

# SAC Legislative Bulletin

The official legislative newsletter for the School Administrators Coalition (SAC) which includes MASA, MAESP, MASSP, MOASBO, MOCASE, MUSIC, MO K-8, MARE & MSHSAA

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For a complete listing of bill summaries that impact education go to:

<http://www.mcsa.org/reference>

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## **SENATE GENERAL LAWS COMMITTEE HEARS WIDE-RANGING EDUCATION BILL**

The Senate General Laws Committee heard [SB 706](#) on Tuesday. One unfortunate aspect of this hearing was that SB 706 had not yet been referred to the committee. That fact did not stop the committee's chairman, Sen. Jane Cunningham (R - Chesterfield), from hearing the bill anyway. Sen. Cunningham also happens to be the sponsor of SB 706.

SB 706 is a hodgepodge of different issues thrown into a single bill. Much of the bill has to do with how the state handles unaccredited districts. The different provisions in the bill are:

- Creation of a voucher program, referred to as a Passport Scholarship, for students in unaccredited districts to attend private schools. The bill would allow for a 60% tax credit for donations to a scholarship program run by a not-for-profit. The tax credit is capped at a \$40 million cost to the state.
- Allows for cooperatives of school districts to open charter schools within unaccredited districts.
- Removes the 2-year period that unaccredited districts must go through before they lapse.
- Dissolves the Missouri High School Activities Association if they decline to allow students that transfer from an unaccredited district to an accredited district, virtual school, charter school, or nonpublic school to participate in athletics.
- Requires that all local effort property taxes in unaccredited districts be gathered by the State Treasurer
- Prohibits a school from counting a student that receives a Passport Scholarship to go to another school in their WADA.
- Requires an unaccredited district to pay the tuition and transportation costs of a student that transfers to an accredited district.
- Requires neighboring districts of an unaccredited district to create criteria by which they can accept students that transfer into their district.
- Allows for a student that transfers to an accredited district to stay in that district until graduation, even if the district of residence regains its accreditation.
- Requires that a district outside of St. Louis and St. Louis County that becomes unaccredited be divided up and annexed by surrounding districts.
- Creates a clearinghouse within DESE to assist students in transferring from an unaccredited district into an accredited district, charter school, virtual school, or private school.
- Expands virtual schools.
- Requires that student performance must be a factor in the measurement of educator evaluations.
- Creates mutual consent agreements between principals and teachers that are rated "highly effective" or "effective", so that teachers can reject their building placement.
- Removes seniority as criteria for districts to look at when a district places teachers on leave. Instead, districts must make their decisions when reducing their force based on the performance of the teacher.

SAC is opposed to SB 706 based on its inclusion of vouchers, virtual school expansion, attacks on

the independence of MSHSAA, and its inclusion of student performance as a measurement for educator evaluations. Additionally, there is a lot of work to be done on several of the other measures that are included in the bill. It is unfortunate to see that the serious work of the General Assembly to address the problems in St. Louis and Kansas City is being distracted by attacks on public education in SB 706.

## **TENURE REPEAL CONSIDERED IN HOUSE COMMITTEE**

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee heard [HB 1526](#) last Wednesday. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Scott Diekhaus (R – Washington), would repeal Missouri’s teacher tenure law and instead require schools to enter into multi-year contracts with teachers. Also included in the bill is a repeal of the “last in, first out” provision that requires districts to lay off their most recently hired teachers when the school goes through a reduction in force.

While both of the provisions talked about above are ideas that have some merit, there are several provisions in HB 1526 that are concerning for administrators. They include:

- A requirement that districts adopt performance based evaluation systems and districts that fail to do so, will fall under a model system from DESE.
- A requirement that evaluation systems for teachers and principals must be based at least 50% on academic growth on state evaluations.
- A requirement that evaluations must result in classifications of Highly Effective, Effective, Fair, or Ineffective.
- The allowance for “Highly Effective” and “Effective” teachers to determine their building placement through a mutual consent agreement with the building principal.

Currently, SAC does not support HB 1526. There are several mandates which could affect districts that currently have quality evaluations in place for their employees. Additionally, HB 1526 could result in a huge cost to districts and/or DESE if every district is required to create multiple tests to determine academic growth for every class that their schools offer. Last, there are several questions regarding how to evaluate administrators, principals, special education specialists, librarians, etc. based on academic performance.

## **FORMULA BILL PASSES HOUSE COMMITTEE**

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee passed [HB 1043](#) out by a vote of 21-2 on Wednesday. Rep. Mike Thomson’s (R – Maryville) bill would give DESE guidance in how to handle distributing money to districts when the state foundation formula is underfunded. Currently, there is no guidance and DESE’s pending decision has hundreds of millions of dollars in limbo, and will result in massive shifts in money from district to district.

Rep. Thomson’s bill seeks to limit that shift by saying that any underfunding will be split between formula schools and hold harmless schools on a 3:1 basis. During debate in committee, an amendment was offered which sought to reign in the growth of the state adequacy target by reinstating the 5% cap on the increases in state aid to performance districts that is used when the SAT is recalculated every two years. The cap was removed in 2009 following passage of Proposition A which removed loss limits from gaming boats.

## **IN THE NEWS...**

[Post-Dispatch Editorial: Focus on Common Ground](#)

[KC Star: Senators Bill to Bring an End to KC School District](#)

[Missouri News-Horizon: Committee Hears Tenure Bill](#)

[Post-Dispatch: Committee Passes Bill to Limit Shifts in Formula Payments](#)

[Missouri News Horizon: Senate Committee Considers Drastic Changes to Education](#)

**According to our records, the following individuals represent  
at least a portion of your school district:**

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