

MSTA ACTION

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State budget includes increased spending on education

The Missouri General Assembly has given approval for a \$45.1 billion state budget to go into effect on July 1. All areas of state government will see additional money due to an unprecedented increase in state revenues and federal funding.

Spending for education will include full funding for programs that have not seen full funding in many years. Approval was given to add an additional \$214 million to fully fund the state portion of student transportation costs for the first time since 1991. Legislators stated that this could be a one-time increase due to the large surplus of state revenues, and this will be difficult to maintain in future years.

The budget also includes \$37 million for the Career Ladder Program. The last time funding was included in the state budget for the Career Ladder Program was 2010. The budget also provides \$21.7 million for a voluntary program to raise minimum teachers' salaries to \$38,000.

This program would be funded with 70% state money and 30% local money to fund the difference between the district salary schedule and \$38,000. There was talk during the budget conference committee to lower the minimum amount to \$34,000 but, with support of the majority of the members serving on the budget conference committee, the amount was restored to \$38,000.

Also included in the final version of the budget is \$25 million for an evidenced-based reading fund to help districts improve literacy in our schools and \$2 million for the Competency Based Education Grant Program. \$50 million was also included for a Close the Gap Program that would allow for direct payments to families of kindergarten through 12 graders to support qualifying educational enrichment activities such as tutoring, extended school day educational programs, academic and arts-related days and summer camps.

The approved budget now goes to Governor Parson for his approval, or he can veto individual line items within the budget.

House and Senate conference meets on SB681 (O'Laughlin)

On Friday May 6, a conference committee comprised of members of the House and Senate met to work out differences between versions passed by each chamber of **SB681 (O'Laughlin)**. When **SB681** passed the Senate, the bill related to improving reading and literacy instruction and the creation of innovation waivers for school districts. The legislature included funds in the FY 2023 budget to implement the reading intervention program as well as competency-based education changes in this legislation. The bill repeals retention requirements for struggling readers and requires schools to provide reading instruction with appropriate evidence-based reading intervention in elementary grades, with assessment and intervention beginning in kindergarten. The bill also requires systematic and explicit interventions for students with characteristics of dyslexia. *See a list of other requirements at msta.org/action.*

On the floor of the House, 19 amendments were added onto the bill, further expanding **SB681** from the original goals of improving literacy and literacy instruction in Missouri schools. These amendments include language that would create an open enrollment program much like what was in **HB1814 (Pollitt)**, which **MSTA opposes**. In total, the House added 54 amendments to this reading bill. The Senate rejected the changes made to the bill by the House and each chamber agreed to a conference committee to work out the changes between each chamber.

The conference committee met Friday and has indicated they will keep nearly 30 different sections in the legislation. The bill most likely will include the underlying reading success legislation among other items.

Discussion during the hearing indicated that **HB1814** will not be included in the conference report. There are several bills supported by MSTa that will likely be included in the conference committee substitute. **HB1928 (Pollitt)** allows provisionally certified teachers an alternative route to achieve their full professional certification beyond the qualifying score on a designated exam, **HB2493 (R. Black)** modifies the Career

Ladder program and **HB2136 (A. Kelley)** relates to suicide prevention.

See a list of items most likely to be included in the conference committee substitute at msta.org/action.

Remaining education bills enter the last week of session

With only one week remaining in the Missouri legislative session, there are still a number of education related issues that are at various points in the approval process. It is not unusual for bills to be loaded with amendments but this year, with fewer Senate bills reaching the House, more large omnibus bills have been created. Below are bills that continue to move with sections that may impact Missouri's education professionals.

SB718 (Washington) must still pass the House and the changes made by the House will need to be approved by the Senate for the bill to pass. The bill began as one paragraph that would have named the third week of September as Historically Black College and University Week in Missouri. The bill is now 26 pages long and addresses a number of issues relating to elementary, secondary and higher education. **SB718** includes dual enrollment reimbursement, career and academic planning for high school students, creation of a computer science task force and workforce diploma program guidelines. Also included is language that would require a public school or charter school with pupils in grades seven through 12, as well as a public institution of higher education that issues pupil or student identification cards, to print the 3-digit dialing code for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline on the cards.

SB982 (Arthur) must still pass the House and the changes made by the House will need to be approved by the Senate for the bill to pass. The bill was filed to modify current law relating to childcare subsidies and childcare facility licensing. It would transfer supervision and implementation authority from the Department of Social Services and the Department of Health and Senior Services to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order, creating the Office of Childhood within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This bill has been greatly expanded to include other issues facing education, including mandates for gifted education and removal of the pilot

designation to the voluntary early learning quality assurance report program.

