

MSTA ACTION



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

Come to the Capitol

By Stacy Blakley,
MSTA State President

Many years ago, as a new teacher, I went to an event not knowing what to expect. I attended my region's Capitol Day. It was definitely outside of my comfort zone and, as often happens when we put ourselves in new situations, I grew! I learned so much about our state government and my MSTA region. I even met Bruce Moe and Steve earned his nickname, Mr. Stacy!

No one can tell your story like you can, and you should! You need to tell your legislators all the great things that are happening in your classroom and how lives are being changed because of your work. They need to know your struggles and how they can make public schools better. Capitol Day is a day for you to meet with YOUR legislators. It is an opportunity to make sure that your voice is heard.

This is not a normal region capitol day as many of us have experienced – it is new and better! I want to encourage you to come to this historic statewide event!

Many people have reached out with questions about how Capitol Day works, I am including that information here in hope that it will help you:

- Wear a school shirt and comfortable shoes.
- Park in the parking garage on Madison Street. It is not free, but if you eat at one of the restaurants that are close, they will validate your parking. Then walk two blocks to the Capitol.
- Our education policy department will provide you with the information you need to speak to your legislators.
- It's okay to come by yourself, we will all meet up in the Rotunda.
- You can go with a group or individually to speak with your legislators.
- Email your legislators now and set up an appointment (you can try to meet with them without an appointment, but you may miss them).

Missouri State Budget

In December, Governor Mike Parson announced the state's Consensus Revenue Estimate (CRE) for Fiscal Year 2024. The annual CRE is a figure that experts use to plan and balance the state budget. It is a forecast of what tax collection may look like for the upcoming year as legislators write Missouri's budget.

"We appreciate House and Senate leadership, our state budget team and other state partners for helping develop this year's revenue estimate," **Governor Parson** said. "In the coming fiscal year, state revenues are expected to grow once again, even after passing the largest state income tax cut in history and returning some of Missourians' hard-earned dollars back to them."

The CRE is based on the assumption that net general revenue collections in FY24 will be \$13.2 billion. This would be a 0.7 percent growth in net general revenue over the estimated revenue for FY23. Budget planners also revised the estimate for the current fiscal year assuming a 1.4 percent increase to \$13.1 billion in net general revenue collections. FY22 general revenue collections increased by 14.6 percent compared to FY21 collections.

In September, the Missouri legislature passed a \$800 million tax cut, but there are still projections that the state budget surplus could exceed \$6 billion, the largest in state history.

State Board of Education

The State Board of Education met on Tuesday, January 10 and received updates on several items from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. There are questions regarding if the move is right for students, and what data is available regarding student achievement.

At the beginning of the meeting, Board President Charlie Shields spoke about his conversations with members of the state legislature and concern about the increased number of districts moving to a four-day school week. There are questions regarding if the move is right for students, and what data is available regarding student achievement.

Commissioner Dr. Margie Vandeven told the department is working on a study. Although initially the four-day week was thought to be a means to reduce costs, it is becoming clearer that districts are using it as a tool to attract and retain quality teachers when they are unable to offer competitive salaries. In 2009, the Missouri General Assembly passed **Senate Bill 291** which allowed for a four-day school week. Locally elected school boards ultimately make the decision on each district's school calendar. In 2018, there were 34 districts on a four-day calendar. There are now 144 Missouri districts operating on a four-day calendar.

In January of 2021, Gov. Mike Parson created the Office of Childhood through executive order, which is now housed in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The office provides a comprehensive approach to childhood care and education. It includes programs related to childcare, home visiting, early learning and early intervention for children birth to age five, as well as after-school programs for school-age children. The Office of Childhood is responsible for overseeing DESE's efforts to expand and improve high quality early learning opportunities. Assistant Commissioner Pam Thomas presented an update on the unified plan for early childhood, as well as the timeline and goals for the office to support Missouri children and families moving forward.

