



Legislative Update

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LEGISLATURE COMPLETES ACTION ON SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET BILL

The House agreed to the Senate position on SS/SCS/HCS/HB 3014 (Smith), the supplemental budget bill, on February 24. The bill is finally passed and has been printed in final form. The bill will be sent to Governor Parson for his approval. The Association appreciates the legislature's timely action to approve the bill before the federal deadline of March 24 to approve the ESSER III grants. The Association urges the Governor to promptly sign the measure into law so that funds can be distributed to districts.

HB 3014 appropriates the federal ESSER III funding to school districts along with several provisions needed to fund Medicaid expansion this year as approved by voters. The \$1.9 billion in federal ESSER III grant funding was approved by Congress last year and will be used according to district plans to provide a safe return to school, address learning loss and help students recover from the impact of the pandemic.

The House version of the bill would have directed up to \$75 million of the ESSER III funds to a proposed tutoring grant program. However, the Senate committee revised the bill back to the Governor's position and does not divert ESSER III funds from schools. This Senate version is the one that was agreed to and will be sent for the Governor's approval.

CAPITOL ACTION DAYS

Due to possible inclement weather, the Capitol Action Day scheduled for February 23 was cancelled. Capitol Action Days will continue March 2, when members from Governance Districts 1, 7 & 8 are scheduled to come to the Capitol.

Capitol Action Days are part of the Association's plan to promote positive policy for public education and take place on most Wednesdays during session, beginning in February. Members unable to attend on the Capitol Action Day for their Governance District can sign up to attend another Capitol Action Day.

For more information and to register for your Capitol Action Day, please visit <https://www.mnea.org/CAD>

EDUCATOR TAX DEDUCTION

The House Ways and Means Committee approved HB 1981 (Ann Kelley) on February 23. The bill would create a 100% state income tax deduction for K-12 educator expenses up to \$500 per year for

professional development or classroom supplies and equipment. The Association believes this is a helpful support to teachers who invest their own resources to advance their skills or support their students' needs in the classroom. The Association supports the bill.

PUPIL SUSPENSIONS

The House Special Committee on Government Oversight heard HB 2533 (Bailey) on February 22. The bill requires school districts and charter schools to document school suspensions and report the information to DESE. School districts will include disaggregated school discipline and suspension data on the district's annual report card. The bill also requires school boards to consider alternatives to suspension and prohibits the suspension of students for truancy, absences, or prior offenses. Schools are prohibited from suspending students in preschool to 3rd grade.

RESTRICTING MEDICAID FUNDING

The House approved HCS/HJR 117 (Cody Smith) on February 24. The joint resolution, if approved by voters, would allow the legislature to choose not to fund Medicaid expansion as recently approved by voters. The Association and opposes the measure.

TAX ROLLBACK ON FEDERAL FUNDS

The Senate Ways and Means Committee heard SB 911 (Eigel) on February 24. The bill would require school districts and other local governments to reduce their property tax levies to offset their revenues by the total amount of federal ARPA funds received. This requirement would completely undermine the purpose of the federal funding and significantly reduce the resources that schools would have to address student learning loss during the pandemic. The Association opposes the bill.

INITIATIVE PETITIONS

The House perfected HCS/HJR 91 (Eggleston) on February 24. The Association opposes HJR 91. The measure would increase signature gathering requirements for initiative petitions to amend the Constitution, postpone action on the petition to allow the legislature to consider the proposal as a bill and increase the approval requirement to a two-thirds supermajority for new constitutional amendments while allowing repeal of existing provisions by simple majority vote. The Association is concerned that this measure will cause the initiative petition process to no longer be a realistic option for Missouri citizens to bring issues of concern forward for public consideration. The Association opposes this measure and will continue to fight to protect the citizens' initiative petition process.

PHOTO ID MANDATE

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee approved several bills on February 23 that would require registered voters to provide a government-issued photo identification, including HB 2113 (McGaugh), HB 1878 (Simmons), and HJR 94 (Simmons). The Association opposes barriers that keep eligible citizens from voting and being politically active and opposes all three measures.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee met on February 22 to hear two bills:

SB 647 (Koenig) to establish a grievance process for parents and guardians of elementary and secondary school students. The Association is concerned that the bill would undermine local school governance and create an appeal process to DESE with no standard for consideration of such an appeal.

SB 660 (Arthur) to establish the Show Me Success Diploma Program, the Competency-Based Education Grant Program, the Competency-Based Education Task Force, and a competency-based credit system for high school students. The Association supports the bill.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard several bills on February 22:

HB 1881 (Rusty Black) to revise PSRS working after retirement provisions. The bill extends time a retiree may use the critical shortage provision from two years to four years. The Association supports the bill and believes the critical shortage position can be improved to better allow PSRS retirees to help when needed.

HB 1928 (Pollitt) to revise the requirements for a visiting scholars certificate of license to teach.

HB 1998 (Davidson) would allow school districts to issue school district-specific teaching permits for persons without a certificate of license to teach granted by the state board of education. The Association believes this additional certification path is not needed. The Association is also concerned that the bill would lower the basic standards for teachers and opposes the bill as filed.

HB 2132 (Haley) to prohibit certain "concepts" about individuals based upon race or gender from being included in state mandated tests. The Association is concerned that the wording may create uncertainty regarding whether key events and topics in history could be covered in state assessments and opposes the bill.

The committee postponed the scheduled hearing on HB 1591 (Lewis). This bill would identify schools scoring in the bottom five percent under the state's ESSA plan and specify a NCLB-like sequence of consequences that will ultimately require a district to close the school, create a charter school, pay to transfer the students to other schools or participate in the school turnaround program. The Association opposes the bill as filed.

The committee met again on February 23 and voted to approve the following seven bills:

HCS/HB 1556 (David Gregory) related to literacy and reading instruction. The HCS matches the recently adopted SCS version for SBs 681 (O'Laughlin) and SB 662 (Arthur), a version supported by the Association.

HCS/HB 1858 (Baker) regarding parental rights in education. The HCS added several changes to coincident with existing policies protecting information shared by students regarding possible child abuse or neglect and sensitive school information regarding school safety plans.

HB 1881 (Rusty Black) to revise PSRS working after retirement provisions. The bill extends the time a retiree may use the critical shortage provision from two years to four years. The Association supports the bill and believes the critical shortage position can be improved to better allow PSRS retirees to help when needed.

HCS/HB 1908 (Shaul) to require school districts to review all curricula intended for use in each school year. The bill requires all curricula to be reviewed annually and adopted in a public hearing. The HCS clarifies that school boards may review curricula on a five year rotating basis. The HCS also includes an amendment that will require elementary schools to teach cursive handwriting.

HCS/HB 1928 (Pollitt) to revise the requirements for a visiting scholars certificate of license to teach. The HCS allows districts to employ teachers who complete an approved teacher preparation program but have not passed the exit exam and provides that such a teacher shall receive a state teaching certificate upon completion of three years of successful teaching.

HCS/HB 1669 (Seitz) regarding school boards and instruction concerning race and history. The bill seeks to prohibit certain "concepts" about individuals based upon race or gender from being included in courses. The Association believes that curriculum decisions are best made at the local level and opposes the bill.

HCS/HB 2011 (Travis Smith) to require parental consent for changes to individualized education programs (IEPs).

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