

LegislativeUpdate

Michigan Association of School Administrators | February 2, 2018



In this update:

- Summary
- Senate Discusses Vision Screenings
- House Education Committee Debates Certification Changes
- Federal Update
- MASA Legislative Advocacy Days

Summary

It was a very busy week for us in Lansing. The legislature has begun to send education bills to a wide array of committees, beyond the traditional education

panels. For this reason, we have a number of issues that are or will be debated with different members of the legislature, many unfamiliar with education issues. MASA is making sure that we are monitoring these committees and meeting with lawmakers when necessary.

We hope that you were able to catch our Legislative Update at the Midwinter Conference last week. In case you missed it, we previewed our the MASA Rapid Response Network, our new texting service that will send you breaking news alerts from the Capitol. You can find more information and sign up [here](#).

Governor Snyder will present his budget proposal next week, so be on the lookout for a detailed update from us in your inbox. We expect many of the items outlined in his State of the State Address on January 23 to be central to the governor's final budget.

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

Senate Discusses Vision Screenings

The Senate Health Policy Committee met for testimony on legislation to mandate further vision screenings this week. SB 411, sponsored by Sen. Rick Jones (R-Grand Ledge), would require local health departments to ensure students in grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 were given vision screenings. If a screening were to indicate that a follow-up comprehensive eye exam is needed, the local health department must notify parents within 30 days. Parents would be required to have their child see an optometrist within 60 days, and the eyecare professional would have to share the results of the exam, including the recommended treatment, with the local health department.

The legislative intent of the bill codifies current practice to an extent. Currently students are screened in grades 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, and parents have to confirm their child has had an eye exam prior to entering kindergarten. However the additional reporting requirements, as well as the sharing of information, were raised as concerns by those opposing the bill. This could create issues of access in some communities and an additional cost for local health departments.

MASA does not currently have a position on the bill, but we share the privacy concerns demonstrated by others who oppose the bill. We will be working with lawmakers on these issues.

House Education Committee Debates Certification Changes

The House Education Reform Committee took up two separate bills aimed at revising the provisional teaching certification. HB 4614, sponsored by Rep. Aaron Miller (R-Sturgis), would allow for a specific group of individuals to receive a two-year extension on a provisional certificate.

The Educator Evaluation legislation of 2015 will take effect later this year and requires effective or highly effective ratings from an educator evaluation in order for an individual to receive a professional certificate. This legislation created an unintended consequence for a small group of Michiganders that currently have a two-year provisional certificate extension, but will not have educator evaluations, and, therefore, will not receive an effective rating to qualify for a professional certificate. This group includes teachers on maternity or medical leave, those teaching in a childcare center or individuals seeking a teaching

position. As it stands currently, these individuals after two years would no longer be eligible for a provisional certificate. HB 4614 will correct this by allowing for unlimited renewals of two-year provisional teaching certifications.

HB 4084, sponsored by Rep. Jim Tedder (R-Clarkston), would remove the three-credit course in the diagnosis and remediation of reading disabilities and differentiated instruction from the requirements for a professional certification. The bill sponsor indicated that this can be an additional barrier to some receiving their certificate not only for the time teachers must dedicate to the course, but also due to the cost. The committee discussed the need for this course to occur prior to or during an individual's student teaching, rather than as a final step towards certification. Additionally, several members on both sides of the aisle raised the point that university programs during the undergraduate level should include this instruction. The chair did not indicate if a vote will take place next week, but MASA will continue to monitor the issue.

The committee also heard testimony on HB 5379, sponsored by Rep. Kevin Hertel (D-Saint Clair Shores), to allow the possession and usage of sunscreen at school by students. The bill allows for children to have sunscreen at school, on buses and at any activity or event sponsored by a school. Students would be required to have written approval from a parent submitted to the school. This legislation follows a national trend, with California, New York, Oregon, Texas, Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Utah and Washington passing similar legislation.

The committee didn't vote on any of the legislation and votes are expected in the coming weeks. MASA will be evaluating the merits of the legislation at the upcoming Government Relations & Policy Committee meeting.

Federal Update

Government Back from Shutdown

On Monday, Senate Democrats agreed to a short-term spending deal to reopen the government after it shut down Friday night. That deal funds the government through February 8 and included six years of funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Senator McConnell promised to hold a vote on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) by February 8. If a deal is not passed, Democrats have threatened to not support another extension or long-term spending deal.

