



The Charter School Advocate

Friday, March 2, 2018

WEEK 2 – LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

THANK YOU ...

FIRST, to those of you who contacted your State Senator and State Representative earlier this week to ask them to support the Legislative Auditor conducting a study of the difference in funding for public school students who attend charter schools verses those in traditional districts.

Attached is the memorandum we developed for our initial conversations with legislators and the Legislative Auditor.

We heard from a number of legislators that they received emails or calls and that they were submitting the topic as one that should be undertaken by the Legislative Auditor.

Hopefully, the Study of the Disparity in Funding for Charter School Students will be selected as one of the four or five topics that the Legislature will choose to direct the Office of Legislative Auditor to conduct this year.

SECOND, to those of you who will be participating in the **ANNUAL CHARTER SCHOOL DAY at the CAPITOL** this coming Wednesday, March 7th. We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday.

HOUSE EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION

On Thursday morning the House Education Committee heard two bills that deal with students with special needs.

H.F. 3013 – would require that teachers with Tier 3 and Tier 4 licenses take at least 2 hours of training in each licensee renewal period to enable a teacher to understand dyslexia and how to recognize dyslexia characteristics in students, would require adoption of a rule by the Professional Educator Licensing & Standards Board.

Note: *Decoding Dyslexia MN gave testimony about the findings of an Education Minnesota survey in which over 75% of teachers said they have not received training for teaching students with dyslexia.*

Comment: *Based on the remarks of Committee members it is more than likely that teacher training for dyslexia in some form will be in the Omnibus Education Bill.*

H. F. 2846 – would establish a special education working group to review special education delivery and costs in Minnesota and make recommendation to the 2019 Legislature.

Note: *A significant push for the establishment of this group is the cost of the special education cross-subsidy which the MN School Boards Association testified is now \$679 million statewide.*

Comment: *There was strong support for the establishment of the working group, although the membership of the group is still not finalized. The MN Association of Charter Schools is listed as one of the organizations that would have representation on the working group.*

SENATE EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE

On Thursday, the Senate Education Policy Committee took a different approach to looking at Special Education.

S.F. 2698 - would establish a legislative working group on special education composed of legislators who would review special education delivery and cost containment and submit a report to the legislature in 2019.

Comment: *The organizations that would be part of the House working group under this bill would be groups that would be consulted in the process.*

S.F. 2465 – the Companion Bill to H.F. 3103 which deals with teacher training to be able to identify dyslexia was heard earlier in the week.

S.F.1061 – would change the graduation requirements for social studies by requiring one-half credit in government & citizenship in grades 11 or 12, and a combination of other credits, at least one-half credit in U.S. history, one-half credit in geography, at least one-half credit in world history and one-half credit in economics.

S.F. 2352 – would add transparency requirements in the policies and procedures of the MN High School League.

HOUSE VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

On Monday, the House Veterans Affairs Committee heard H.F.2788 which would require school counselors and teachers who advise students about careers to inform students about careers in the military services.

After reviewing the legislation by **Rep. Dettmer**, Forest Lake (a charter school supporter), we sent a letter to Rep. Dettmer expressing support but posing a couple of questions for clarification. Rep. Dettmer expressed appreciation for the suggestions and indicated that he will be incorporating the suggestions in amendments to the bill as it moves through the process.

If you would like to read the letter just send me a note, eugene@mncharterschools.org.

OTHER PUBLIC POLICY RELATED NEWS

Federal Charter School Grant - in the new five (5) year Federal Charter School Grant MDE dedicated about **\$600K (thousand) for charter school leadership development**. In the grant MDE indicated that the funding would be given to **MN Board of School Administrators** who would facilitate the development of a program for charter school leaders.

MACS raised serious concerns and questions with MDE about the funding going to a Board whose main responsibility is the licensure of school administrators – given the fact that charter school leaders are not required to be licensed, and that the Board has not been in the business of professional development.

The Association is involved in ongoing conversations with the Executive Director of the Board as the Board seeks to implement its responsibilities under the funding it is receiving from the grant.

We will keep you updated ...

ELP