strongly opposes the bill.

CIVICS EDUCATION TRAINING

The Senate-Education and Workforce Development Committee also approved SCS/SB 137 (Eslinger) on February 7. The bill requires DESE to develop a patriotic and civics training program for teachers. Teachers who complete the training will receive a \$3000 stipend. The Association supports giving teachers this option for additional training and supports the bill as filed.

PERSONAL FINANCE

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee also heard HB 809 (O'Donnell) on February 8. This bill requires DESE to convene a work group to develop and recommend academic performance standards relating to the one-half unit of credit in personal finance required for high school graduation.

RETIREMENT

The House-Pensions Committee approved HB 769 (Owen) on February 7. The bill would enact additional provisions regarding the investments of all Missouri public pension systems, including PSRS and PEERS, regarding proxy voting and their fiduciary investment priority.

The PSRS Board of Trustees has a fiduciary duty to invest for the benefit of the members of the system. The bill would require that pension systems shall not consider environmental, social or governance factors in a manner that would override their fiduciary duties. The provisions of the bill as filed are consistent with the current practices of PSRS and PEERS and are not expected to interfere with the operation of the Systems.

SCHOOL PROTECTION OFFICERS

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee approved HB 70 (Dinkins) on February 8. The bill allows school districts to designate other school personnel (besides administrators and teachers) as a school protection officer.

REPEAL OF PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX

The Senate Economic Development and Tax Policy Committee approved SCS/SB 8 (Eigel) on February 6. The bill would permanently eliminate the taxes on personal property. The SCS would reduce the assessment ratio for personal property to 31% and depreciate the value of all vehicles over a ten year schedule from date of manufacture. This will eliminate all property taxes on vehicles over ten years old. Subject to appropriations, local governments with reduced property taxes could receive compensating state funds. Given the size of the revenue reduction, the state is unlikely to be able to fund this offset. This bill will stagnate or reduce local school revenues and local property taxes for other essential community services. The Association opposes the bill.

CORPORATE TAX REPEAL

The Senate-Economic Development and Tax Policy approved SCS/SBs 93 & 135 (Hoskins) on February 6. The bill would phase out the corporate income tax. Fully implemented, this bill would reduce state revenues by about \$700 million per year. The Association is concerned that this change will leave the state even less able to meet the funding needs of public education and other vital services in future years and opposes the bill.

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