SB997 (Bernskoetter) must still pass the House and the changes made by the House will need to be approved by the Senate for the bill to pass. The bill was only one page when it was first filed and would have allowed state employees to be paid bi-weekly. The bill was expanded by the committee in the House and is now 78 pages long. It includes many of the same changes that were attached to **SB681 (O'Laughlin)**. **SB997** establishes the Show Me Success Diploma Program and would create a Competency-Based Education Program, the Competency-Based Education Task Force and a competency-based credit system for high school students. The bill creates the Show Me Success Diploma Program and includes changes to reading instruction for future educators and reading interventions for students. DESE would be allowed to grant innovation waivers to school districts in certain circumstances. The bill would also mandate gifted education and include the same changes to reading intervention contained in **SB681**. Also included are changes to substitute teaching certificates, the visiting scholar certification and revisions to the Career Ladder Program that would increase the state percentage of funding and shorten the eligibility window from five years to two.

HB1552 (Richey) includes sweeping changes from the version that was passed by the House. The House has not yet taken action on the bill and will need to either accept the changes that were made in the Senate, including a massive expansion of virtual education that has never been debated by the House, or send the bill to a conference to work out differences.

The original bill was filed to address funding issues for Missouri's charter schools. Under the foundation formula, charter schools received less per pupil than the traditional school districts where they operate. This legislation is designed to address the issue, with the difference now being made up by state funding.

This new funding calculation would not take money away from local school districts where charters currently exist and would only apply to charter schools where they currently operate under law. It is estimated that this change would add an additional \$62 million cost to the foundation formula.

The bill includes sections that are designed to increase accountability for charter schools. Charter schools operating outside of the locally elected school board are required to have governing board members who are residents of the state of Missouri. Charter school management companies will now be required to be nonprofit corporations. The schools must provide lactation accommodations and will be required to publish annual performance reports on their school websites.

A large section of the bill that was

added by the Senate would allow for an expansion of the Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program (MOCAP). **MSTA opposes the virtual education expansion in HB1552. MST A adopted resolutions oppose public funding of virtual education without the oversight of a local education authority.**

HB1814 (Pollitt) was voted do pass out of the Senate Education Committee and has not been turned in to be debated by the full Senate yet. MST A remains opposed to **HB1814** based on MST A Adopted Resolutions that support each local school district developing a written policy for transfer and assignment of students within a district and to any other school district.

HB1856 (Baker) is on the Senate calendar and could be brought up for debate at any time. The bill establishes the Extended Learning Opportunities Act and would allow each local school board and charter school the ability to earn credit through extended learning opportunities, which the bill defines as "out-of-classroom learning experiences approved by a local school board or a charter school to provide enrichment, career readiness skills, or other approved educational opportunities." Extended learning opportunities shall count as credit toward graduation requirements and the achievement of state standards. Students shall submit a written request and proof of completion to a school administrator to receive credit.

HB1858 (Baker) is on the Senate calendar, but it must first be approved by the Fiscal Oversight Committee due to a large financial cost before it may be debated by the Senate. **HB1858** was filed as a Parents Bill of Rights Act and includes additional requirements placed on school districts. This proposed legislation has several flaws, many of which include vague language that is contrary to current state and federal laws. The fiscal note on the bill, which indicates the cost to implement the legislation, estimates an additional \$3.5 million cost to the state if the bill is passed and an additional 18 new state employees would need to be hired.

HB2000 (Schwadron) is on the Senate calendar and could come up for debate at any time. The bill would designate the second week in April as Holocaust Education Week. Holocaust education would include age-appropriate instruction to students in 6th grade and higher.

HB2304 (E. Lewis) was expanded in the Senate Education Committee and is on the Senate calendar but must first be voted out of the Fiscal Oversight Committee due to the costs associated with the bill. When **HB2304** was passed by the House, it included language relating to changes to obtaining a substitute certificate to teach. This bill is similar to the changes that were adopted by the State Board of Education.

Applicants for certification must complete a background check and have

at least 36 college hours or have completed a 20-hour online training. Individuals must also have a high school diploma or equivalent. The bill allows retired teachers to substitute part-time or as a temporary substitute and not have those hours and salary affect their retirement allowance until June 30, 2025.

The Senate Education Committee included many of the same amendments that have been added to other bills that that have been combined the last few weeks. The issues now contained in the bill create the Show Me Success Diploma Program, school innovation waivers and changes to reading intervention and reading instruction. Language in the bill would allow competency-based education in the state, process and procedures for implementation and a task force. The Senate committee substitute includes mandates for schools to provide gifted education programs.

HB2202 (Fitzwater) is on the Senate calendar but must first be voted out of the Fiscal Oversight Committee. This bill is yet another that has been expanded at the end of the session. When the House sent this legislation over from the Senate, it included changes to computer science programming in schools and the computer science task force. In committee, it was expanded and is now substantially similar to **HB2304**.

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