



Friday, August 12, 2022



The Charter School *Advocate*

NEW LAWS

LIMIT ON SCREEN TIME FOR CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

MN Statutes 124D.166 – “A child in a publicly funded preschool or kindergarten program may not use an individual-use screen, such as a tablet, smartphone, or other digital media, without engagement from a teacher or other students. This section does not apply to a child for whom the school has an individualized family service plan, an individualized education program, or a 504 plan in effect.”

EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2022

STUDENT DATA PRIVACY

MN Statutes 13.32 Subd. 1 - Modifies student data privacy protections by defining a “school-issued device”, and “technology provider”, the requirements on schools to notify parents and students of any programs or contracts with technology providers that deal with student data; the rules that technology providers must follow regarding student data, and what student data government agencies, and service providers cannot access or monitor.

EFFECTIVE: 2022-2023 School Year

MACS GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

AUGUST MEETING REPORT

The Committee held its August meeting earlier today and discussed proposed policy positions on fair and equitable funding for charter school students, and rational and equitable charter

facilities. The committee also reviewed and provided feedback on issue primers on various charter funding issues. At its September meeting, the committee will focus on general education and charter school policy issues.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE WANTS YOU!

The Government Affairs Committee provides one of the many opportunities for members to participate in the public policy work of the Association. The committee is charged with developing the public policy positions of the Association, which eventually are presented for approval by the MACS board and ratification by member schools. If you are interested in helping to develop the public policy positions, we invite you to consider serving on the committee. The committee currently meets monthly via Zoom on the second Friday of the month.

CONTACT: Eugene Piccolo, Executive Director if you are interested.

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ADVOCACY

While the 2023 Legislative Session may seem like a long way off, the **PRIMETIME** for connecting / building relationships with your legislators is just around the corner. Because of redistricting or election results, many charter schools will have **new** legislators representing them at the State Capitol. So, it is critical this year to make connections with your state representative and state senator because they may not know your school.

PRIMETIME for inviting legislators and candidates who have no general election opponent is now, before the November election.

PRIMETIME for inviting legislators elected in November will be after the election and the beginning of the legislative session in early January.

During session, the most likely day that legislators will be available to visit is on Fridays as normally there are not committee meetings or session that day.

A visit to your school provides the opportunity for legislators to see first-hand the good work of your school, to tell your story, and establish a relationship with your legislators. Building these relationships is essential to creating strong charter advocates during the next legislative session. We will be calling on the legislators to support important initiatives such as more equitable funding for charter school students.

The good news is we are here to help! We are available to help connect you with information, practical guides, and personalized help.

PELSB UPDATE

The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) board met on July 29th to discuss the proposed changes to the Licensing and Academic Standards and Rules ([R 4615](#)). The

rules pertain to licensure requirements and standards for teachers to “obtain and renew teaching licenses and permissions.” A final hearing on the proposed rules will be on August 24th. If the rules are adopted, the new tiered licensure rules will go into effect in six months, and other license-specific rules in July 2024.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Addressing Teacher Shortage Act - Senator Tina Smith has reintroduced the Addressing Teacher Shortage Act in the U.S. Senate. The bill would provide federal funding for teacher residency programs, teacher mentor programs, Grow Your Own programs, teacher preparation pathways in secondary schools, and other evidence-based strategies to increase teacher retention and support teachers.

Trauma-Informed Schools Act – in late July, **Senator Tina Smith** introduced the Trauma-Informed School Act in the U.S. Senate. The bill would make key federal funding sources available for teachers, staff and after school programs to support trauma-informed practices in school settings. The bill also defines “trauma-informed practices” in federal education law, to ensure that such practices are evidence-based and help all students.

LEGISLATIVE ISSUE - LITERACY

During the 2022 legislative session, the **focus of the Senate Education Committee was on literacy** and LETRS. During and since the session, there have been questions about **what is LETRS? Why was the focus on LETRS? And who is LETRS?**

A July 20, 2022, article in **EDUCATION WEEK** provides answers to these questions.

What is LETRS? – LETRS is a professional development training program. It is a 160-hour course over a two-year period, which introduces teachers to the research and new methods of reading instruction. LETRS is described as a “speech to print” approach to teaching reading in contrast to what is described as a “balanced literacy” approach.

Why the focus on LETRS? – The proponents of LETRS reference the experience of Mississippi which included LETRS in a series of initiatives which led to big gains in reading in the state’s reading scores on the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress. The article points out that Mississippi, at the same time it put in LETRS, also changed the state’s curriculum and intervention protocols and implemented a system of teacher coaching.

An evaluation by the Southern Regional Education Laboratory found that LETRS did increase teacher knowledge and improved teacher practice, but it is almost impossible to know what led to the big gains in reading results. Other research confirms that the training increased teacher knowledge and can change teacher practice – but how much that results in higher student achievement cannot be directly traced to the training.

Who is LETRS? – The LETRS program was developed by two literacy experts and consultants.

LETRS is a program owned by LEXIA, which is owned by the Cambium Learning Group, which is owned by Veritas Capital, a company which owns Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, among its portfolio of companies.

GOVERNOR WALZ'S 10-YEAR ECONOMIC EXPANSION PLAN

Last week, Governor Walz proposed a 10-Year Economic Expansion Plan. In terms of education, the plan proposes to **"Improve K-12 education in Minnesota to ensure all children receive a high-quality education"**. The Plan lays out fourteen points which deal with everything from literacy to mental health, and transportation for open enrollment to teacher salaries. While all the proposed actions would impact chartered public schools, it is notable that **there are two actions** which specifically mention charters by name.

- **Encourage school districts and charter schools** to pursue solutions and remove barriers to implementing STEM education as a career pathway to prepare students for the 21st century workforce.
- **Support successful charter schools and encourage them** to share their best practices.

"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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