



Friday, March 11, 2022

The Charter School Advocate

OLA PRESENTS REPORT ON MDE'S ROLE IN ADDRESSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

On Tuesday, the OLA issued its report on MDE's role in addressing the achievement gap. The OLA looked at four programs that MDE is responsible for administering that focus on addressing the achievement gap. The [Report](#) lays out the findings of the OLA and provides recommendations for MDE and the Legislature.

THE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Legislature should consider amending statutes to more explicitly define the term “achievement gap” and clarify MDE’s responsibilities related to the gap.
- The Legislature should amend particular statutes to establish more practical timelines and clearer expectations for MDE.
- MDE should monitor districts’ and charter schools’ progress toward closing the achievement gap and other World’s Best Workforce goals.
- MDE should take a more active role in developing improvement plans when districts do not meet the Achievement & Integration goals, including reducing the achievement gap.
- MDE should develop a strategic plan for American Indian education that includes approaches to reduce the achievement gap.
- The Legislature should consider making the services of the Regional Centers of Excellence more widely available as a way to address the achievement gap.

THIS WEEK @ THE CAPITOL

HOUSE EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE

Monday, March 7th – The Committee heard:

- **HF 2726:** Would allow school boards to include additional learning activities to count for hours of instruction for high school students if a student is “actively engaged” and all other “relevant programmatic statutory requirements” are met. **This bill passed and was referred as amended to the Education Finance Committee.**
- **HF 2742:** Would allow schools to serve students until they are 22 years old if they were enrolled in grades 9-12 between 2021-2023. **This bill passed and was referred to the Education Finance Committee.**

Wednesday, March 9th – The Committee heard:

- **HF 3260:** Would require school boards to prohibit “malicious and sadistic conduct” involving “race, gender, religion, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, and sexual exploitation” via a written policy posted in each school building and require a process discussing this policy with students, parents, and school employees. **This bill passed / was sent to the House floor.**
- **HF 3554:** Would update the alternative teacher preparation grant program to include grant eligibility for “license shortage areas” such as English as a second language, early childhood, special education, career and technical education, science, technology, engineering, arts, math, and world languages. **This bill passed and was referred to the Education Finance Committee.**
- **HF 2856:** Would replace Columbus Day with indigenous Peoples' Day as a state holiday. The bill would also require schools to observe the holiday for one hour and suggests topics recommended for staff training and instruction. **This bill passed and was referred to the State Government, Finance, and Elections Committee.**

HOUSE EDUCATION FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 8th – The Committee heard a presentation from the Office of the Legislative Auditor on their [findings and recommendations](#) related to MDE’s role in addressing the achievement gap. Commissioner Heather Mueller also gave testimony on [MDE’s response](#).

- **HF 3434:** Would alter social studies graduation requirements to include ethnic studies (without increasing the amount of credits needed to graduate) beginning in 2024-25 for 9th grade students. It would also require elementary and middle schools to provide ethnic studies instruction by 2025-26. HF 3434 was amended after being referred by the Education Policy Committee. **This bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**

Wednesday, March 9th – The Committee heard:

- **HF 3243:** Would require the Commissioner of Education to establish a task force and “foundational blueprint for a statewide computer science program” serving elementary and secondary students. **This bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**

- **HF 2750:** Would appropriate funds and require schools to provide students with access to free menstrual products in restrooms. **This bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**

SENATE EDUCATION FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Monday, March 7th - The Committee heard:

- **SF 3426:** Would increase and make permanent the funding for the Minnesota Council on Economic Education to provide professional development and coaching for K-12 teachers on economic education. **This bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**
- **SF 3052:** Would appropriate funds and require schools to provide students with access to free menstrual products in restrooms. **This bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**

Wednesday, March 9th - The Committee heard:

- **SF 3373:** Would authorize the "Cambridge Assessment International Education" program to partner with schools (as another option to AP / IB), so participating students can earn college credits through those courses. **This bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**
- **SF 3843:** Would require elementary teacher candidates to "receive instruction" using the LETRS reading program, beginning February 1st, 2026. **This bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**
- **SF 3173:** Would strongly encourage schools to provide "substance misuse awareness and prevention instruction" at least once to students in grades 6-8 and high school. It encourages using "peer-to-peer" education programs and discuss the role of social media in drug trafficking. **This bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**
- **SF 3231:** Would permanently enhance funding for the Minnesota math corps program to be \$1million dollars annually. **This bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**

OTHER EDUCATION BILLS INTRODUCED THIS WEEK

- **SF 3744 / HF 2726:** Would allow additional learning activities as hours of instruction for high school students
- **SF 3843:** Would require LETRS reading program for elementary teacher candidates
- **SF 3863 / HF3378:** Would require annual compliance certification on school student bullying policy statute, prohibit employer retaliation for employees reporting bullying, and add civil penalty of \$5000 for failure to comply.
- **SF 3916:** Would increase Grown Your Own grant funding
- **SF 3929 / HF3034:** Would prohibit MNSCU using SAT / ACT test scores for college admissions

- **HF 4012 /SF2913:** Would suspend earnings limitation for returning retired teachers covered by TRA
- **HF 4074:** Would require secondary schools to annually report postsecondary participation rates and require identical weighted GPA policies for local in-school and PSEO grades

NOTE: Please keep in mind that when a bill is introduced, it **does not mean** it will be heard or will be enacted into law.

MORE LEGISLATORS ANNOUNCE RETIREMENTS

- **Representative Liz Boldon** (DFL – 25B) – 1 Charter in district. - Seeking Senate Seat
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NEXT WEEK @ THE CAPITOL

- **Monday, March 14th – House Ed Policy Committee**
 - **HF 3860:** Would create school nurse recruitment grants
 - **HF 3965:** Would change teacher shortage reporting requirements
- **Monday, March 14th – Senate Education Finance and Policy Committee**
 - **SF 3656:** Would allow students with an IEP to receive scholarship money to attend a non-public school
 - **SF 3297:** Would establish a special education legislative working group on tuition billing
 - **SF 3534:** Would allow a charter school serving at least 90 percent of deaf / hard of hearing students to give enrollment preference to a student whose primary disability is deaf / hard of hearing
- **Tuesday, March 15th – House Ed Finance Committee:**
 - **HF 1742:** Would create a new state aid for hiring additional student support personnel
 - **HF 649:** Would adjust the PSEO dual enrollment program's structure
- **Wednesday, March 16th– House Education Policy Committee:**
 - **HF 1729:** Would create the healthy and hunger-free school program
 - **HF 3580 / HF 4074:** Both bills would require English learner program revenue indexing to basic education revenue
- **Wednesday, March 16th– House Ed Finance Committee:**
 - **HF 3963:** Would reimburse “high-cost” special education activity
 - **HF 3948:** Would create and fund “Wilderness Inquiry” grants for credit recovery programs

FEDERAL SPENDING FOR CURRENT YEAR FINALLY APPROVED BY CONGRESS

Since October 1st, the Federal Government has been operating a continuing resolution which maintained government spending at last year's levels. This week, Congress finally passed a bill to fund the Federal government through the end of this fiscal year – September 30th.

In terms of education, the bill includes: an increase of 1 billion for **Title 1 programs (\$17.536 billion)**; an increase of 406 million for **IDEA Part B (\$13.343 billion)**; an increase of 34 million for **Title 3 of ESEA (\$831 million)**, a 60 million increase in **Student Support and Achievement Enrichment**. The bill also provides 440 million for the **Charter School Program**, which is the same amount as the last 4 years.

"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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