



Legislative Update

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Number 18
May 19, 2021
www.mnea.org

REGULAR SESSION ENDS

The 2021 Regular Session of the General Assembly ended on May 14. The Association appreciates the support of the many members who participated in Missouri NEA's legislative advocacy throughout the session during this challenging time.

The COVID-19 pandemic created many challenges for public schools, and privatization advocates started early in the session with a strong push to advance an agenda of tax credit scholarship vouchers, charter school expansion and full-time virtual school open enrollment.

The legislature did eventually enact a tax credit scholarship voucher in HB 349 (Christofanelli). As of this writing, HB 349 has been delivered to Governor Parson and awaits his decision to sign or veto the bill. The Association opposed the bill and urged Governor Parson to veto the bill.

The legislature failed to reauthorize the federal reimbursement allowance (FRA) provider tax in SB 2 (Hegeman). This critical tax on healthcare providers brings in roughly \$2 billion in federal revenues and is necessary to support the Medicaid program as contained in next year's budget. The provision has been routinely renewed for about 30 years but was blocked this session by a fight over birth control and abortion issues. The legislature will need to convene for a special session to renew the taxes before they expire in September.

For more detailed information on other legislation, visit <https://www.mnea.org/Missouri/LegislativeActionCenter.aspx> to view legislative updates and other related information.

BILLS THAT PASSED

BUDGET APPROVED WITHOUT FUNDING MEDICAID EXPANSION

MNEA believes adequate and equitable school funding is a fundamental right for every student. The state must invest in classroom priorities that build the foundation for student learning: early childhood education, smaller class sizes and a well-rounded education that will prepare students to compete in the worldwide economy.

The legislature a state budget for next school year. The budget would allow full funding of the K-12 formula and increases college and university funding 3.7% above current year levels.

Primary among the state's funding provisions for public schools is the foundation formula for basic school aid. The budget requests only about \$9 million to maintain full funding and the base per pupil amount (known as the State Adequacy Target or SAT) will remain at \$6,375 per weighted ADA count. Overall growth of this fundamental factor of school funding has been minimal since the adoption of the current formula in 2005. The average yearly growth from the initial value of \$6,117 per weighted ADA in FY 2007 to \$6,375 for FY 2022 is only 0.3% per year over that fifteen year span, far below the actual increase in the cost of education and far below even CPI growth over that span of years.

The Association urged the conferees to support the Senate position in HCS/HB 2 on several key items, but conferees agreed to the House position on several key provisions. The CCR for HB 2 (Smith) retains the House position of \$2M for a non-profit entity in St. Louis school district. This line appears to be available for the pro-charter Opportunity Trust. The Association opposes this change in the CCR version.

The CCR on HB 2 also takes the House position to provide up to \$5M in state funding for charter school maintenance. However, the CCR also retains the Senate position to increase funding for career and technical education center improvements to \$2M. The CCR on HB 2 also retains House language to require half of the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funds to be used for voucher-like "microgrants". The Association opposes this change.

The Senate defeated Sen. Rizzo's amendments to fund Medicaid expansion in the state budget, and the final version of the budget does not fund Medicaid expansion. Sen. Rizzo's proposal would have amended HB 10 (Smith) regarding budgets for the Departments of Health and Mental Health and HB 11 (Smith) regarding the budget for the Department of Social Services. Given this decision, the legislature will not fund Medicaid expansion in the regular budget. The Association will continue to work to support efforts to implement this important, voter-approved program in the future in a supplemental budget.

While the state has received increased state revenues this year due to last year's delayed tax filing date and is receiving significant one-time federal funding related to COVID-19, the long-term outlook for the state budgeting process remains limited by the cumulative effect of harmful state tax cuts in recent years. These tax cuts have reduced the state's ability to invest in public education and other vital services while also maintaining responsible levels of budget reserve funds. The legislature must commit to do more to meet the ongoing needs of all Missouri students.

LEGISLATURE APPROVES TAX CREDIT VOUCHER BILL AND COMPANION AMENDMENT

The legislature approved HCS/HB 349 (Christofanelli). The bill passed the Senate on May 6 with no changes to the House version and surprisingly little debate. The Speaker's session-long leveraging of Senate priority bills was ultimately successful, as several Senators who had previously opposed the bill throughout the session changed and voted in favor. The Association opposes HCS/HB 349 and will need the support of members to ask the Governor to veto this harmful legislation.

