

# MSTA ACTION



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

## Senate Committee Approves Version of Budget

The Senate Appropriations Committee completed their work on crafting the FY24 state operating budget. The Senate's version of the budget includes funding approved by the House to continue the efforts made last year to improve educator salaries by continuing the teacher baseline salary grant program as well as full funding for the foundation formula and transportation reimbursement.

The Senate committee removed language relating to prohibitions on programs associated with diversity, equity and inclusion and \$4.5 million was placed back in the budget for Missouri libraries. The budget now moves to the full Senate, then on to a conference committee to work out any differences between the two chambers. The legislature must approve the state budget by May 5th.

## House Bills Include Provisions Relating to Education

As the legislative session moves into the final three weeks, provisions have been added as the bills move through the process. The following are a few bills which now include language related to education.

**HB934 (Hovis)** and **HB155 (O'Donnell)** both deal with retirement issues and now include a provision to help speech implementers and speech-language pathology assistants in making sure that their retirement with PSRS does not change due to a change in the way certifications are issues for these positions.

**HB471 (J. Black)** is a bill designed to allow for performance bonuses for state employees. It now includes a provision to allow school districts to adopt written policies describing criteria, to be approved by their school boards, allowing exceptional employment achievement payments in contracts between school districts and individual district employees. This bill also allows the board of education of a school district to include differentiated placement of teachers on the salary schedule to increase compensation for teachers in hard-to-staff subject areas or hard-to-staff schools. Each school district that includes differentiated placement of teachers on the district salary schedule shall submit an annual report to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The contents of the report are specified in the bill.

**HB669 (Copeland)** is a bill that helps teachers and school districts when it comes to criminal records checks of employees. Currently, qualified entities (school districts) receive Rap Back notifications for individuals as long as the individual has had a Missouri and national criminal record review completed within the previous six years. These entities get updated information so the agency or entity can tell if the person who is applying or is employed has any changes in criminal record. Currently, fingerprints have to be renewed every six years. This bill removes that provision. We are the only state that has the six-year renewal.

**HB1108 (Hicks)** is a wide-ranging public safety bill that includes a provision affecting schools.

A provision was added to require a school district to have bullet-resistant doors and windows on all first-floor entryways and bullet-resistant glass for each exterior window large enough for an intruder to enter through. Beginning in the 2024-25 school year, money from the Classroom Trust Fund must be spent on installing these safety measures until they are all implemented.

## House Committee Passes Omnibus Education Bill

**SB4 (Koenig)** narrowly passed out of the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee. The bill approved by the Senate would have created a portal for curriculum and other information at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The committee approved a version that instead requires school districts to report information to DESE to be maintained on a statewide website and included on a report card.

The items that must be sent from each district to be included in the DESE database on a report card include: information for all curricula such as the title of each textbook, course outlines, and reading lists at least thirty days before the beginning of each semester in which the material will be taught; school building level and district academic performance information of the percentage of all students scoring at the proficient level or higher on all assessments administered under MAP; the percentage of students in each reportable subgroup including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and English language learners scoring at the proficient level or higher on all assessments under MAP; growth scores

in ELA and in math measured against the national normal curve equivalent; and financial data.

Language from the previous version that created a Parents' Bill of Rights was largely unchanged. The rights outlined in the bill include many policies already adopted by districts across the state. The bill requires that parents have access to information regarding their child's records and materials provided to their child including curricula, books, and other instructional materials. Also mostly unchanged was language relating to the teaching of divisive concepts, the bill was amended to be more specific and avoid unintended consequences of language that was broad.

The bill requires that all school-issued electronic devices must implement technology solutions that prohibit students' access to inappropriate material, but language that would have prohibited videos that could have included instructional videos was removed from the bill. The committee also included language from **HB1087 (Byrnes)** that would create the Missouri Childhood Hero Act. The legislation would prohibit schools from adopting a zero-tolerance disciplinary policy. A new section of law that would be included in the legislation would designate an affirmative statement as a Teacher's Bill of Rights that relate to professional conduct of other staff as well as safety in classrooms. This language is similar in concept to **HB192 (E. Lewis)**.

## Contact Your Senator About Open Enrollment

Legislation that would create a transfer procedure for students to attend nonresident districts, **HB253 (Pollitt)**, remains on the Senate calendar and could be brought up for debate at any time.

Grassroots advocacy will make a difference between this bill passing or not, each email, phone call and individual contact with your Senator could make the difference. If you haven't contacted your Senator, it isn't too late.

Open enrollment would negatively impact teachers and students and communities across the state, leading to school consolidation, the closing of schools, and limiting the ability of students to receive a quality and robust education in their local community.

