



Friday, February 11, 2022

The Charter School *Advocate*

THIS WEEK @ THE CAPITOL

***A note:** We do our best to keep you informed of as much education-related activity as we can during the Legislative Session. Please keep in mind that when a bill is introduced, it does not mean it has been, or will be, passed into law. As the session continues, MACS will keep you up to date on bills that advance through the legislative process.

HOUSE EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE

Educator Support, Crisis Online Learning, & a Short-call Substitute Teacher Pilot (HF 2950)

Monday, February 7th - The House Education Policy Committee met on House Bill **HF 2950** which proposed actions to help schools dealing with staffing shortages and other long-term Covid-19 complications. The bill proposes creating a Crisis Online Learning option for schools, adding five additional E-Learning days to this current school year, creating a pilot program with more options and flexibility around Short Call Sub Licensing, creating more pathways for hiring teachers with a lapsed license, and allowing new teachers to obtain conditional Tier 3 Licenses before passing exams. MACS written testimony can be read [here](#).

Increase Teachers of Color Act & Child Abuse Hotline (HF 3079 & HF 2131)

Wednesday, February 9th - The House Education Policy Committee heard testimony on a bill that would strengthen the Teachers of Color Act and increase the "percentage of teachers of color

and American Indian teachers in Minnesota” by setting clear goals and requiring the reporting on outcomes (**HF 3079**). This bill would also modify the world’s best workforce statute to include “ethnic studies,” “antiracist,” and “culturally sustaining” curriculum. It would also create and adjust existing grant programs to address opportunity gaps, prohibit American Indian mascots, prohibit discrimination or discipline for educating about protected classes, and adjust tenure and licensure requirements amongst a variety of other provisions. Testifiers included teachers, school staff, and students from across Minnesota K-12 schools and colleges who consistently advocated on the harm caused by the [stark disparity between students of color and licensed staff of color in Minnesota](#). **HF 3079** passed a committee vote and was referred to the **Committee on Education Finance**. The committee also heard testimony on **HF 2131** which would require a child abuse hotline number to be publicly displayed in all school buildings.

HOUSE EDUCATION FINANCE COMMITTEE

MDE Presentation on English Language Learner Cross-Subsidy (HF2944 & HF1939)

Tuesday, February 8th – The House Education Finance Committee discussed the growing population and needs of English Learners in Minnesota schools across the state. Testifiers discussed English Learner Cross-Subsidy funding and bills that outlined pathways to adjust funding structures and increase English Learner Aid in schools (**HF 2944 & HF 1939**). **HF 2944** would increase the basic EL allowance per student and phase in more funding to make up for extra spending beyond the baseline EL revenue that a school already receives. The Minnesota State Demographer Center and Department of Education testified on the [statewide population trends of English Learners](#), [English Learning Cross Subsidy](#), and [current funding structures](#). Superintendents and representatives from schools across the state discussed how increased funding would better support EL and SLIFE (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education) students in various ways, including increased specialized school staffing, expanding specialized programming, and freeing up more funding for culturally responsive teaching training. Rep. Carlos Mariani (65B) discussed a similar bill (**HF 1939**) and asked the committee to address this issue urgently by choosing from the different pathways presented. His testimony focused on the importance of including in the law formalized and representative community input, accountability structures, and clear exit criteria.

MDE Presentation on Special Education Cost Drivers (HF 2647 & HF 2751)

Wednesday, February 9th – The House Education Finance Committee discussed Special Education funding and Cross-Subsidies for school districts in Minnesota. Two bills were discussed. **HF 2647** would eliminate the Special Education Cross Subsidy and replace it with full state funding. **HF 2751** would put together a working group to meet this year to study tuition billing for special education services “provided to a student with a disability by a nonresident school district.” This working group would issue a report on their findings by January of 2023. Testifiers included the [Minnesota Department of Education](#) as well as Superintendents and representatives from St. Cloud, Minneapolis, North Saint Paul, Albert Lea, and Goodhue County. Testifiers cited that as local districts are required by state law to cover the additional special education costs, these cross subsidies put excessive strain on their general education budgets. If **HF 2647** passed,

testifiers cited they would be able to spend the newly available revenue on things such as tax breaks, lower class sizes, technology, and more school staff to address issues such as increasing student mental health needs.

Informational Hearing: MDE Presentation on Governor's Supplemental Budget Proposal

Thursday, February 10th – The House Education Finance Committee heard testimony from Commissioner of Education Heather Mueller and her team at Minnesota Department of Education on the [Governor's Supplementary Education Budget Proposal](#). They discussed a range of proposals and expanded budgetary recommendations which can be seen in the attached report.

SENATE EDUCATION FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Informational Hearing: Technology and Student Mental Health

Monday, February 7th – The Senate Education Finance and Policy Committee hosted a group of testifiers from [LiveMore ScreenLess](#). The [LiveMore ScreenLess program](#) submitted testimony and a [report](#) following up on their progress since receiving funding in the Digital Well-Being Grant passed in the 2021 Special Session. Testifiers discussed how their program addresses the continuing need for "balanced and strategic use" of technology in schools and the negative impact of social media, technology, and "screen overuse and misuse" for young people's mental health and wellbeing. Representatives from Faribault Public Schools also testified to the positive impact the LiveMore ScreenLess Program has had on schools, students, and families in their district.

Informational Hearing: LETRS Program and Literacy Education

Wednesday, February 9th – The Senate Education Finance and Policy Committee heard testimony focused on the current state of literacy education in Minnesota schools, including the impacts of the pandemic on [student learning](#) and [test scores](#). Testifiers included Minnesota parents, representatives from Minneapolis Public Schools Academics Advocacy Group, and a variety of literacy specialists and professionals. Testifiers advocated for further expanding literacy education in Minnesota schools to the "[science of reading](#)" approach and discussed the success of programs such as [LETRS](#) and [Bridge2Read](#).

PARENTAL RIGHTS BILLS INTRODUCED THIS WEEK

- **SF 2909**– "The legislature further finds it necessary for a school to establish a consistent mechanism for a parent to be notified of information relating to the health and well-being of the parent's minor child" " A school board or board of a charter school must ensure that the following information is displayed on a school's website :... (1) all instructional or training materials and activities used for staff and faculty training; (2) all learning materials and activities used for student instruction."

CURRICULUM BILLS INTRODUCED THIS WEEK

- **SF 2948 / HF 3109** – would move the “benchmarks” of state academic standards into legislative rulemaking governance

NEXT WEEK @ THE CAPITOL - FEBRUARY 14-18

- **Monday, February 14th** – House Education Policy Committee – **HF2750, HF1883, & HF224** - Menstrual product access in school districts, school requirements to maintain opiate antagonist and non-patient-specific epinephrine auto-injector supply.
- **Monday, February 14th** – Senate Education Committee – TBD
- **Tuesday, February 15th** – House Ed Finance Committee – **HF378 & HF2133** – Paraprofessional paid orientation and training funding; Employee health insurance and non-licensed school personnel minimum starting salary increased; (Presentation from the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board)
- **Wednesday, February 16th** – House Education Policy Committee – **HF1083** – Comprehensive school mental health service lead position established and funded
- **Wednesday, February 16th** – Senate Education Committee – TBD
- **Thursday, February 17th** – House Ed Finance Committee – TBD

"Unleashing education from convention" - is more than the MACS motto, it is a reminder of our purpose, our goals and it serves as a clarion **Call To Action.**

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