The bill creates a type of voucher known as a scholarship tax credit. This approach was created to get around constitutional restrictions that prevent a legislature from appropriating funds to private and religious schools. The bill would initially reduce state general revenue funds by up to \$50 million per year by allowing a tax credit for donations to pay expenses for home school, private school or charter

schools for certain students. HB 349 would reduce state funds that could have been used for public education and other vital services and would divert those funds to private and home schools that are not held to the same standards as public schools.

The overall program cap in HB 349 starts at \$50 million per year and could grow over time to \$75 million. The program is limited to students in the more populous (charter) counties and in cities over 30,000 population. The bill will be delayed until the year after pupil transportation funding reaches 40% of allowable cost, which means the program could start in the 2022-23 school year if the appropriation for next year meets that 40% target. The bill also provides five years of phantom student state aid payments to districts for students who leave the district to participate in the program.

The legislature also passed an amendment to SCS/SB 86 (Hegeman) pertaining to restrictions on public funds for election and campaign purposes. The amendment makes several changes to the tax credit scholarship voucher in HB 349 (Christofanelli). The primary change is to reduce the first year tax credit cap to \$25 million, though it appears that the cap may immediately jump to the maximum value of \$50 for the second and succeeding years. The bill also restricts taxpayer donations to contributions of cash or check, and excludes donations of stocks, bonds, securities and property.

LEGISLATURE APPROVES COVID LIABILITY BILL

The legislature approved SS#2/SCS/SBs 51 & 42 (Luetkemeyer) on the last day of session. The bill pertains to liability protections for employers and other entities during declared emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic. The Senate Substitute makes several changes to the original language but retains the same problematic approach of the bill as filed.

The bill moved quickly through the Senate but was held up by the House until the end of session. The bill was approved without an emergency clause and will have a normal effective date of August 28, 2021.

The Association has concerns regarding this type of sweeping liability waiver and opposed the bill. Fundamentally, if no one is responsible, no one is safe. Among several concerns, the products liability waiver could put educators and many other workers at risk of using ineffective, inadequate or unsafe products if manufacturers have no responsibility to maintain high product standards during the pandemic.

LEGISLATURE APPROVES HIGHER EDUCATION BILL

The House agreed to the Senate changes and approved SS#2/SCS/HS/HCS/HB 297 (Wallingford) on May 14. The bill contains various provisions relating to higher education, including certain statewide missions and suspension of tuition caps. The Association supports the portion of the bill to suspend tuition caps at higher education institutions and the statewide mission for Harris-Stowe State University.

The bill also includes several other provisions, including: 1) adding SB 386 (Eslinger) to require DESE to create a statewide plan for career-technical education, 2) renaming the state's 529 education savings program and expanding the program to include all eligible institutions under federal regulations and 3) revising the process by which school districts vote to annex to community college districts.

SEVERAL EDUCATION BILLS PASS IN CHILD PROTECTION BILL

The legislature approved HB 432 (Kelly) pertaining to protection of vulnerable populations. The House bill does not directly pertain to public schools, but the House agreed to Senate amendments to add several education-related provisions.

The Senate amendments added the following education provisions:

HB 254 (Paula Brown)/SB 76 (Beck) to require school districts to adopt policies providing for accommodations for nursing mothers. The Association supports this provision.

HB 387 (Bailey) regarding requirements for seclusion and restraint policies in public schools.

HB 228 (Basye) to allow parents of special education students to make audio recordings of IEP meetings and 504 plan meetings with prior notice.

LEGISLATURE LOWERS SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER MINIMUM AGE

The legislature approved HB 685 (Chipman) pertaining to qualifications for public office. Among many changes, this bill lowers the minimum age requirement to 21 years for seven-director school districts. The bill does not make changes to the minimum age requirement for urban or metropolitan school districts.

