OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR REPORT ON MDE

On **Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at 8:30 a.m.**, the Office of the Legislative Auditor will release the program evaluation report on *Minnesota Department of Education's Role in Addressing the Achievement Gap*. The report covers: 1] To what extent does state law require MDE to address and assess the achievement gap, and does MDE comply with these laws? 2] To what extent has MDE been effective in assisting school districts and charter schools with reducing their achievement gaps through its administration of four specific K-12 education initiatives?

The Report will be available on the OLA website at 8:00 on Tuesday, March 8th.

For those who are interested the Report will be presented to the Legislature on Tuesday, March 8th at 8:30 a.m. The presentation can be viewed on the Legislative Audit Commission remote viewing channel, click [here](#).

THIS WEEK @ THE CAPITOL

HOUSE EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE

**Monday, February 28th** – The Committee heard the following bills:

- **HF 3251**: 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. Testifiers included Dr. Susan Lane-Outlaw, from the Metro Deaf School in Saint Paul. **This bill passed and was referred to the house floor.**
• **HF 3401:** The Governor's education policy bill includes a variety of education provisions. The Charter School section’s changes would change some legal definitions, require market need and demand studies (MACS proposal), modifies authorizer corrective action requirements (MACS does not support MDE’s proposal), amongst other changes. **This bill was laid over for further consideration.**

**Wednesday, March 2nd** – The Committee heard the following bills:

- **HF 3265:** Would make schools remediate lead in their drinking water if it exceeds 5 ppb. It would require schools to notify the Department of Health and parents of test results and remediation efforts. It would provide schools with funding for lead remediation through “long-term facilities maintenance revenue.” **The bill was referred as amended to the Education Finance Committee.**

- **HF 1808:** Would require school districts to have at least one school counselor in every building and provide counseling services for students. The bill specifies a large list of “appropriate job duties” for counselors. It would also require administrators renewing their licenses to have mental illness training. **The bill was referred as amended to the Education Finance Committee.**

- **HF 3634:** Would require participating schools to conduct mental health screening on K-12 students, require parent notice, and allow the commissioner to provide school support. The bill would establish a new category of revenue called “student mental health supports revenue” to pay for screening and additional mental health staff, add this revenue to the list included in general education revenue, and allow charter schools to be eligible to receive it. It would also require schools to report on mental health staffing to the commissioner. **The bill was referred as amended to the Education Finance Committee.**

- **HF 3655:** 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 as amended was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**

**HOUSE EDUCATION FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, March 2nd** – The Committee heard the following bills:

- **HF 2949:** Would link the "general education basic formula allowance to the rate of inflation" for 2024 and beyond. It would also link extended time revenue and Local Optional Revenue to the increases in the basic formula allowance. The proposal is a recommendation of the MDE School Finance Report Work Group. **[MACS supports this proposal]. This bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**

- **HF 3727:** Would speed up the disbursement timing of state Special Education Aid for school districts without affecting the amount of revenue received. **This bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**
Thursday, March 3rd – The Committee heard the following bills:

- **HF 1408**: Would add “Certified Deaf Interpreter” (CDI) as an optional choice in the group of required certifications needed by American sign language / English interpretation employees at schools. **This bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**
- **HF 2199**: Would allocate a grant of $45,000 to Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs for their STARS initiative. **This bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**

SENATE EDUCATION FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Monday, February 28th - The Committee continued to discuss teacher training for teaching reading. PELSB and MACTE testified on the related existing statutes and accountability systems.

Wednesday, March 2nd - The Committee heard the following bills:

- **SF 1988**: Would establish grants to offer “emergency medical services courses” to help students prepare for the emergency medical technician certification test. **This bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill.**
- **SF 3341**: Would transfer two percent of each district’s early childhood family education aid funding to MDE to provide “support and guidance for early childhood family education programs.” **This bill was approved and sent to the Senate Finance Committee.**
- **SF 3380**: Would modify the school district ‘safe school’ revenue formula. This bill would provide charter schools $44 per student funding in 2023 and after. It would expand the use of the aid to include telemedicine mental health services and cybersecurity enhancements. **This bill was approved and sent to the Senate Finance Committee.**

OTHER EDUCATION BILLS INTRODUCED THIS WEEK

- **SF 3611 / HF 3231**: Teacher licensure provisions modified / PELSB composition modified
- **SF 3656 / HF 3909**: Scholarship Program for Students with a Disability Act
- **SF 3659**: School employees must report witnessed student fights and file police report
- **SF 3679 / HF 3650**: Student Religious Liberties Act establishment
- **HF 3963**: Additional Aid for “High Cost Special Education” activities
- **HF 3891**: Working group on identifying student eligibility for compensatory revenue calculations

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

MORE LEGISLATORS ANNOUNCE RETIREMENTS

- **Representative Steve Sandell** (DFL-53b) – 1 Charter in district.
- **Representative Jen Shultz** (DFL – 7A) – No Charters in district.
• **Representative Mike Sundin** (DFL – 11A) – No Charters in district.

• **Representative Tama Theis** (R-14A) - 2 Charters in district. – Seeking Senate Seat

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**NEXT WEEK @ THE CAPITOL - FEBRUARY 28-March 4**

- **Monday, March 7th – House Education Policy Committee**
  - **Presentation:** Minnesota State High School League Plan to Address Racism
  - **HF 2246:** Would modify Minnesota State High School League governance
  - **HF 2726:** Would modify hours of instruction requirements
  - **HF 2742:** Would allow students to be served until age 22

- **Monday, March 7th – Senate Education Finance and Policy Committee**
  - **SF 821:** Would modify after-school community learning programs
  - **SF 3586:** Would increase funding for community education programming
  - **SF 3052:** Would require school districts to provide access to menstrual products

- **Wednesday, March 9th – House Education Policy Committee:**
  - **HF 3554:** Would modify alternative teacher preparation program grants
  - **HF 2856:** Would establish Indigenous Peoples' Day as a state holiday

- **Wednesday, March 9th – House Ed Finance Committee:**
  - **HF 3243:** Would establish computer science education task force
  - **HF 2750:** Would require school districts to provide access to menstrual products

- **Thursday, March 10th – House Ed Finance Committee:**
  - **HF 917:** Would update transportation sparsity revenue percent

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**CHARTER NEWS ACROSS AMERICA**

**OKLAHOMA** - The legislature is considering a bill that would create a State Board for sponsoring and oversight of charter schools. The bill would end current sponsors and eliminate the fees pay to sponsors.

*2-22-2022 Oklahoma Channel 9*

**WEST VIRGINIA** – The legislature is considering a bill to provide start-up funds for new charter schools up to $200,000. The funds would be administered by the State Charter School Board, whose members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate.

*2-22-2022 Charleston Gazette-Mail*

**NEW MEXICO** – The legislature has passed a bill to provide standardized lease aid; creating a revolving loan funds for facilities; and giving charters access to unused district facilities.
“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.