Assistant Commissioner Paul Katnik and Educator Preparation Coordinator Daryl Fridley of the Office of Educator Quality presented an agenda item aimed at increasing appropriately certified educators. The department recommended that the State Board of Education authorize DESE to grant certificates to those test takers who earn a score of at least one Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) below the established qualifying score in the following certification areas: Elementary Mathematics Specialist, Library Media Specialist, Counselor, Building-Level Administrator and Superintendent. The change will take place during the current test window. This is a continuation of the State Board's policy from June and would now apply to all areas of certification. The department believes this change will address staff

shortage systemically and maintain the quality of Missouri educators.

Paul Katnik and Daryl Fridley also gave an update on educator preparation and The Path Forward initiative, which is part of the larger Read, Lead, Exceed literacy initiative. A major goal of the project has been the review and revision of the literacy-related competencies in programs that prepare educators to provide evidence-based instruction to young children. For several months, a small group of Missouri literacy experts (Early Literacy Fellows) have focused on this work. Much of the work is being done due to the passage of **SB681**, although the Department had already begun some initial work prior to passage. The new law requires changes to the literacy expectations of teacher candidates, not only for those who work with young children, but also for educators planning to work in middle school and secondary English Language Arts.

The State Board Meeting concluded with two charter school renewals as well as licensure discipline. The next meeting will be February 7, 2023.

Committees Announced

Senate

Senator Andrew Koenig will serve as the Senate Education and Workforce Development Committee Chair. Senator Koenig represents the 15th district. In addition to his legislative duties, Sen. Koenig is the owner of a construction company that does roofing and painting. He also is a licensed insurance adjuster. Senator Koenig and his family attend West County Assembly of God. A 2001 graduate of Marquette High School, Sen. Koenig received a B.A. in Business Administration from Lindenwood University in 2005. Born Dec. 21, 1982 in St. Louis, Sen. Koenig currently resides in Manchester with his wife, Brooke, and their five children, Jeremiah, Isaac, Gideon, Lily and Levi. They are also foster care parents.

Education and Workforce Development

Chair, Sen. Andrew Koenig
Vice Chair, Sen. Rick Brattin
Sen. Lauren Arthur
Sen. Doug Beck
Sen. Elaine Gannon
Sen. Denny Hoskins
Sen. Greg Razer
Sen. Nick Schroer
Sen. Curtis Trent

Appropriations

Chair, Sen. Lincoln Hough
Vice Chair, Sen. Tony Luetkemeyer
Sen. Lauren Arthur
Sen. Jason Bean
Sen. Rusty Black
Sen. Justin Brown
Sen. Mike Cierpiot
Sen. Sandy Crawford
Sen. Karla Eslinger
Sen. Denny Hoskins
Sen. Karla May
Sen. Holly Thompson Rehder
Sen. Barbara Washington
Sen. Brian Williams

Veterans, Military Affairs and Pensions

Chair, Sen. Bill Eigel
Vice Chair, Sen. Rick Brattin
Sen. Rusty Black
Sen. Elaine Gannon
Sen. Tracy McCreery
Sen. Steven Roberts
Sen. Nick Schroer

House

Representative Brad Pollitt, of Sedalia, will serve as the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee Chair.

In addition to his legislative duties, Rep. Pollitt is the owner and operator of Rocher P. Cattle Company LLC. He previously worked as an educator and administrator for 34 years. Pollitt served as a teacher and coach in North Shelby and Sedalia, a principal in Smithton, assistant superintendent in Knob Noster and superintendent in Sedalia.

Rep. Pollitt received his bachelor's degree from Northeast Missouri State University (now Truman State) and his master's in education from William Woods University. He also received an educational specialist certificate from the University of Central Missouri. Rep. Pollitt resides in Sedalia with his wife, Danette. They have three children: Kevin, Whitney and Brianna. They attend Maplewood Church in Sedalia.

Full House Committee membership will be released next week.

