



MN ASSOCIATION OF  
CHARTER SCHOOLS

## The Charter School Advocate

Friday, January 23, 2015

Good Morning,

While it was a short week with the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday, it was a busy week at the legislature as the Education Committees in both chambers moved into full gear with hearings on a variety of topics and the pace of bill introductions quickened. On Wednesday, **legislative leaders released the deadlines for action on policy and finance bills**, and announced the break for Passover and Easter (Saturday, March 28 until noon, Tuesday, April 7th).

Next week is **National School Choice Week** – we hope some of you will be able to attend the School Choice Event next Wednesday morning – more details can be found on the [Events Calendar](#) on our website.

Also, next week the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools is expected to release the **2015 Charter School Law Rankings**. As you know, Minnesota's law has been either # 1 or 2 every year since the rankings began.

Finally, we will be reporting more on specific bills of importance in [THE CHARTER CURRENT](#), so we encourage you to subscribe to receive the notice of new blog postings.

### HEADLINES – WEEK OF JANUARY 20 - 23, 2015

- Senate Education Committee Hearings on Facilities Funding Bills
- House Education Innovation and Policy Committee Presentations
- More Bills Introduced on Teacher Preparation, Mentoring & Interstate Reciprocity
- Senate Education Committee Hears Universal Pre-School Bill
- U.S. Senate Education Committee Working on Re-Authorizing ESEA
- Charter School Day at the Capitol

## SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARING ON FACILITIES FUNDING BILLS

On Thursday morning, the Senate Education Committee heard two bills, **SF 75 and SF 76**, which deal with facility funding for public schools. The bills would implement a number of the recommendations from the MDE School Facilities Task Force that met in 2013 and 2014.

**SF 76 would create a new program called Long Term Maintenance Revenue** that would replace three current health and safety, deferred maintenance facility revenue and levy programs for school districts. Charter schools are currently not part of these revenue streams or programs.

**Under SF 76 Charter Schools would receive Long Term Maintenance Revenue** that would be phased in over the same number of years that it would be phased in for traditional districts. Revenue for charter schools would be indexed to inflation after the final year of the phase-in period.

MACS was invited to testify on SF 76 by Senator Dahle, the author of these bills.

### [MACS Testimony](#)

The Committee laid the bills over for inclusion in the Senate Omnibus Education Bill while discussions on the specifics of the proposal continue to be worked out as there are implications related to local taxes.

**NOTE:** *Representatives from the MN Rural Education Association, Schools for Equity in Education, MASBO, and other organizations indicated that enactment of the recommendations of the School Facilities Task Force was a top, if not the top priority for this session.*

## HOUSE EDUCATION INNOVATION AND POLICY COMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

On Thursday morning, the House Education Innovation and Policy Committee invited organizations to present testimony on their policy priorities for 2015. The **MACS presentation** included a quick Primer on Charter Schools and highlighted a few policy priorities including: *allowing charters to offer alternative learning programs; establishing an innovative assessment system for schools serving significant populations of graduation incentives students; and giving authorizers final decision-making authority on grade expansions, additional campuses, school mergers, and authorizer transfers, instead of MDE; to name just a few.*

## MORE BILLS INTRODUCED ON TEACHER PREPARATION, MENTORING & INTER-STATE RECIPROCITY

For more information about new bill introduction check out the [CHARTER CURRENT](#).

## SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE HEARS UNIVERSAL PRE-SCHOOL BILL

On Wednesday, the Senate Education Committee heard testimony on **SF 6**, authored by Senator Hoffman, that would create a **universal pre-school program for 4 year olds**. The program would cost \$417 million in the FY 16-17 biennium and over \$581 million in the FY 18-19 biennium if enacted.

## **U.S. SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE WORKING ON RE-AUTHORIZING ESEA**

As we noted in last week's issue, the United States Senate Education Committee has released the staff discussion draft of the **reauthorization of ESEA**. One of the major components of the reauthorization is testing and the discussion draft proposes **two different assessment options** for consideration in the new legislation.

**OPTION 1 – Continue to Require states** to do **ANNUAL TESTING**. Testing **annually** in grades (3 -8) and once in grades (9-12).

**OPTION 2 - Allow states** to implement **GRADE SPAN TESTING**. Testing **at least once** in grades (3-5), once in grades (6-9), and once in grades (10-12).

Earlier this week we sent all charter school directors a short survey asking them to share their position on these options. We appreciate the responses that we have received so far.

The results of the survey will help form the basis of the Association's position which will be shared with Minnesota's delegation in Congress.

## **CHARTER SCHOOL DAY AT THE CAPITOL**

Charter school administrators, board members, and parents are invited to attend the **2015 Charter School Day @ the Capital** being held on **Thursday, March 5**.

In order to maintain the positive momentum of charter schools, it's important that charter school leaders connect with their local legislators. MACS takes care of setting up the meetings and you get to enjoy a day making connections!

No worries – we'll even walk you through the process of talking with legislators on the day of the event.

Due to Capitol construction there are no places available in the Capitol complex for large groups, and the Capitol is closed for tours & field trips until 2017. Please limit groups to a maximum of 4-6 people.

To register your participation, click [here](#).