



# MSTA ACTION

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

## Budget Heads to Conference Committee

The Missouri Senate completed work on their version of the FY2024 state operating budget. The Senate-approved version of the budget includes almost \$50 billion in spending from state general revenue, federal and other funds. Items impacting education that were approved by the Senate include concurring with the House on fully funding the foundation formula with over \$4 billion and \$346 million for K-12 student transportation. Both chambers agreed on \$55 million for pre-K expansion while the Senate allocated an additional \$81 million for increased rates for childcare providers.

Both chambers agreed to fund the Teacher Baseline Salary Grant program, but the House funded the program with \$21 million requiring a 70% state funded and 30% local funded program. The Senate allocated \$29 million to make the program 100% state funded and does not require a local district match to raise teacher salaries. The Career Ladder program will be funded in the next fiscal year, with expanded funding that was agreed to by both chambers. After over a decade of being dormant and legislative changes made last session to how the program would work, the current state budget has \$37 million for the restarted program. The FY24 budget will see a significant increase in funding and include over \$69 million. The increase is designed to attract more schools to participate in the voluntary program.

Each chamber included almost \$2.5 million to support local school districts and teacher preparation programs with Grow Your Own programs that encourage efforts for recruiting students to enter the teaching profession. The House version of the budget included \$1.3 million for a massive state database of curriculum that would be controlled by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Senate did not include funding for this proposal. Other differences between the two legislative bodies include the Senate replacing \$4.5 million in state funding for libraries that had been removed by the House, and the Senate removing language that would have restricted any expenditure of state funds associated with diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Senate's version of the state budget includes over \$4.2 billion more than the version approved by the House, leaving \$2 billion in unspent funds for future appropriation.

Both the House and Senate have voted to send the bill to a conference committee to work out differences in the budget that were approved by each legislative body. Each chamber will appoint members to bring a final product to be approved that will make up the FY24 budget. The legislature must complete their work on the budget by Friday May 5th at 6:00 p.m.

## Four Day Week Bill Heard in House Committee

**MSTA testified in opposition to SB411 (B. Brown)** in the House General Laws Committee. The bill includes language that would change the ability for locally elected school boards to adopt a 4-day school calendar. It would require school districts located wholly or partially in charter counties or cities with more than 30,000 inhabitants to adopt a school calendar with a minimum school term of 174 school days and 1,044 hours of actual pupil attendance. Districts in these areas could only adopt a 4-day school week by submitting to the voters of the school district a ballot measure to approve the change. Under the language in the bill, the change would take effect for the 2024-25 school year. The change in calendar policy would impact districts that cover any of the following counties and cities: St. Louis County, Jackson County, St. Charles County, Jefferson County, Clay County, Kansas City, St. Louis City, Springfield, Columbia, Independence, Lee's Summit, Joplin, Jefferson City and Cape Girardeau. **MSTA opposes this change in locally elected school boards determining their school calendar. MSTa Adopted Resolutions support a school calendar being made by a local school board with input from teachers and other school employees.**

**SB411** would allow students in a newly defined FLEX school to participate in public school activities. The bill creates a definition for a "Family-Led Educational eXperience (FLEX) school." FLEX schools meet the criteria for home school but applies to students who participate in the Missouri empowerment scholarship accounts voucher program or activities offered by a public school district.

**SB411** also includes language from **SB122 (May)** that allows students to be excused from attendance at school if the child is unable to attend school due to mental or behavioral health concerns, provided that the school receives documentation from a mental health professional and language from **SB34**

**(May)** that would allow a school district or public charter school to offer an elective social studies course relating, but not limited to, the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament of the Bible or the New Testament of the Bible. The bill was scheduled to be voted on by the committee on Thursday, but the vote was postponed and could come up for a vote next week. Members of the House General Laws

Committee include:  
Alex Riley - Chair  
Justin Hicks - Vice-Chair  
Keri Ingle - Ranking Minority Member  
Ben Baker  
Ron Copeland  
Aaron Crossley  
Anthony Ealy  
Brad Hudson  
Doyle Justus  
Tony Lovasco  
Mark Matthiesen  
Aaron McMullen  
Peter Merideth  
Jeff Myers  
Cameron Parker  
Renee Reuter  
Emily Weber

## Changes in Assessment and School Accreditation Approved by House Committee

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee took the first step to change the statewide assessment and accreditation system for students and schools. **HB49 (P.Brown)** would require the State Board of Education to select an existing statewide assessment that satisfies the pupil testing mandates under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. The results from the assessment could only be used for the purpose of meeting federal requirements and for no other purpose.

Local school districts would have the ability to create local assessment systems in conjunction with teachers, administrators, students, parents and the community to reflect a complete picture of student learning. The locally developed assessments must be authentic to student discipline-specific learning, experience and the demonstration of performance-based learning, related to curriculum taught in school, and evaluated and graded in a manner that provides the student with meaningful feedback. Student performance would be reported based upon grade-level equivalence.

Under this proposal the State Board of Education would create a single statewide accountability system for all schools. This system will have overall levels whether the annual school performance is considered “Excellent,” “Good,” “Satisfactory,” or “Needs Improvement.”

