

MSTA ACTION

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



Governor proposes grant program to raise beginning teacher salaries

On Wednesday, Governor Mike Parson delivered the State of the State Address to a joint session of the Missouri Legislature. This is the time for the Governor to outline his policy and budgetary priorities for the legislative session.

“The future of Missouri — and Missouri families — relies upon children being healthy, safe and ready to learn,” Parson said. “We must continue to invest in our children and their education.”

Although much of his speech outlined Missouri’s successes over the past year, the Governor highlighted that Missouri ranked last in the country for starting teacher pay and that half of Missouri teachers leave within the first five years.

“We are proposing to raise teacher pay in every corner of this state,” Parson said. “By partnering with local school districts, we can increase the baseline salary of new teachers to \$38,000.”

While complete plans of the program were not detailed in the speech, during a hearing of the House Sub Committee Appropriations – Education, the Department of Elementary of Secondary Education briefly outlined the proposal. It appears that this will not be proposed in legislation, but rather the grant program will be included in the budget bill and receive approval if funding is made available from the legislature. Total cost to the state would be \$21.8 million.

This would be a voluntary program where the state would reimburse districts 70 percent of the cost difference between current salary and \$38,000. Districts would provide 30 percent of the cost difference between current salary and \$38,000. DESE estimates that there are currently 8,500 full time teachers in Missouri who are not making at least \$38,000. A review of the MSTA Salary Survey shows that there are currently 440 school districts that do not have a starting salary of at least \$38,000.

Upon questions from committee members, DESE officials agreed that this could lead to salary compression in many districts and would lead to teachers with more years of experience making the same salary as beginning teachers. While DESE

officials agreed with this assessment, they also noted the need for a long-term solution to move beginning salaries forward. MSTA Adopted Resolutions call for a beginning salary of \$40,000, and while this proposal does not quite reach that threshold, it is a very good starting point to build momentum to raise all teacher salaries.

The Governor’s proposed budget also includes flat funding for the foundation formula and school transportation.

Throughout the entirety of the state budget, the Governor is asking for nearly \$12 billion in new spending for the budget year that begins July 1 - much of it fueled by robust tax collections and federal pandemic aid. The state’s total operating budget would jump from \$35 billion to \$47 billion.

Parson also proposes putting away \$281 million into a rainy-day fund to avoid cuts in tighter budget years as Missouri will enter the new fiscal year with nearly \$3 billion in surplus in general revenue. The state is also anticipating a record for future tax collections and billions more in federal aid. The biggest investments are one-time items which could lessen the burden on taxpayers for ongoing expenses, including deferred maintenance and infrastructure costs, making more money available in the future.

State Board of Education adopted legislative priorities

The State Board of Education recently outlined new legislative priorities for the 2022 legislative session. These priorities focus on five areas: educator recruitment and retention; safe and healthy schools; success-ready students and workforce development; early learning and early literacy; and providing access to opportunity.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has been working on educator recruitment and retention efforts over the past several years. MSTA members and staff have served on stakeholder groups providing member surveys and input to advance the voice of professional educators. Regarding recruitment and retention, the State Board advocates for increasing the minimum teacher salary to at least \$35,000 by the

2024-25 school year, the governor announced a new goal of \$38,000 this week. The board also outlined the creation of two workgroups to further address teacher salaries and recruitment/retention issues.

The State Board included priorities relating to early learning and early literacy to support the new Office of Childhood that is now under the department. These priorities include additional funding for Pre-K programs in local school districts. Other items support legislation which would address the state’s digital divide and expand broadband internet access. MSTA Adopted Resolutions support expanding high speed internet access.

A very concerning topic included in the State Board of Education’s priorities is support for open enrollment, allowing students to attend the public school of their choice regardless of attendance boundaries. In states such as Iowa and Minnesota, open enrollment has seen an increase of segregation in urban schools and school district consolidation in rural areas. MSTA Adopted Resolutions support intra-district choice approved by the local school district and oppose legislative actions involving the concept of inter-district choice. In addition to these issues, studies have pointed toward decreased student achievement when students experience increased mobility.

Hours waiver for PSRS/PEERS retirees expired

The temporary waiver on portions of state statutes that limit the number of hours worked and salary earned by PSRS/PEERS retirees while working for covered employers in temporary, part-time and substitute positions expired December 31, 2021. The work after retirement limits began on January 1, 2022 but are not retrospective. Only hours worked starting in January will count toward the PSRS/PEERS work after retirement limits. The State Board of Education, as well as the legislature are continuing to look at opportunities to expand work after retirement, but the current limits remain in place. MSTA Adopted Resolutions support an earnings limit instead of a limit on the number of hours a retiree may work while receiving retirement benefits.

