



The Charter School Advocate

Thursday, March 22, 2018

SAFE SCHOOLS

Safe Schools and the safety of students has become a top issue at the Legislature as a result of a number of factors: the recent school shootings and the activism it has sparked among young people, the mental health needs of youth that have not been addressed, the rising opioid crisis, the report that Minnesota ranks *4th in the recruitment of young people into sex trafficking, and the disparity in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of students of color.*

The Governor and legislators have responded to these issues with a range of proposals:

- **Safe Schools Aid**
- **Physical Security Audit Grants**
- **Non- Exclusionary Discipline Policy and Practices**
- **Threat Assessment Teams**
- **Health Curriculum Program Requirements**

1] SAFE SCHOOLS REVENUE/AID

There are basically two (2) different approaches that have been put forth with a number of variations.

One approach would provide funding through the Long-Term Maintenance Revenue Program by dedicating new additional funding to School Safety measures.

The second approach would use the current Safety Levy to provide funding for traditional districts and create a Safe School Aid Program for Charter Schools.

MACS ACTION

The Association is meeting with legislators to ensure that charter schools receive Safe School Revenue/Aid – no matter the manner in which the funding ultimately is provided.

2] PHYSICAL SECURITY AUDIT GRANTS

The grants would provide reimbursement to schools for an audit of the physical safety of the campus and crisis management policies.

MACS ACTION

The Association is meeting with authors and other legislators to ensure that charter schools are eligible for the grant program if it is enacted.

3] NON-EXCLUSIONARY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

There are several proposals – including a definition of Non-Exclusionary Policy – on how these policies and practices would apply to suspension, expulsion and situations where a student withdraws rather than being expelled.

MACS ACTION

The Association is at this point monitoring the various proposals to ascertain the impact on schools as the proposals are refined.

4] THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAMS

Again, there are several proposals – including a definition of threat assessment – with a requirement to establish a threat assessment team in every school or district, as well as a requirement to conduct a threat assessment of a student when a student is suspended, expelled or voluntarily withdraws.

MACS ACTION

The Association has met with the House author of the bill that would require the establishment of a threat assessment team in every school to point out the difficulty that would pose for small schools, given the requirements proposed, liability issues, and the affordability & access to the required training. We will continue to monitor the proposals as they are amended and work through the process.

5] HEALTH CURRICULUM

There are proposals to require health curricula to include “Jake’s Law” – substance misuse prevention instruction, and sexual exploitation prevention instruction. The House Committee debate included whether to mandate or encourage schools to include these issues in the curriculum.

MACS ACTION

The Association is monitoring the issue as we have not taken a position on the issue of whether these curriculum topics should be mandated or encouraged.

Finally, there are a lot of steps yet in the legislative process, so it is not clear which proposals or which versions of the proposals will be in the final bill – but it does seem clear that there will be action on Safe School issues.