

# MSTA ACTION

THE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN OF THE MISSOURI STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION • PLEASE POST



## House Budget Committee removes teacher salary grant program, adds Career Ladder Funding

When Governor Parson outlined his budget priorities for the next fiscal year, he included \$22 million to help districts ensure that every teacher in Missouri would make at least \$38,000. He outlined a voluntary program where the state would reimburse districts 70 percent of the cost difference between current salaries and \$38,000. Districts would provide 30 percent of the cost difference between current salaries and \$38,000. DESE estimates that there are currently 8,500 full-time teachers not making \$38,000. A review of the MSTA Salary Survey shows that there are 440 school districts without a starting salary of at least \$38,000.

Because of many expressed concerns, the House Budget Committee eliminated the Governor's grant program from the budget.

During the House Budget Committee's mark-up process, **Rep. Nurrenbern** offered an amendment to move this \$22 million to restart the Career Ladder Program. The committee approved this change with broad bipartisan support. As the budget process moves forward, there is now funding available for a Career Ladder Program. **MSTA Adopted Resolutions support reinstating state funding of the Career Ladder Program.**

One other item added to the K-12 budget was a \$300,000 for an after-school program for St. Louis Public Schools.

The budget bills will move to the House floor next week, and once approved move to the Senate where they will continue their work to craft a state budget.

## House gives approval to Career Ladder Bill

In debate on the floor of the House, a bill that would modify the Career Ladder Program was given first round approval. **HB2493 (R. Black)** expands on the criteria for Career Ladder admission and stage achievement. Under this bill, teachers would be eligible for Career Ladder after two years of teaching.

The bill also adds additional responsibilities that may count toward Career Ladder hours. Those additional responsibilities include volunteer efforts outside of compensated hours such as: uncompensated coaching, supervising,

and organizing extracurricular activities; serving as a mentor or tutor to students; additional teacher training or certification; or assisting students with college or career preparation. The bill also increases the state percentage of funding for salary supplements for Career Ladder from 40 percent to 60 percent.

The House adopted an amendment to add **HB2445 (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 bill will need one more vote before it is sent to the Senate.

## Senate approves bill to develop plans for students with epilepsy or seizure disorders

The Senate approved **SB710 (Beck)** which establishes "Will's Law," requiring individualized health care plans to be developed by school nurses in public schools and charter schools. These plans will be developed in consultation with a student's parent or guardian, appropriate medical professionals that address procedural guidelines and specific directions for emergency situations relating to a student with epilepsy or seizure disorder. Plans are to be updated at the beginning of each school year and whenever necessary. Notice must be given to any school employee that may interact with the student, including symptoms of epilepsy or seizure disorders and any medical and treatment issues that may affect the educational process.

All school employees are required to be trained every two years in the care of students with epilepsy and seizure disorders. Training must include an online or in-person course of instruction approved by the Department of Health and Senior Services. School personnel must obtain a release from a student's parent to authorize the sharing of medical information with other school employees as necessary. The bill will now go to the House for consideration.

## House Pensions Committee approves bill to improve benefits for PSRS members

**HB2161 (Dinkins)** was voted do pass out of the House Pensions Committee.

The bill would allow retirees who work 32 or more years to receive a 2.55% factor when figuring their retirement benefits. A similar benefit was available to PSRS retirees allowing people working 31 or more years to earn the 2.55% factor, but it expired in 2014. The proposal being considered this year would raise the years of experience necessary to receive the 2.55% factor. This bill is intended to reward teachers who work more years by increasing their monthly retirement benefit, while saving the retirement system money. The most recent actuarial analysis of this legislation, performed by the firm PricewaterhouseCoopers, shows a savings of \$21.1 million per year.

## House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee presented with bill on differential pay

MSTA testified against **HB1770 (E. Lewis)**, which would remove the requirement that salary schedules adopted by a district's board of education apply to all teachers in the district, allowing school boards to include differentiated placement of teachers on the salary schedule for hard-to-staff subject areas or schools. No modifications to the identification of hard-to-staff subject areas/schools, or both, for the purpose of placement on the salary schedule would be allowed to result in the demotion of a teacher in the salary schedule. **MSTA testified in opposition based on MSTA Adopted Resolutions.** MSTA supports competitive, equitable salaries for all staff.

Also heard in committee was **HB2745 (Reedy)**, which would require the State Board of Education to develop a driver education course offered in public and charter schools to pupils in grades 10 through 12. Before graduation, students must complete the driver education course.



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## Senate holds hearing on open enrollment bill opposed by MSTA

The Senate Education Committee heard **HB1814 (Pollitt)**. MSTA remains opposed to **HB1814** based on **MSTA Adopted Resolutions** that support each local school district developing a written policy for transfer and assignment of students within a district and to any other school district.