**MSTA opposes legislative actions involving the concept of inter-district choice and open enrollment.**

## Bill to Expand Pre-K Heard in Senate Committee

Currently, children between three and five years old who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch and attend an early childhood education program operated by a school district or a charter school may be included in such district's or charter school's calculation of average daily attendance. The total number of such pupils shall not exceed four percent. This would change under a proposal that was heard this week in the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee.

**SB495 (Eslinger)** would expand this to include foundation formula payments to school districts for all students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch and who attend a pre-K program operated by a school district in the year prior to their kindergarten enrollment. Three-year-old pupils and other pupils who are more than one year prior to kindergarten enrollment eligibility, who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, and who attend such early childhood education programs shall be included in a district's or charter school's calculation of average daily attendance under existing law.

The goal of this bill is to provide opportunities for children to be ready to enter kindergarten, while providing foundation formula payments to school districts that are able to expand pre-K programs to meet the needs in their community. **MSTA testified in support of the legislation.**

## Retirement Board Holds April Meeting

The Public School & Education Employee Retirement Systems of Missouri Board of Trustees met on Monday April 17. It was announced at the meeting that Sharon Kissinger had resigned from the Board. Mrs. Kissinger was appointed in 2019 by Gov. Mike Parson and relied on her extensive financial background to serve PSRS/PEERS members. The position will remain vacant until the governor makes a new appointment to the Board.

Jason Steliga, teacher from Park Hill South High School was elected to serve as chair of the Board, and Beth Knes of Weldon Spring was elected to serve as Vice Chair. Other business at the meeting included investment education on private equity and private credit as well as a management report regarding the member services information center.

The meeting was adjourned after a legislative update from PSRS/PEERS staff and government relations consultants.

## Bill Summaries

### Senate

#### Executive Session

**SB508 (B. Brown)** would allow for school board members to be subject to recall from office if a petition is signed by at least ten percent of the voters who voted in the most recent school board election and certain conditions are met. **Voted do pass.**

### House

#### Elementary and Secondary Education

**HB1087 (Byrnes)** creates the "Missouri Childhood Hero Act" and requires that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education develop a model policy that each school district must adopt by the 2023-24 school year to address bullying and school discipline. The policy must prohibit zero-tolerance disciplinary policies for any student that is a victim of bullying or is defending a victim of bullying. The bill requires that the policy outline annual mandatory training for district employees and volunteers that includes training in the defense of justification as well as age-appropriate training for students that provides education and information regarding the school's antibullying policy. The school district administration is required to implement programs and instruct school counselors, school social workers, licensed social workers, mental health professionals, and school psychologists to educate students who are victims of bullying on techniques to overcome bullying's negative effects.

The techniques shall include but are not limited to: (1) Cultivating the student's self-worth and self-esteem; (2) Teaching the student assertive and effective self-defense; (3) Helping the student develop social skills; (4) Encouraging the student to develop an internal focus of control; or (5) Teaching the pupil nonconfrontational methods for avoiding conflict.

**HB1087** requires school administration to report monthly to the school board all acts of bullying, discipline for bullying, as well as all other disciplinary referrals. School boards must review the monthly report in a closed meeting and address concerns related to reported incidents within 30 days. Each school district must establish criteria that annually acknowledges any student in the district who has taken positive steps to resolving conflict through a nonphysical confrontation and designate the student as a Missouri Childhood Hero. The bill provides immunity from liability for school district employees and volunteers who intervene in an incident of school violence, violent behavior, or criminal actions against any pupil that is a victim of bullying.

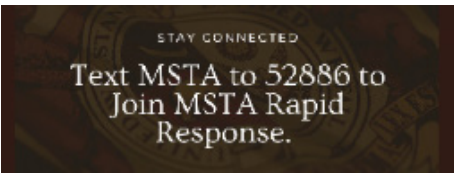
### Executive Session

**HB1163 (Peters)** requires schools to implement parental consent procedures for students with an IEP. Written parental consent shall be obtained and maintained for initial placement, annual placement, or other revisions to a student's IEP. **Voted do pass.**

**HB883 (Cupps)** renames health education "health and family education." The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will convene a work group to develop academic performance standards that contains educators, representatives from DESE, and nonprofit organizations with a focus on public health, parenting, and social services. The State Board of Education shall adopt and implement the performance standards relating to health education for the 2024-25 school year. **Voted do pass with committee substitute.**



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P.O. Box 458, Columbia, MO 65205  
(800) 392-0532 > www.msta.org

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