Bill Summaries

House

HB2304 (E.Lewis) provides a new four-year certification method for individuals that want to substitute teach. Applicants for certification must complete a background check, have at least 36 college hours or have completed a 20-hour online training and have a high school diploma or equivalency. An alternative route to certification is provided for qualified individuals with technical or business expertise or Armed Forces experience and a superintendent sponsorship. Substitute certificates will expire if the individual fails to substitute teach for at least five days or 40 hours in a calendar year. No individual under 20 years old may substitute in grades 9-12. The bill also requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop an online substitute training program with 20 hours of training related to subjects appropriate for substitute teaching and authorizes school districts to develop district specific orientations lasting two hours. Beginning January 1, 2023, the bill allows substitutes who apply for a fingerprint background check the opportunity to submit the results in up to five different school districts.

HB1750 (Basye) allows registered voters to file a petition with the school board to add agenda items to any monthly school board meeting. Any agenda item added in this manner shall be taken up by the board following the procedure for such items within three meetings. This bill requires "public officials" including school board members, officers or employees to perform duties specified in state law, or if there is willful neglect or refusal there will be a civil claim for damages.

HB1669 (Seitz) prohibits public schools from requiring students to engage in any form of mandatory gender or sexual diversity training or counseling. The bill also prohibits public school employees from requiring or making concepts part of a course including but not limited to: one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex; an individual's moral character is necessarily determined by the individual's race or sex; and an individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of the individual's race or sex.

Senate

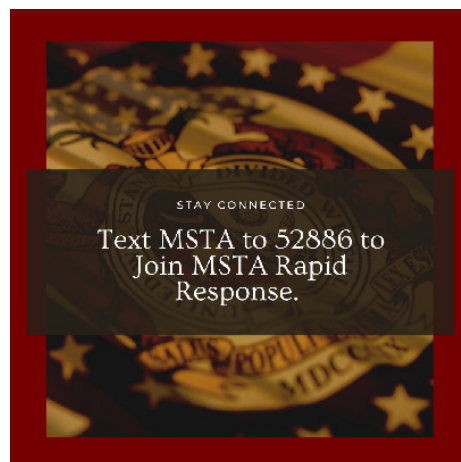
SB650 (Eigel) would allow charter schools to be operated in any school district located within a charter county, as well as in any municipality with a

population greater than 30,000. This includes possible expansion into any school districts in Jackson, St. Charles, St. Louis and Jefferson counties. In addition to any cities in those counties, school districts in the cities of Springfield, Columbia, St. Joseph, Joplin, Jefferson City, Cape Girardeau and Liberty could see charter schools open under this proposed expansion. **MSTA testified in opposition. MSTAs opposes charter school expansion under current laws that fail to address accountability and oversight from members of the community in which they serve.**

Take Action

It is important that MSTAs members make their voices heard and stay in contact with their local elected officials. MSTAs Capitol visits are an opportunity to come to Jefferson City and make an impact. Each visit begins with a briefing by MSTAs Education Policy staff on legislation as well as the state budget, then allows time for members to meet with their legislators. MSTAs members who would like to attend can contact the Education Policy department, or their local field service coordinator. SMSTAs members have their own day to gather at the Capitol, and RMSTAs members can attend with their regions. Further helpful information can be found on the MSTAs website at msta.org/capitol-visits.

MSTAs 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 MSTAs 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 MSTAs's Rapid Response program. When it comes to education in Missouri, there are no greater experts than the members of MSTAs.



2022 MSTAs Capitol visits

All groups meet in the 3rd floor, East Alcove

Jefferson County

Tues., Feb. 22, 9 a.m.

Greater St. Louis

Tues., Feb. 22, 9 a.m.

South Central

Wed., Feb. 23, 9 a.m.

Northwest

Tues., March 1, 9 a.m.

St. Joseph

Wed., March 1, 9 a.m.

Southeast

Wed., March 2, 9 a.m.

Southwest

Tues., March 8, 9 a.m.

Greater Kansas City

Tues., March 8, 9 a.m.

Central

Tues., March 22, 5:15 p.m.

Northeast

Wed., March 30, 9 a.m.

SMSTAs

Wed., April 6, 9 a.m.

RMSTAs

Attend with your regions.

Connect with MSTAs



facebook.com/missouriteachers



instagram.com/missouriteachers



twitter.com/msta



tiktok.com/@missouriteachers



© 2022 Missouri State Teachers Association
P.O. Box 458, Columbia, MO 65205
(800) 392-0532 > www.msta.org

Permission to reprint gladly granted on condition that reprinted materials are credited to MSTAs Action, the legislative bulletin of the Missouri State Teachers Association.