



MN ASSOCIATION OF  
CHARTER SCHOOLS

## The Charter School Advocate

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Good Afternoon,

This afternoon the conferees for the House and Senate will meet for the first time to start the process of putting together the Omnibus PreK-12 Education Bill. The Senate Conferees are **Senators Chuck Wiger, Alice Johnson, LeRoy Stumpf, Kevin Dahl**, (DFLers), and **Senator Eric Pratt** (Republican). The House Conferees are all Republicans, **Rep. Jennifer Loon, Sondra Erickson, Ron Kresha, Bob Dettmer and Roz Peterson**.

The first meeting is a walk-through of the side-by-side, which is a comparison of the provisions of the House and Senate bills. The walk-through highlights where the two bills are exactly the same, where there are similar provisions, but different approaches or language, and where there are provisions in one bill, but not the other.

The next step in the process is agreement of conferees on the provisions that are exactly the same, followed by discussion, negotiations, and horse trading on the other provisions.

As you know, this year there are significant differences in both funding levels and what would be funded in the House and Senate bills and both of those bills are significantly lower in funding than what the Governor proposed and is seeking for education.

**In terms of provisions related specifically to charters, the House and Senate Bills both contain:**

**1]** Extensive language and instruction to the Revisor of Statutes on the recodification of the charter school law. MN 124D.10 and 124D.11 would become 124E and the sections of the law would be put in some logical order. (MACS supports)

**2]** Language that students enrolled in a fee-based Prek program may not be counted in the school pupil count for general revenue.

3] Language that makes it clear that charters may combine the Annual Report and World's Best Workforce Reports. ***(MACS supports)***

4] Language that would require a charter school that enrolls PreK students with a disability to comply with certain laws related to the interagency early childhood intervention system as though it were a district.

5] Language that would allow Kindergarten preference for PreK students if the PreK program is free for all participants. ***(MACS opposes as stated in bills – language links enrollment preference to the program being free rather than the student attending free – and it does not address the issue of an enrollment preference for a student who is attending free in a program that has both free and tuition paying students.)***

6] Language regarding the merger of two or more charter schools, the new contract and funding for the merged school. ***(MACS not opposed – however the language needs to be more comprehensive in terms of merger process.)***

**Provisions related specifically to charter schools that are not contained in one or the other bills.**

**The House bill contains the following provisions – but not the Senate bill.**

1] Language to require a school district to provide transportation of non-resident charter school pupils within the district between any scheduled stop or route, if the district provides transportation for the charter school. The district would have the ability to charge a fee for that transportation. ***(MACS supports)***

2] Language that an authorizer may terminate a charter contract of a school that has been in the bottom 10% of all public schools for 3 consecutive years on federal and state accountability measures. If the authorizer chooses not to close the schools, it must submit a public, written justification of the decision. ***(MACS opposes. Authorizers already have authority to close low performing schools under law and through the contract with the school.)***

**The Senate bill contains the following provisions – but not the House bill.**

1] Language that creates an accountability system for charter school contracts for schools that enroll at least 70% students who are eligible to participate in the graduation incentives program under MN Statutes 124D.68, or charters that limit admissions to graduation eligible students. ***(MACS supports)***

2] Language to allow charters to give an enrollment preference for children who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch when the percent of enrolled charter school students is lower than the statewide average or the average of the district in which the charter school is located. ***(MACS not opposed)***

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