Finally, the bill changes district accreditation. The State Board of Education would recognize two national school accreditation agencies from which any district may seek to obtain accreditation. Any district that options accreditation from at least one of the identified national school accreditation agencies would be considered to have full accreditation status.

## Senate Holds Hearing on House Education Omnibus Bill

The House has sent the Senate an education bill that includes many different provisions. This week the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee had a hearing on **HB497 (E.Lewis)** that started as a bill that modifies the existing “Urban Flight and Rural Needs Scholarship Program” by changing the name to the “Teacher Recruitment and Retention State Scholarship Program” and ended as a bill including many different provisions.

Provisions of the existing scholarship program are modified, including increasing the maximum number of two-year scholarships from 100 in the 2024 academic year to 300 such scholarships by the 2029-30 school term. Scholarships for 100% of eligible tuition and fees are to be awarded to “eligible students” who agree to teach in “hard-to-staff schools” or “hard-to-staff subject areas” for two years for every year the scholarship is received. The repayment rate of the scholarships for a failure to fulfill is 1% over the prevailing prime rate in effect on January 1st with annual adjustments. The bill includes provisions from other legislation that was filed this session, including:

**HB190 (E.Lewis)** allows school districts to identify hard-to-staff schools and hard-to-staff subject areas and designate a higher placement on the salary schedule when hiring such teachers.

**HB496 (E.Lewis)** enacts several school retirement provisions, including a 2.55% benefit factor for 32 or more years of PSRS service, extending the term of teacher critical shortage work after retirement to a maximum of four years, and modifying the earnings limit for a PSRS retiree that goes back to work in a PEERS position.

**HB116 (Shields)** requires schools to have bleeding control kits available in high-traffic areas of schools.

**HB70 (Dinkins)** allows school staff other than teachers and administrators to serve as school protection officers.

**HB809 (O'Donnell)** requires DESE to

convene a work group to develop academic performance standards for the half-credit course in personal finance required for high school graduation.

**HB483 (Baker)** creates an extended learning policy that would allow students to receive credit for participation in out-of-classroom learning experiences as approved by the State Board of Education, a school board, or a charter school.

**HB669 (Copeland)** eliminates the requirement that schools using the Rap Back program for notifications of law violations must require all employees to undergo an additional fingerprint background check every six years.

**HB529 (J.Black)** removes the cap that is currently in place on the growth of the State Adequacy Target (SAT). Currently there is a 5% cap on the growth of the SAT. Under this legislation the cap would increase 1% per year until 2031-32 when the cap would not exceed 9%.

**HB433 (E.Lewis)** increases the minimum teacher's salary for beginning teachers as well as teachers with a master's degree and 10 years' experience and establishes the “Teacher Baseline Salary Grant Program” in law. The bill also includes language that removes current requirements for preservice teacher programs to require an entry level test before prospective teachers are admitted.

## Bill Summaries

### Senate

#### *Education and Workforce Development*

**HB471 (J. Black)** allows school districts to adopt written policies 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 must submit an annual report to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The bill also allows for additional payments to state government employees according to specific, written criteria, predetermined and approved by the department director in writing, at least one year prior to the exceptional employment achievement. The payments authorized by the bill may not exceed 20% of the employee's base wages or salary and are awarded upon the completion of the retention period in question and not more frequently than annually. The change in law would not apply to any public employee whose salary is set by statute.

**HB715 (H. Kelly)** provides educational funding for children admitted to a licensed residential care facility. The bill outlines payment amounts for both resident and non-resident pupils. The payment amount

for a pupil receiving all such pupil's education in a residential care facility shall be equal to 95% of the average daily attendance share of local and state funding attributable to a student in a resident district or in the nonresident district for any non-resident student. For any resident students that receive less than all their education at a facility the payment amount shall be attributable to the time such education is received. Residential care facilities may also reach a financial agreement with a school district that deviates from the provisions of the bill. The bill adds admittance under a physician's order due to a determination of medical necessity for a diagnosed mental illness to the current reasons for which a school district must provide educational services. This provision applies to both resident and non-resident children and includes the current determination of medical necessity required for an authorization from Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to make payments in lieu of local tax efforts for such children. Currently, domiciliary school districts must pay costs for educational services rendered by a resident district for any child temporarily in a licensed children's hospital. This bill also expands the requirement to include children that are in a psychiatric residential treatment facility.

**SB535 (Fitzwater)** creates the “STEM Career Awareness Activity Fund” for the purpose of establishing a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics activity program for students in grades nine through 12. DESE is required to select a provider to deliver a teacher-led program that involves facilitating a cohort of students to conduct STEM activities at state, national or international competitions. DESE must select a provider that presents data demonstrating the effectiveness of the program. DESE must begin soliciting applications from providers by January 1, 2024, and select a provider by March 1, 2024.

### House

#### *Elementary and Secondary Education*

**SB122 (May)** requires that a child be excused from attendance at school if the child is unable to attend school due to mental or behavioral health concerns, provided that the school receives documentation from a mental health professional.



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(800) 392-0532 > [www.msta.org](http://www.msta.org)

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