



# Legislative Update

By Otto Fajen  
MNEA Legislative Director  
[Otto.fajen@mnea.org](mailto:Otto.fajen@mnea.org)

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## **ACTION STALLED ON CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING MAP**

Conservative caucus Senators filibustered on March 30 and indicated their intent to block action on a motion to go to conference on HB 2117 (Shaul) regarding Congressional redistricting. Later that day, the Senate voted to ask the House to pass the Senate map. The House voted to reject the Senate version of HB 2117 and again requested conference on March 31. The window for candidate filing ended on March 29 without a new Congressional map in place. If the legislature fails to pass a bill to create the map, a court is likely to draw the map in response to a lawsuit filed by a candidate asking for clarification of the districts.

Last week, the Senate adopted a map offered as an amendment to SS#2/SCS/HB 2117 by Sen. Koenig. The map is different from the House map but still regarded as a "6-2" map. The Senate approved the bill with an emergency clause, while the House did not approve an emergency clause.

## **BUDGET**

As of this writing, the House Budget Committee is working to amend and approve HCS versions of budget bills for next fiscal year on March 31. Progress on the budget in the House is several weeks behind the typical schedule. Assuming the House passes the budget bills next week, only four weeks will remain for Senate consideration and conference committee action before the bills must be completed on May 6.

HB 3002 (Cody Smith) is the budget bill for DESE and K-12 education. The main changes from the Governor's budget in K-12 were to pull apart the broad authorizations for ESSER II funds and DESE's state share of ESSER III funds. The HCS redirects a total of \$75 million to a proposed, new tutoring grant program through a third party selected by DESE. The Association is concerned that little is known about this proposed tutoring grant program that would receive a significant amount of state funds.

## **SENATE DEBATES CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING BILL**

The Senate debated SCS/SB 869 (Koenig) on March 30 but did not bring the bill to a vote. The bill would revise the law specifying payments to charter schools and shift more local school funds to charter schools. The HCS version includes additional changes specific to the St. Louis City district. The House amended the bill to delay the effectiveness on St. Louis City for five years. The Association opposes the bill.

## **SENATE DEBATES SCHOOL BOARD RECALL BILL**

The Senate debated SB 657 (Cierpiot) on March 30 but did not bring the bill to a vote. The bill would establish procedures for recall elections for school board members. Unlike HB 1747 (Bayse), this bill contains no new provisions to authorize lawsuits against school staff and school officials. Sen. Cierpiot offered a substitute version that would allow a district to provide board members a stipend of \$500 per month and the opportunity to participate in the district's health care plan.

## **OPEN ENROLLMENT BILL**

The Senate Education Committee heard HCS/HB 1814 (Pollitt) on March 29. The bill would create a public school open enrollment program. The Association believes that a public school choice plan must state its purpose and intended outcomes at the outset, be designed primarily to improve the quality of instructional and educational programs in the public schools, promote equal educational opportunity for all students, and operate in ways that facilitate better racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic balances in the public schools. The House adopted an additional amendment granting open enrollment options to a district based on property ownership in the district. The Association opposes the bill.

## **HONESTY IN EDUCATION**

The Senate Education Committee heard six bills relating to honesty in education on March 29. The Association is concerned that these bills will interfere with providing students the honest education they deserve. The Association opposes all the bills. Four similar bills, SB 638 (Onder), SB 676 (Brown), SB 734 (Hoskins) and SB 1184 (Rehder), would restrict "divisive concepts" in public school curricula or instruction. The committee also heard SB 645 (Koenig) and SB 694 (Brattin) which also affect issues of honesty in education.

The committee postponed the scheduled hearing on SB 740 (Eigel), a bill that addresses honesty in education, moves school board elections to general elections, prohibits schools from requiring masks and COVID vaccines and bans trans athlete participation in women's or girls' competitions. The Association opposes the bill.

## **HOUSE PASSES OMNIBUS EDUCATION BILL**

The House gave final approval to HCS/HB 1750 (Basye) on March 28. The bill received a total of sixteen amendments during floor debate. The resulting omnibus bill contains the provisions of a total of fifteen bills, primarily bills already approved by the House committee by a unanimous vote.

## **COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION**

The House Workforce Development Committee approved HB 1956 (Richey) on March 28. The bill would establish a competency-based alternative graduation pathway, allow grants to schools to create competency-based education programs, and create the Competency-Based Education Task Force. The Association supports the bill.

## **DRINKING WATER IN SCHOOLS**

The House Conservation and Natural Resources Committee heard HB 2532 (Bailey) regarding safe drinking water in schools. The Association believes school districts should conduct periodic testing for harmful water and airborne particles and agents that are detrimental to the health of students and education employees and report the results publicly. School districts should also complete corrective actions to eliminate the problems and report results in a timely manner. The Association supports the bill.

