

LegislativeUpdate

Michigan Association of School Administrators | February 16, 2018



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Summary

It's budget week in Lansing. MASA has begun the process of reviewing the budget and getting clarification on our priority issues.

Governor Snyder will unveil his "Marshall Plan for Talent" on Thursday, February

22. His speech will be given at the Michigan Science Center to echo his expected call to fill high-demand jobs in computer science and other STEM professions. We will be in attendance and will provide an update once details are released. Further, next week we are expecting the introduction of a multi-bill package aimed at teacher prep programs, and we will share those when they become available.

Our MASA/MAISA Government Relations & Policy Committee met this week, so look for the minutes and executive summary from your region representative.

As always, please contact [MASA](#) with any questions or concerns.

House Argues A-F

The House Education Reform Committee had another hearing on HB 5526 sponsored by Rep. Tim Kelly (R-Saginaw). The bill creates an A-F accountability system to replace the Department of Education's dashboard.

The committee heard several groups testify in favor of the bill, the majority citing the need for clear and consistent indicators of school performance. We also heard many state their support for a summative grade. A point of contention transpired between the committee and State Board of Education member Tom McMillin (R-Rochester Hills), who advocated that the accountability system is not measuring the correct characteristics and removes local control by not allowing teachers flexibility. The testimony also touched on Sec. 1280c and the need to repeal that section of law. The current version of HB 5526 keeps 1280c alongside the new A-F system. Rep. Kelly indicated he would be open to discussing if this should be included in the bill or repealed.

MASA took a position of opposition to HB 5526 at this week's Government Relations & Policy Committee meeting. We believe that the MDE dashboard has not been around long enough to evaluate its efficacy and further believe that 1280c is part of the problem. As the

sponsor of the bill and the chairman of the committee, it is likely that Rep. Kelly will call a vote on this bill next week. We anticipate several amendments to be proposed in committee, and we're working with lawmakers to address our concerns.

The House Education Reform Committee also heard testimony on SB 727 sponsored by Sen. Phil Pavlov (R-St. Clair). The bill eliminates the basic skills test for those entering alternative certification programs. As of late, MDE had implemented the SAT as the basic skills test, meaning that individuals with master's degrees would still have to take the SAT in order to receive an alternative certification. SB 727 removes this requirement, but individuals in an alternative program and getting an interim teaching certificate would still be required to have at least a bachelor's degree.

The legislative intent is to address the teacher shortage issue, and eliminating the entry test removes at least one barrier.

However, the committee heard dissenting opinions over the grade point requirements in SB 727. Under the bill, alternative teaching programs must have a cohort grade point of 3.0. Currently the department requires the individual to have at least a 3.0 GPA, and the bill would remove that requirement. Testimony from universities advocated against this change while alternative certificate programs were in favor.

There will be further testimony on this issue, and it's possible that the bill will be amended to eliminate the basic skills test for all teacher certification candidates.

MDE Clarifies Memo on Librarians and Counselors

On February 8, 2018, memoranda from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) were distributed to Local and Intermediate School Districts on the subjects of certification requirements in state law for school counselors and library media teachers. We at MASA heard numerous concerns from members about the impact of this memo on libraries

across the state—some members even indicated that if the statements in the memo were true, they'd have to shut down their library programs.

We worked very closely with MDE to get clarification, and yesterday the department released follow up [guidance](#) on the issue.

The main takeaway for the immediate future is that, “The MDE will not be recommending state aid deductions for the 2017-2018 academic year in these areas based on this guidance, and the MDE will work with districts to refine their programming and assignments for upcoming academic years.”

Thank you to the members who provided feedback and raised this issue.

Budget Hearings Begin Amid Tax Cuts

The annual hearings on the State Budget have begun and more details emerge at every hearing. The House and Senate will begin deliberating on their own version of the budgets, all while balancing the recently passed tax cuts that will go into effect in the near future.

SBs 748 and 750 passed through the House and back to the Senate so quickly this week they are already on their way to the governor's desk. The Senate's final versions of the bills did not include language of any kind to hold the School Aid Fund harmless, which is of very high concern. As the budget is debated in the coming weeks, the implications of this legislation will be significant. We are disappointed in lawmakers for not including a School Aid Fund hold harmless provision and urge members to contact legislators to share that concern.

For more detail on the budget visit the [MASA Budget Resource Center](#), which will be updated regularly with new material as it becomes available. Two new resources were

added today: A School Aid Fund Summary from the House Fiscal Agency, as well as a section-by-section School Aid highlights from the HFA.