LEGISLATURE APPROVES WAYFAIR SALES TAX PROVICION AND INCOME TAX CUTS

The legislature approved the conference committee version of SB 153 (Koenig). The bill would allow state and local taxation of online and remote sales as allowed under the recent Wayfair decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. However, the bill also includes additional income tax cuts to reduce state revenues and offset the possible increase of funds from the sales tax changes. The SS would add three more 0.1% reductions to the top income tax rate. Two of these 0.1% cuts would be implemented after the remaining cuts from SB 509 in 2014. The third cut will be implemented in 2024. The Association supported the Wayfair fix but urged the legislature to address the online sales tax provision without further cuts to the income tax. The income tax cuts are likely to further limit the capacity of the legislature to invest in public education and other vital services.

LEGISLATURE APPROVES LIMITS ON LOCAL CONTROL OF PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES

The legislature approved the conference committee version of HB 271 (Wiemann). The bill limits local control of public health measures by city and county health agencies and limits the period that public health agencies may issue emergency orders without approval by the city or county governing body. The final version allows initial orders for up to 30 days and allows the orders to be extended by vote of the governing body of the city or county. The Association was concerned that early versions of this and similar bills might not leave local and state public health officials with the ability to take

appropriate and timely action to adopt and enforce provisions to help ensure students have safe schools.

BILLS THAT DID NOT PASS

CHARTER SCHOOL EXPANSION

The Association vigorously opposed charter school expansion bills this session. SB 25 (Eigel) and SCS/SB 55 (O'Laughlin) would have allowed charter schools to be sponsored by outside entities (other than the local school board) and operate in many districts around the state. Neither bill passed.

HCS/HB 137 (Richey) and SB 218 (Luetkemeyer) would have revised the law specifying payments to charter schools and shifted more local school funds to charter schools, but neither bill passed. The Association remains concerned regarding the wording of the bill and urges the legislature to provide an allowance in the calculation for maintaining district capacity to serve all students.

Guided by the revised MNEA Position Paper on charter schools, the Association opposed these bills and put forward alternative language to realize the goals of the Position Paper. Missouri NEA believes that charter schools should be sponsored by and accountable to the local community through the elected school board and approved only after an impact study is conducted by the district to consider the proposal. School board sponsorship ensures that the board can plan the use of all school funds and implement the services and programs that meet the needs of all students in the community.

The Association also believes that all charter schools should be subject to the same standards of accountability, transparency and respect for the rights of students, parents and staff as are applicable to traditional public schools.

BACK DOOR CHARTER EXPANSION

HB 942 (Haffner) and SB 400 (Onder) would have required district accreditation to be based at least seventy percent on student scores on standardized tests, but neither bill passed. The bills would have created a similar accreditation process for individual school buildings and automatically require significant percentages of both districts and schools to annually be labeled at the lower two levels of unaccredited and provisionally accredited. This bill harkens back to the now-abandoned "test, blame and punish" mindset of the former, federal NCLB Act. Moreover, this arbitrary lowering of accreditation status would create a "back door" charter school expansion by radically expanding the number of districts where charter schools could be sponsored by outside entities without approval of the local school board. The Association opposed the bill.

The primary supporter of the bills was the Opportunity Trust, a pro-charter organization established in St. Louis City and one of many pro-charter groups around the country that have been funded by the City Fund. Towards the end of session, alternative language appeared that would create a School Accountability Council to review and comment on MSIP standards. While based loosely on a similar advisory council created in Massachusetts, this version would have created a council where about half of the members would be political appointments made by the House and Senate leadership and explicitly prohibit any of those appointees from being public school employees or their family

members. The Association believes that this version of the panel lacks appropriate public school participation for such an important public school issue.

VIRTUAL SCHOOL OPEN ENROLLMENT

SB 95 (Onder) and HB 754 (Christofanelli) would have eliminated local district input on the enrollment of district students in the virtual school program and transfers the authority to DESE. However, neither bill passed. The bills also would have created full-time virtual programs as separate educational agencies with limited public accountability to the State Board of Education and with specific requirements that require districts to pay the state adequacy target amount per pupil, rather than the market necessary costs for those programs. The Association opposed both bills.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

HB 543 (Pollitt) would have created a public school open enrollment program, but the bill did not pass. The House voted to remove the transfer of local funds from the sending district and clarify that the bill does not authorize transfers to charter schools or to full-time virtual schools. School districts would have the option to specify the number of transfer students they are willing to receive. A district may adopt a diversity plan that could limit student transfers out of the district for transfers that would work against the diversity plan. The Association remains concerned that some students may be left behind in such a transfer plan, particularly if funding is not provided to support participation of students with special needs and at-risk students. Ongoing appropriations to the state fund created to support those transportation and special education expenses will be needed to implement the bill.

