

# LegislativeUpdate

Michigan Association of Superintendents & Administrators | February 7, 2020



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Budget day was Thursday, and for education lobbyists, it's a lot like Christmas morning. You get to unwrap presents to see if you've been naughty or nice, you end up fighting with family and friends, and when it's all over you could use a nap and some quiet time. All and all, schools did quite well in the overall picture, SAF spending is up 4.9% overall, but not all of that represents direct classroom spending. To read more about the budget, visit our [website](#) to read yesterday's more in depth update. As always, please [contact MASA](#) with any questions or concerns.

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## Michigan Senate Holds Informational Hearing

On Tuesday, Deputy Superintendent Venessa Keesler gave an informational presentation to the Senate Education and Career Readiness Committee on assessments. Her presentation highlighted the components of our state's balanced assessment system and included an overview of our formative and summative assessments and what has changed over time.

Her presentation included information demonstrating that state assessments account for less than 1% of instructional time, and she advised that if lawmakers are looking to reduce testing time they would need to review the picture of all assessments given, not just the ones required by state law. She also reviewed the national test date requirements and MSTEP testing windows, including the flexibility districts have to administer those tests.

Discussion included mention to the committee that if there are proposed changes the committee feels need to be made to how we test our students, then the law needs to be changed due to the fact that the MDE does not require schools to give tests that are not federally or state-mandated.

Keesler reiterated the department's position to support the elimination of the requirement for all students to take WorkKeys and make it an optional test reimbursed by the state. Further, pertaining to evaluations, Keesler reiterated that MDE agrees that we should remove the requirement to use MSTEP data to calculate student growth in teacher evaluations and that those data should be optional. Additionally, MDE would like to see growth capped at 25%—a position MASA could support. There was no indication that the committee members intend to introduce legislation on evaluations. Chairwoman Sen. Lana Theis (R-Livingston) indicated in committee that she intends to reduce "unnecessary testing" and stated an interest in considering the WorkKeys requirement. Also mentioned by Sen. Ken Horn (R-Frankenmuth) was his intent to introduce legislation to repeal the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA).

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## **House Tax Policy Moves Brownfield Reimbursement Bill**

On Wednesday, the House reported HB 5059 from the House Tax Policy Committee to the House Ways and Means Committee. The bill is sponsored by Rep. Bradley Slagh (R-Holland) and would reimburse intermediate school districts for tax revenue that is captured by the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.

Currently, revenues for local school districts in a brownfield are held harmless, but ISDs are not. The School Aid Fund reimburses a local district for school taxes that are captured by the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority through the per-pupil foundation. When ISDs are not reimbursed, this equates to fewer dollars available for special education, career and technical education, and other local programs. This bill addresses a tax parity issue and the MASA Council has supported this legislation.

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## **Movement on MMC Bill**

In previous updates, we have flagged a potential curriculum change for next year's 8th graders. As you know, high school students currently can fulfill their foreign language requirement with visual, performing or applied arts or CTE. There is currently a sunset on this law that is set to expire; SB 171, sponsored by Sen. Jim Stamas (R-Midland), would remove that sunset to allow for students to continue to fulfill the foreign language requirement in this way. If this bill does not pass, current 8th grade students would be required to take two years of a foreign language.

It's currently on the Senate Floor. We will keep you updated on this one, but as you start doing scheduling for next year, a lot of folks are advising to plan that 9th graders next year will have two years of foreign language absent this bill change.

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## **Governor Vetoes Press Box Heating Bill**

In unexpected news this week, Gov. Whitmer vetoed SB 294 on Tuesday. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Dale Zorn (R-Ida), proposed amending Michigan's construction code to clarify that interior spaces, such as press boxes built as viewing areas for outdoor sporting activities, are exempt from the permanent heating requirements. The bill also would exempt ticket booths and concession stands from the heating requirement.

The explanation for the veto cited that our construction code creates a set of standards to protect from "shoddy construction." She went on further to explain that seeking a legislative fix for a license denial removes regulatory authority from the department and encourages this approach for future license denials. "Legislation that makes construction in this state less safe for everyone is not an appropriate response to a single license denial."

MASA did support the legislation, but we do not anticipate an override vote would be successful. You can read her veto letter [here](#).