

MSTA ACTION

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



MSTA supports bill to improve career and technical education

MSTA testified in support of **SB386 (Eslinger)** that would make improvements to Career and Technical Education. If passed, this bill would require the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Career and Technical Advisory Council, to develop a statewide plan establishing the minimum requirements for a Career and Technical Education (CTE) Certificate. The statewide plan is required to match workforce needs with appropriate educational resources.

This bill would retain local control as each local school district shall determine the curriculum, programs of study, and course offerings based on student needs and interests and the requirements of the statewide plan.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will convene work groups from each CTE program area. These work groups are required to develop and recommend performance standards or course competencies. DESE will develop written model curriculum frameworks for CTE programs.

Expanding alternative certification proposed

The Senate Education Committee heard a bill this week that would expand alternative certification options for those wanting to receive a certificate to teach.

SB448 (Rowden) would expand

the current law allowing visiting scholars certification to include someone that would be employed as part of an initiative to fill vacant positions in hard-to-staff schools or subject areas. Under current law, the State Board of Education may grant an initial visiting scholars certificate of license to teach to an applicant based on verification from a hiring school district that the applicant will be employed as part of a business education partnership initiative for students in grade or grades not lower than the ninth grade for which the applicant's academic degree or professional experience qualifies them.

Applicants for a visiting scholars certificate are required to have the appropriate and relevant bachelor's degree or higher, occupational license, or industry-recognized credential as well as completion of a background check. The initial visiting scholars certificate shall certify the holder of such certificate to teach for one year. An applicant would be eligible to renew an initial visiting scholars certificate a maximum of two times.

MSTA testified in support of the bill.

House passes gifted education mandate

The House gave approval to **HB306 (Griesheimer)** which requires school districts and charter schools to establish a state-approved gifted program if 3 percent or more of the students are determined to be gifted. By July 1, 2023, districts and charter schools with average daily attendance of more than 350 students are required to have a teacher certificated to teach gifted education.

In districts with an average daily attendance of 350 or less, any teacher providing gifted instruction will not be required to be certified to teach gifted education but must participate in six hours per year of professional development regarding gifted services, paid for by the school district.

An amendment was added to the bill that requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to make rules regarding the minimum GPA requirement to qualify for the A+ grant award that will only consider grade averages that do not

have a negative change to a student's GPA from 2019-20 or 2020-21 due to the impact of Covid19. This change would ensure students maintain eligibility for the A+ program.

The bill will now head to the Senate for consideration.

House Committee hears breastfeeding protection bill for schools

The House Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education heard **HB254 (P. Brown)** that would require school districts to develop a written policy on accommodations for lactating employees, teachers, and students to express breast milk, breastfeed a child, or address other needs relating to breastfeeding in each building. The policy would be required to include accommodations for at least one year following the birth of the employee or student's child. Local districts may elect to extend the accommodations for longer than a year.

The district policy must require each school building to contain suitable accommodations in the form of a room, other than a restroom, for the exclusive use of breastfeeding or to express breast milk. The room must be near a sink with running water and a refrigerator for breast milk storage. The room must also have a door that may be locked for privacy, a work surface and a chair, and electrical outlets. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education must develop a model policy for districts to use.

MSTA testified in support of the legislation. MSTA adopted resolutions support districts adopting policies that allow for release time and appropriate accommodations for breastfeeding/pumping. Each building should be proactive in identifying an appropriate location and plan for a schedule that supports nursing mothers. A similar bill, **SB76 (Beck)** has had a hearing and was **voted do pass** from the Senate Education Committee.



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Bill Summaries

House

Elementary and Secondary

HB743 (Wiemann) modifies the trauma informed school initiative to require participating schools to keep a record of specific incidents and to inform parents within 48 hours of a child's removal from a classroom due to an outburst.