PAYCHECK DECEPTION

SB 244 (Onder) and HB 88 (Taylor) would have enacted onerous and intrusive restrictions on certain public employees regarding payroll deductions for dues and deductions for political action, but neither bill passed. HB 1413 from 2018, the anti-bargaining bill, was blocked by permanent court injunction resulting from a lawsuit filed by the Association and other public labor organizations. This permanent injunction strongly affirms public employees' constitutional right to bargain and their right to join the association of their choosing. The Association strongly opposed both bills.

CURRICULUM ISSUES

The House debated a controversial amendment that was proposed to HCS/HB 1141 & 1067 (Buchheit-Courtway), but the amendment was not approved or voted into law. HA 1/HA 3 (Schroer) would have precluded the instructional use of a broad range of content referred to as "critical race theory" that would include the 1619 Project initiative of the New York Times, the Learning for Justice Curriculum, Teaching Tolerance, We Stories, programs of Educational Equity Consultants, and similar and successor curricula. The Association believes that curriculum decisions are best made at the local level and opposed the amendment.

HB 952 (Seitz) was similar to Rep. Schroer's amendment and would have prohibited the use of the 1619 Project initiative of the New York Times in the public schools of the state. However, the bill did not pass. The Association opposed the bill.

The Association believes that teachers and students should be able to explore, present and discuss divergent points of view. Controversial issues should be a part of instructional programs when the issues are appropriate to the curriculum and the maturity level of the students. The work of social studies teachers involves engaging students in uncovering sources and evidence and then challenging and weighing that evidence. Both HB 952 and HA 1/HA 3 HB 1141 would have interfered with high quality social studies instruction.

INITIATIVE PETITIONS

Several joint resolutions were filed that would have made it harder for citizens to use the initiative petition process in the future, including HJR 20 (Henderson). The House passed HCS/HJRs 20 et al, but the HJR did not pass the Senate. HJR 20 would have required a higher fraction of signatures in more parts of the state and required a two-thirds supermajority vote to pass a Constitutional amendment brought forward by either the legislature or by initiative. The Association opposed these measures and will continue to fight to protect the citizens' initiative petition process.

REPEAL OF PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX

SB 24 (Eigel) would have permanently eliminated 99.997% of the taxes on personal property within a five year phase out period. Late in session, a similar provision was added to HB 66 (Pike), but applying only to St. Charles County. However, neither bill passed. Based on the official fiscal note for the bill, this change is expected to ultimately reduce local school revenues by roughly \$1 billion per year. The Association opposes the bill.

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY ASSESSMENT CAPS

HB 248 (Coleman) and SB 131 (Luetkemeyer) would have attempted to restrict assessments below true value based on the amount of increase from the previous assessment, but neither bill passed. The bills would have imposed a cap on the increase of assessment of any residential real property (except for new construction and improvements). The Association is concerned that this change would violate longstanding constitutional principles of uniformity and fairness of assessment and would adversely affect local school revenues in the long run. The Association opposed both HB 248 and SB 131.

READING INTERVENTIONS

Several different bills were filed regarding reading instruction and intervention, but none of the bills passed. These bills would substantially revise existing laws regarding reading intervention programs and establish a new reading intervention program focused mainly on students in kindergarten to fourth grade. The bills remove the requirement that would make grade level promotion for certain students contingent on passing a reading examination.

SB 304 (Eslinger), SB 54 (O'Laughlin) and HB 368 (Gregory) all pertained to reading intervention in schools. The bills repeal retention in grade requirements for struggling readers and require assessment and intervention beginning in kindergarten. SB 54 (O'Laughlin) and HB 368 (Gregory) would have required systematic and explicit interventions for students with characteristics of dyslexia. The

Association believes that reading instruction, with appropriate evidence-based reading intervention, especially in the early grades, is essential for learning and achieving high standards in all content areas. The Association also believes that key decisions regarding assessment, placement, additional instruction and advancement should be made at the local level with district, employee, parent and student input.

RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOLS

SCS/SB 259 (O’Laughlin) would have allowed creation of recovery high schools for students in recovery from substance use issues, but the bill did not pass. The original bill would authorize the creation of a charter school in Kansas City to serve as a recovery high school. The SCS version approved by the committee will instead allow school districts or groups of districts to apply to DESE for authority to create recovery high schools in regions around the state. The Association appreciates the committee's decision to avoid using the original approach that relies on the flawed charter school law and urges legislators to use the process contained in SCS/SB 259 if similar legislation is considered in future sessions.

PROFICIENCY-BASED LEARNING

Several bills were filed regarding competency based education, but none of the bills were passed. SB 33 (Arthur) would have created a task force to study and develop competency-based education programs in public schools and a grant program to fund to school districts for the purpose of providing competency-based education programs. The Association supported the bill. SB 34 (Arthur) would have required DESE to create an alternative diploma program. HB 624 (Richey) contained the provisions of both SB 33 and SB 34.

Towards the end of session, language pertaining to alternative student credit was amended to several bills. However, none of the bills passed. The language would allow students to earn graduation credit for participating in extended learning opportunities outside the regular school day. However, the wording of the language was not clearly drafted concerning many implementation issues, such as whether programs must be approved by DESE, how much credit would be earned, whether such credit would affect other graduation credit requirements and how such credit would be related to demonstrated proficiency based on core learning standards.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

HB 101 (Pollitt) and SB 265 (Eslinger) are similar bills that would have enacted various provisions governing workforce development and education. Neither bill was passed. Among these provisions, both bills create the option for school districts to request waivers of certain regulations from the State Board of Education. The bills also change state formula aid calculations to encourage districts that have not yet done so to establish early childhood programs. The bills also extend the maximum full-time retirement employment option under the critical shortage statute from two years to four years. The bills also allow a PSRS retiree to be employed under critical shortage as a superintendent after a one year waiting period. The Association supports several provisions in the bills, including the funding changes to support early childhood education.

HB 733 (Patterson) would have created a new adult high school and industry credential program through DESE. However, the bill was not passed.

HB 1346 (Henderson) would have revised funding allocations for institutions of higher education by making a part of the allocation based on workforce readiness of students. However, the bill was not passed. The bill would create incentives for institutions to emphasize programs leading to high-paying careers. This change could adversely affect programs leading to lower-paying careers, including teaching, social work and law enforcement.

IN-STATE TUITION FOR MISSOURI RESIDENTS

HB 3 (Smith), the higher education budget bill, requires public institutions of higher education to charge the higher, international tuition rate to any undocumented student, including those who have attended and graduated from Missouri public schools. The Association believes that a Missouri high school diploma or high school equivalency credential should provide documentation for undocumented students for verification of in-state tuition status. The Association opposes this provision in HB 3.

A+ SCHOOLS SCHOLARSHIPS

HB 1067 (Shaul) would have protected A+ scholarship eligibility for students who have a negative change to their GPA from 2019-20 or 2020-21 due to the impact of COVID-19. However, the bill was not passed.

GIFTED EDUCATION

HB 306 (Sommer) and SB 151 (Hoskins) would have required districts and charter schools to identify and provide services and programs for gifted children, but neither bill passed. The bills would have required 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 supported the bills.

COMPUTER SCIENCE INSTRUCTION

HCS/HB 320 (Fitzwater) would have required schools to offer computer science courses or imbedded instruction in elementary and secondary schools. The bill was eventually amended to allow high schools the option to comply by informing students and parents of virtual course offerings in computer science and creating a task force that would study related issues and plan for ways to provide computer science instruction in elementary schools. However, the bill did not pass.

BRAILLE INSTRUCTION

HB 1360 (Basye) and HB 1381 (Shields) would enact new provisions governing Braille instruction. The bills are expected to increase the fraction of vision-impaired students receiving Braille instruction. However, the bills did not pass.

CURSIVE WRITING INSTRUCTION

HB 108 (Bangert) would have required students to receive instruction in cursive handwriting. However, the bill did not pass.