**HB1814 (Pollitt)** creates open enrollment throughout Missouri. The legislation claims to create a “voluntary” system, yet it is only voluntary as to whether a district accepts students. If a transfer student decides at any time to return to the resident district, the resident district is again responsible for the education of that student.

MSTA has the following concerns regarding the legislation:

**School Consolidation: HB1814** will lead to school consolidation at worst, and lead to many districts struggling to maintain the educational programs they already offer such as FFA, choir, band and athletic programs.

**Special Education: HB1814** allows districts to deny students based on special education status if the transfer district determines they cannot meet the special education student’s needs, allowing districts to discriminate against special needs students.

**Financial Implications/Anti-Collaboration: HB1814** will pit schools against one another to compete for students and the funding associated with them. Funding that would normally go toward student learning would be spent on recruiting students and competing with neighboring districts.

Six bills relating to curriculum and instruction were also presented together to the committee. The bills included were: **SB638 (Onder)**, **SB645 (Koenig)**, **SB676 (Brown)**, **SB694 (Brattin)**, **SB734 (Hoskins)** and **SB1184 (Thompson Rehder)**.

## Senate Education Committee Executive Session Summaries

**SB800 (Hegeman)** currently exists with the voluntary early learning quality assurance report program as a pilot program and expires on August 28, 2022. The bill removes the designation of the program as a pilot and extends the program until August 28, 2028. **Voted do pass.**

**SB806 (Hoskins)** requires school districts with a certain number of gifted students to establish a state-approved program for such students. **Voted do pass.**

**SB818 (Bernskoetter)** authorizes the Gasconade R-II school district, which crosses county boundaries, to use the county that yields the highest dollar value

value modifier under the school foundation formula. **Voted do pass.**

**SB957 (Bean)** establishes the “Workforce Diploma Program” to assist students in obtaining a high school diploma and in developing employability and career and technical skills. **Voted do pass with committee substitute.**

**SB958 (Bean)** provides that a school’s agent, trained by a nurse and contracted for the transportation of school children, must have the discretion to administer an epinephrine auto syringe on any student who is having a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction. It also modifies a definition of school bus to include only vehicles designed for carrying more than 10 passengers. **Voted do pass with committee substitute.**

**SB1051 (Brattin)** would give students the ability to earn credit through extended learning opportunities, which the act defines as out-of-classroom learning experiences approved by a local school board or a charter school to provide enrichment, career readiness skills, or other approved educational opportunities. **Voted do pass with committee substitute.**

**HB1552 (Richey)** would change funding for charter schools in Missouri. **Voted do pass with committee substitute.**

## House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee Executive Session summaries

**HB2008 (Schwadron)** garnered a large amount of attention for the burdensome requirements contained in the original bill regarding posting individual lesson plans and supplemental materials online. The bill was amended in committee to only require posting of approved school curriculum. Any changes to the curriculum would be required to be updated on the website within 30 days with notice provided to parents. Any curriculum that is trademarked or copyrighted may not be widely disseminated to the public. **Voted do pass with committee substitute.**

**HB1753 (Basye)** was passed out of committee as an omnibus education bill. The original bill created a new program that would allow the Commissioner of Education to approve and authorize up to four pilot recovery high schools to be established and operated by individual public school districts or groups of such districts.

Recovery high schools shall serve as an alternative public high school setting and recovery program for students in recovery from substance use disorder or substance dependency, or such a condition along with co-occurring disorders as described in the bill, who would academically and clinically benefit from placement in the recovery high school and who are committed to working on their recovery.

The bill was expanded noncontroversial bills that have been previously approved by the committee. **Voted do pass with committee substitute.**

**HB2152 (Henderson)** allows school innovation teams to submit a plan to the State Board of Education for a state innovation waiver for a variety of purposes. Plans must include the provision of law for which the waiver is being requested, as well as demonstrate the necessity of the waiver, provide measurable performance targets and goals, and demonstrate support for the plan, along with additional requirements as provided in the bill.

School innovation waivers are only effective for three years, beginning the school year following the approval and may be renewed. Only one waiver may be in effect per school at a time, and specific restrictions to statutory requirements relating to school start date, teacher certification, teacher tenure, or any requirement imposed by federal law may not be included in the waiver. **Voted do pass with committee substitute.**

**HB2445 (Sassmann)** authorizes certain school districts in multiple counties to use the county that yields the highest dollar value modifier under the school foundation formula. **Voted do pass with**

## Take Action

MSTA has many strong leaders that are passionate about advocacy, but even small actions by many people can make a difference. Advocacy can take many different forms: making a phone call, sending an email, sharing MSTA Action with your coworkers, being involved in a political campaign or discussing current education issues with your friends and families. To stay on top of the most critical issues, sign up for MSTA’s Rapid Response program. When it comes to education in Missouri, there are no greater experts than the members of MSTA.