HB1381 (Shields) establishes the Blind Students' Rights to Independence, Training, and Education Act or the "BRITE Act." The bill requires blind children to have an individualized education plan, that shall specify results obtained from evaluations on reading and writing skills and should include the need for instruction in Braille or the use of Braille. All instruction in Braille reading and writing shall be sufficient to allow a student to effectively and efficiently communicate at an appropriate age level. The bill includes additional guidance for the instruction of Braille and the use of nonvisual accessible assistive technology. The bill provides direction to school districts regarding accessible assistive technology and requires a school district to provide duplicative accessible assistive technology to be used in a blind student's home without requiring payment or family assumption of liability for loss or damage. The bill requires districts to perform an orientation and mobility evaluation to be conducted by certified individuals and provides guidance on the instruction for orientation and mobility, and districts may not limit a student's instruction in the home, school, or community and provide transportation in the preferred mode of the instructor. The bill requires educators hired to teach Braille, accessible assistive technology, and orientation and mobility to hold a valid certificate as outlined in the bill. The bill requires school districts to comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act even during declared emergencies, to bear the cost of any required eye report, and to develop nonvisual accessibility policies to reduce or eliminate common barriers for the blind.

HB254 (P. Brown) requires DESE to develop a model policy, by January 1, 2022 relating to accommodations for breastfeeding. See earlier story. **MSTA testified in support.**

HB368 (Gregory) modifies current law regarding reading intervention programs and establishes reading success plans. Each local school district and charter school shall have on file a policy for reading success plans for pupils in grades kindergarten through four, rather than through grade three which is current law. Each policy shall be aligned with the guidelines developed by DESE for reading success plans. Authority to develop guidelines to assist school districts and charter schools in formulating policies for reading intervention plans is transferred from the State Board of Education to DESE. Any guidelines for instruction must meet the needs of the student by ensuring that instruction is explicit, systematic, diagnostic, and is based on phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Frequent assessments are required to measure student progress. Each local school district and charter school is required to include in an individual pupil's reading success plan, individual and small group reading development activities. The plan shall be developed after consultation with the pupil's parent or legal guardian. Each school district and charter school shall administer a reading assessment or set of assessments to each student within the first 30 days of school for grades one through four, and by January 31 for kindergarten, unless a student has been determined in the previous school year to be reading at grade level or above. The reading success plan shall be provided in addition to the core reading instruction provided to all students. Any K-4 student who exhibits a deficiency in reading at any time, based upon local or statewide screening assessments shall receive an individual reading success plan no later than 45 days after the identification of the deficiency. This plan must be created by the teacher and other pertinent school personnel, along with the parent or legal guardian, and shall describe the evidence-based reading improvement services the student shall

receive. The reading success plan shall specify if a student was found to be at risk for dyslexia in the statewide dyslexia screening requirement or if the student has a formal diagnosis of dyslexia. This bill specifies that, beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, students who are not reading at grade level by the end of the second grade shall receive appropriate reading intervention to remedy the student's specific reading deficiency. Each school district and charter school shall conduct a review of student reading success plans for all students who are not reading at grade level by the end of the second grade and shall address additional support services needed to remedy the areas of deficiency. School districts and charter schools are required to provide an appropriate acceleration for any student not reading proficient or above on a local or statewide third grade reading assessment and has a reading success plan. Currently, each student for whom a reading success plan has been designed shall be given another reading assessment to be administered within 45 days of the end of the student's fourth-grade year. If such student is determined to be reading below third-grade level, the student shall be referred for an evaluation for an IEP and the district shall provide appropriate intensive structured literacy instruction on a one-to-one individualized basis. If the student does not qualify for an IEP under the state guidelines for qualification, the student shall continue to receive appropriate intensive structured literacy instruction on a one-to-one individualized basis until the student is reading at grade level. If the student is still not reading at grade level upon completion of the sixth grade, the school district or charter school shall continue to provide a reading success plan to be implemented during the regular school day until such time as the student is reading at grade level, or upon graduation from high school. Each school district or charter school are required to offer summer school reading instruction to any student with a reading success plan. Districts may fulfill the requirement through cooperative arrangements with neighboring districts or virtual schools.