STUDENT NEWSPAPERS

HB 480 (Christofanelli) and SB 434 (Washington) would have granted greater freedom for student journalists. Neither bill was passed. The bills include anti-retaliation provisions to protect student communications sponsors and other staff from possible retaliation by boards or administration for granting students greater editorial latitude as provided by the bills. The Association supported the bills.

OPTIONAL COURSE IN THE BIBLE

SB 323 (May) would have allowed schools to offer elective social studies courses on the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament in public schools. The bill is a largely symbolic piece of legislation stating that public schools may offer elective courses in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. Existing state law already provides that books of a religious nature may be used in public schools as part of instruction in elective courses in literature and history, if such books are used in a manner consistent with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

TRANSGENDER ATHLETE PARTICIPATION

HJR 53 (Basye) would have asked voters to approve a constitutional provision that specifically overrules current MSHSAA Board Policy on Transgender Participation as taken from existing NCAA policy. HB 1045 (Basye) also would have restricted transgender athlete participation. Neither HJR 53 nor HB 1045 passed. HJR 53 would have required students participating in any single-gender event or activity organized by MSHSAA or another statewide organization to participate in the event corresponding to the student's biological sex at birth. The Association believes that educators should continue to establish the policies and procedures that govern the activities of Missouri students who participate in high school activities and opposed HJR 53.

HIGHER EDUCATION FREE SPEECH ISSUES

SB 566 (Moon) would have created an office of public policy events at each public institution of higher education, but the bill did not pass. The office would be required to organize debates, group forums, and individual lectures representing opposing sides of public policy issues. The legislature may provide funds to establish these offices, but the Association is concerned the bill requires the institution to fund the mandated office if the legislature fails to fund the program.

AP CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

HB 1208 (Chris Brown) would have required in-state public educational institutions to grant undergraduate course credit for students who score 3 or higher on advance placement examinations. However, the bill did not pass.

SUMMER SCHOOL

SB 166 (Arthur) would allow students to attend multiple public summer school programs non-concurrently, but the bill did not pass. The Association supports the bill.

PARENT OR STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCESS

SB 352 (Koenig) to create a grievance process for parents and guardians of elementary and secondary school students. However, the bill did not pass. 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.

HOME SCHOOL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION MANDATES

SB 55 (O'Laughlin) and HB 494 (Hurlbert) would have required MSHSAA to allow home school students to participate in activities or member schools will lose state funding. The Association believes that educators should continue to establish the policies that govern student activities and opposed the bills.

CAMPUS CARRY

SB 117 (Burlison) and HB 86 (Taylor) would have taken away local control of college and university governing boards to regulate concealed weapons on campus. The Association believes that all students and education employees should be allowed to learn and work in a safe environment free of unauthorized guns and other deadly weapons and opposed the bills.

SCHOOL IMMUNIZATIONS

HB 37 (Pollock) would have exempted private schools from immunization requirements applicable to public schools and created an exemption for students providing a written religious or conscientious belief statement regarding immunizations. However, the bill did not pass. The Association believes that waivers should minimize the numbers of unvaccinated students to those necessary due to documented medical conditions.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER STANDARDS

HCS/HB 608 (Lewis) would have created a state law establishing qualifications for substitute teachers, but the bill did not pass. The bill would create a similar structure to the State Board rule that currently allows either 60 hours of college credit or completion of 20 hours of DESE training to qualify for certification. HCS/HB 608 makes several changes, including requiring a high school grade level substitute to be at least 20 years of age and allowing a substitute to designate up to five districts to receive background check information from a single application with a maximum additional cost of \$10 beyond the basic cost for the background check. The Association supports high standards for substitute teachers and believes that professional development, including classroom management, should be required for all substitutes. The Association also suggests that substitutes should be

regularly surveyed to better understand the challenges they face and improve working conditions and pay for substitutes.

DISTRICT LEVEL ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION

HB 439 (Davidson) would have allowed 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. However, the bill did not pass. 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 opposed the bill.