## **HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The committee heard HB 2731 (Shields) on March 28. The bill expands the existing Dual Credit Scholarship program by adding related provisions relating to dual enrollment courses. Participating students must meet current law requirements and enroll in a dual enrollment course offered by an approved higher education institution.

## **CAREER LADDER**

The House gave first round approval to HB 2493 (Rusty Black) on March 30. The bill makes several changes relating to teacher career plans. The state is not currently funding this program. The House adopted an amendment to add HCS/HB 2445 (Sassmann) to authorize the Gasconade R-II school district and West St. Francois County R-IV school district, which each cross county boundaries, to use the county that yields the highest dollar value modifier under the school foundation formula. The House also adopted an amendment to add HB 1940 (Mackey) to provide bankruptcy protection for Missouri's 529 education savings accounts.

## **SCHOOL RETIREMENT**

The House Pensions Committee heard HB 2799 (Pike) on March 30. The bill would extend the waiver of the 550 hour limit for PSRS members working after retirement in a teaching position for the next three school years. The Association believes this provision will help address current difficulties in finding part-time and substitute teachers and supports the bill.

The committee also voted to approve HCS/HB 2161 (Dinkins). The bill would create an increased retirement allowance multiplier of 2.55% for PSRS retirees with 32 or more years of service. The Association supports the bill.

## **SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

In addition to HB 1552 regarding charter school funding, the committee also approved six other bills on March 28:

SCS/SB 957 (Bean) Establishes the "Workforce Diploma Program" to assist students in obtaining a high school diploma and in developing employability and career and technical skills.

SCS/SB 1051 (Brattin) to create a policy that would allow students to receive credit for participation in out-of-classroom learning experiences as approved by the State Board of Education, a school board, or a charter school. The SCS specifies that the extended learning opportunities would only be approved by districts and charter schools and will not be approved by the State Board of Education.

SB 800 (Hegeman) to repeal the expiration date on the early learning quality assurance report program. The Association supports the bill.

SB 806 (Hoskins) to require districts and charter schools to identify and provide services and programs for gifted children. The bill requires a district to establish a gifted education program if three percent or more are identified as gifted. The Association believes that gifted and talented students need a challenging curriculum and a program that identifies and supports their unique needs. The Association supports the bill.

SB 818 (Bernskoetter) to authorize the Gasconade R-II school district, which crosses county boundaries, to use the county that yields the highest dollar value modifier under the school foundation formula.

SB 958 (Bean) to limit the definition of school bus to include vehicles designed to carry more than ten people. Schools would still be able to use other motor vehicles for pupil transportation.

## **HOUSE-ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The committee heard two bills on March 29:

HB 2745 (Reedy) to require public high schools, including charter high schools, to offer an approved driver's education course, taught by a qualified instructor, to students each school year. The bill creates a state fund to help fund driver education programs. The course is not required to graduate from high school. A student who successfully completes the course shall receive one-half credit as an elective. First-time driver's license applicants must complete an approved driver's education program. The bill contains a six-year sunset clause.

HB 1770 (Lewis) to allow school districts to create differentiated teacher salary schedules. The Association is concerned that the bill allows for differentiated pay without requiring districts to first establish a strong salary schedule and negotiate fair and transparent stipends through a bargaining process and opposes the bill.

The committee voted to approve four bills on March 29:

HCS/HB 1753 (Basye) is an omnibus version that now includes the provisions of twenty-five bills that were mostly approved by unanimous vote in committee. The original bill allows creation of recovery high schools for students in recovery from substance use issues. The bill allows school districts or groups of districts to apply to DESE for authority to create recovery high schools in regions around the state. The Association supports the bill.

HCS/HB 2008 (Schwadron) is a revised version that only requires school boards to post adopted curricula on the district website. The HCS removes the requirements for educators to publish all instructional documents used or available for use in instruction or training on a district's website. The HCS also clarifies that no copyrighted curriculum material will be placed on district websites in conflict with copyright requirements.

HCS/HB 2152 (Henderson) to provide for school innovation waivers to exempt schools from specific requirements imposed by statute or regulation. The Association believes this bill could grant flexibility to improve pupil assessments and supports the bill. The HCS requires DESE to compile and publish an annual report on the requests and use of waivers.

HCS/HB 2445 (Sassmann) to authorize the Gasconade R-II school district and West St. Francois County R-IV school district, which each cross county boundaries, to use the county that yields the highest dollar value modifier under the school foundation formula.

**Legislative Update 2022**

Missouri National Education Association  
1810 East Elm Street  
Jefferson City, MO 65101-4174  
(573) 634-3202 or (800) 392-0236  
[www.mnea.org](http://www.mnea.org)

Phil Murray, President  
Rebeka McIntosh, Vice President  
DeeAnn Aull, Executive Director  
Otto Fajen, Legislative Director  
Sandy Smith, Administrative Assistant