The parent or legal guardian of any student who exhibits a deficiency in reading or has screened positive for the characteristics of dyslexia shall be notified in writing no later than 30 calendar days. This bill requires the board of each school district or charter school to post, by September 1 of each year the number and percentage of all students grades three through eight; by building, scoring at each proficiency level on the English language arts statewide assessment; by building, in each demographic category scoring proficiency level on the English language arts statewide assessment; by district, scoring at each proficiency level on the English language arts statewide assessment; and by district, in each demographic category scoring at each proficiency level on the English language arts statewide assessment. The department is also required to report the information in a state-level summary to the State Board of Education, the public, the Governor, and the Joint Committee on Education by October 1 of each year.

Executive Session

HB64 (Pike) currently, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will reimburse school districts for the costs of special education for high-needs children with an Individualized Education Program exceeding three times the current expenditure per average daily attendance as calculated on the district annual secretary of the board report for the year in which the expenditures are claimed. The bill states that any money reimbursed to a school district, with 500 or less students, is excluded from such calculation. This bill specifies that a school district shall submit the cost of serving any high-needs student with an IEP to DESE. **Voted do pass.**

HB465 (Pike) requires that beginning in the 2021-22 school year the optional, professional development training in youth suicide awareness and prevention, contain at least one unit relating to stress management strategies for students and faculty. **Voted do pass.**

HB872 (Pike) beginning with the 2021-22 school term a school district's half day education program will only make up days or hours of school that are required of the district due to inclement weather on a proportional basis. **Voted do pass.**

Senate

HB624 (Richey) establishes the Show Me Success Diploma Program as an alternative pathway to graduation for high school students. Students may earn the Show Me Success Diploma beginning at the end of a student's 10th grade year. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is required to develop detailed requirements for students to become eligible for the Show Me Success Diploma. Students who earn a Show Me Success Diploma may elect to remain in high school. A student who earned the diploma may instead enroll in a qualifying postsecondary educational institution. For each student enrolled in such an institution, an amount equal to 90 percent of the pupil's proportionate share of the state, local, and federal aid that the district or charter school receives for the student will be deposited into an account that lists the pupil as the beneficiary. The bill establishes the Competency-Based Education Task Force to study and develop competency-based education programs in public schools. The Task Force members will be appointed before October 31, 2021: two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker, two members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tem, four members appointed by the Governor. The Commissioner or his or her designee shall also serve on the Task Force. The members of the Task Force will represent the geographic diversity of the state. A report shall be presented to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President Pro Tem of the Senate, the Joint Committee on Education, and the State Board of Education by the first of December annually.

SB166 (Arthur) would not allow a student to attend summer school classes in more than one district concurrently during summer school.

SB352 (Koenig) would allow a parent or guardian to file a formal objection to any school policy, practice, or procedure which applies to the parent, guardian, or his or her child, including instructional materials or methods not required by state law with the local school board. Within thirty days of receipt of the objection, the school board shall issue a response denying the parent's objection or describing an implementation plan to immediately exempt the child from the policy, practice, or procedure. Parents and guardians may appeal a school board's denial by filing such appeal with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education within fifteen days of the issuance of the denial. A parent or guardian shall be awarded one thousand five hundred dollars or the total amount of the parent or guardian's contributions to local property taxes in the preceding year, whichever is greater, if the school district fails to show by clear and convincing evidence that it responded as required by the bill. Such award may only be used for the child's educational expenses.

SB386 (Eslinger) Requires the State Board of Education to develop a statewide plan for minimum requirements for career and technical education certificates. See earlier story. **MSTA testified in support.**

SB448 (Rowden) modifies requirements for a visiting scholars certificate of license to teach. See earlier story. **MSTA testified in support.**