The House adopted an amendment to require the State Board to ratify the district permit, so that the teacher can legally participate in the appropriate public retirement system. House amendments also limit a district to using the district permit for 15% of teachers, require a candidate to have a bachelor's degree and require a participating district to establish training on classroom management and provide mentoring for the district permit teachers. With the amendments, the district permits still lower certification standards by not requiring adequate preparation on how to teach and would limit the permit recipients to teach in the district offering the permit without the portability of a statewide teaching certificate.

SUICIDE PREVENTION AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

HB 465 (Pike) would have specified that the optional, professional development training in youth suicide awareness and prevention, contain a unit relating to stress management strategies for students and faculty. However, the bill did not pass. The Association supports the bill.

PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

HB 275 (Hannegan) and SB 81 (Razer) would revise the Missouri Human Rights Act regarding employment, disability and housing to make discrimination based upon a person's sexual orientation or gender identity an unlawful discriminatory practice. The Association supported both bills.

RENEWAL OF CONTRACTS OF SCHOOLS AND OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

HB 323 (Hill) would have prohibited political subdivisions from automatically renewing contracts without taking a definite action, but the bill did not pass. The bill also limits contract renewals to no earlier than three months from the expiration of the contract. The sponsor focused on questions regarding renewal and buyout of multi-year contracts for school superintendents. The Association expressed its concern that the broad language of the bill might interfere with the timelines for renewal of probationary teacher contracts by disallowing the current policy that a contract will be renewed automatically for the next school year if a probationary teacher is not notified of non-renewal by April 15.

EDUCATOR TAX DEDUCTION

SB 228 (Arthur) would have allowed for a state income tax deduction for educator expenses, but the bill did not pass. Many public school teachers purchase school supplies for students out of their personal funds and these purchases are not typically reimbursed by the district. The Association supported the bill.

CAREER LADDER

HB 1133 (Rusty Black) would have changed the Career Ladder law by adding plan recognition for certain additional responsibilities and volunteer activities, such as coaching and mentoring. The bill also allows teachers to qualify after two years. However, the bill did not pass. This program is not currently being funded by the state.

VISITING SCHOLAR CERTIFICATE

SB 448 (Rowden) would have revised the visiting scholar's certificate, but the bill did not pass. The bill expands the existing visiting scholar certificate, primarily to address persistent vacancies in hard to staff subjects at the high school level.

WORKING AFTER RETIREMENT

HB 812 (Rusty Black) would have extended the critical shortage working after retirement option for teachers from two years to four years, but the bill did not pass. HB 811 (Rusty Black) would have increased the amount a PSRS retiree can earn annually from PEERS employment while receiving a pension from \$15,000 to the Social Security earnings limitation, which is \$18,960 for 2021. The bill did not pass. The Association supported both bills.

2.55% PSRS FACTOR FOR 31+ YEARS OF SERVICE

HB 828 (Dinkins) would have reestablished the 2.55 percent benefit factor for PSRS members with 31 or more years of service. However, the bill did not pass. This bill would save the system money over the long term while still providing an incentive for experienced teachers to continue teaching for another year. The Association supports the bill.

SCHOOL RETIREMENT SURVIVOR POP-UP PROVISION

SB 608 (Razer) would extend the current survivor pop-up option for certain PSRS and PEERS retirees to include retirees who selected a reduced benefit to provide a survivor payment for his or her same-sex partner or before September 1, 2015. However, the bill did not pass. The bill provides similar provisions to protect the interest of the nominated beneficiary as apply to the current pop-up provision. The retiree must execute an affidavit, along with any supporting information and documentation required by the Systems, attesting to the existence of the domestic partnership at the time of the nomination and that the partnership has since ended. The nominated beneficiary must consent to the removal and disclaim all rights to future benefits in writing, or the parties must obtain a court order or

judgment after September 1, 2021, removing the nominated beneficiary. The Association supports the bill.

SCHOOL BOARD AND MUNICIPAL ELECTION DATE

HB 920 (Baker) would have changed the general municipal election for schools and local governments from April to November, but the bill did not pass. This change would likely make it harder for school board candidates and school issues to receive as much attention during the November election cycle when attention will be taken up by partisan contests for federal, statewide and legislative offices and statewide ballot issues.

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS BY SUBDISTRICT

Several bills were filed that would have allowed school board members to be elected by subdistrict rather than at-large, but none of the bills passed. HB 421 (Proudie) would have created subdistricts within certain school districts in St. Louis County. HB 164 (Veit) would have allowed school districts to change from at-large to subdistrict school board elections, including the local option for any district to vote to approve a change to elect some or all board members from subdistricts. HB 253 (Fishel) would have changed school board elections for Springfield school district from seven at-large board members to two at-large members and five subdistrict members.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER RECALL

HB 229 (Basye) would have established a process for school board member recall elections, but the bill did not pass. The bill lists many possible grounds for seeking a recall. Some of the listed grounds reflect a form of official misconduct while others appear to reflect a disagreement on policy or process.

SCHOOL BOARD AGENDA ITEMS

While not filed as a bill, Rep. Basye filed several amendments to allow voters of a school district to file a petition to require the school board to place a requested item on the agenda at one of the next three meetings and take a vote on the petitioned item. Petitions could seek to address board policy, administrative actions, curriculum, instruction or the school calendar.

RESTRICTING ADVOCACY OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

HB 512 (Lovasco) would have limited the ability of schools and other local governments to provide any printed matter regarding a ballot measure or any matter before the legislature, including even information for the purpose of educating the public. HB 515 (Baker) would have attempted to limit the ability of local public officials and school employees and other public employees to testify for or against or even provide education on any matter pending before the legislature. Neither bill was passed. The Association opposed both bills.

HEALTH INSURANCE

HJR 51 (Shields) would prevent health benefit plans from limiting or excluding benefits or charging higher premiums or other costs relating to preexisting conditions. However, the joint resolution was not passed. Proper healthcare is critical to ensuring that all children come to school ready to learn. Missouri NEA believes that every student should have access to comprehensive health, social and psychological programs and services and supports the joint resolution.

PHOTO ID MANDATE

HB 334 (Simmons) and HB 738 (Rone) would have required registered voters to provide a government-issued photo identification. A similar provision was passed as HJR 53 in 2016, approved by voters and then blocked by a Missouri Supreme Court ruling that found the option to vote without a photo ID by giving a sworn statement was confusing for voters. Missouri NEA opposes barriers that keep eligible citizens from voting and being politically active and opposed both HB 334 and HB 738.

VOTER ACCESSIBILITY

HB 324 (Young) and HB 423 (Proudie) are similar bills that would have required election authorities to have at least one electronic voting machine per polling location for blind or visually impaired voters. Neither bill was passed. The Association supports efforts to remove barriers and allow all eligible citizens to vote and to participate in the political process. The Association supported both bills.

HB 738 (Rone) and HB 842 (Hill) would have eventually disallowed electronic voting machines and other emerging technologies that can help disabled and visually impaired voters. Neither bill was passed. The Association believes that the human and civil rights of individuals with disabilities must be protected. Missouri NEA also opposes barriers that keep eligible citizens from voting and being politically active and thus opposed both bills.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCE (TIF) REFORM

SB 22 (Koenig) would have made several changes regarding tax increment finance (TIF) projects. The Association supported this effort to improve TIF regulations by better defining and focusing the situations where TIFs can apply and ensuring a third party does the evaluation of whether the proposed project meets those definitions, rather than the developers.

SUPERINTENDENT SHARING

HB 151 (Shields) would have provided additional state aid for school districts that share superintendents, but the bill did not pass.

FINES AND SCHOOL FORMULA

HB 679 (Dinkins) would have removed increases in the amount received from a particular fine ordered under a particular environmental case in Iron County. This bill would have allowed the district to receive a net financial benefit from the receipt of fines ordered by local courts. However, the bill did not pass.

SPECIAL EDUCATION EXTRA COST FUNDING

HB 64 (Pike) would have revised the calculation of aid relating to the cost of serving high-needs students, but the bill did not pass. The bill ensures that a district's per pupil average used as a basis for the high-needs funding is not skewed by the high cost of serving those students. The Association supports the bill.

MAKEUP DAYS FOR HALF-DAY SCHOOL PROGRAMS

HB 872 (Pike) would have specified that make up day requirements for half-day preschool programs are proportional to the program's schedule, but the bill did not pass. The Association supports the bill.

Legislative Update 2020

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