

LegislativeUpdate

Michigan Association of School Administrators | March 9, 2018



In this update:

- Summary
- MASA Testifies on Truancy Package
- House Continues Discussion on Teacher Preparation Programs
- Senate Revives Union Leave Time Legislation
- Federal Update from AASA
- MASA Legislative Advocacy Days

Summary

The budget continues to be the background discussion for legislators, and all signs point to a smooth process. We anticipate the House and Senate will release their versions the week of March 19, and then don't expect much

action until the May Revenue Estimating Conference. Both chambers continue to imply that the Governor's proposed \$120/\$240 foundation increase is not unrealistic, but we remain cautious until the actual budget bills are released.

The details of the Marshall Plan for Talent have been sent to the Legislature. Lawmakers have begun examining the \$100 million proposal within the context of the budget and amid increased calls for some sort of spending plan for school safety. We'll be taking the plan to the MASA/MAISA Government Relations & Policy Committee for input, and will continue to weigh in. Many of the proposed programs are actually existing programs that Gov. Snyder has moved out of the School Aid Budget and into a special proposal for long-term implementation.

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

MASA Testifies on Truancy Package

MASA joined the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) to testify before the House Judiciary Committee on the truancy package on Tuesday. As shared in previous updates, MASA and other stakeholders have been working for several months with the committee chair on Senate Bills 103-106. We appreciate the work and compromise that have been achieved thus far, but there are several outstanding issues that need to be resolved.

MASA testified to those concerns before the committee and answered several questions regarding how this legislation in its current form could impact students. In summary, we have proposed changes to the definitions of "in attendance" and "excused absences," and would like to see a few minor changes to maintain local autonomy. We will continue to advocate for these

changes in future discussions.

You can view the testimony [here](#).

House Continues Discussion on Teacher Preparation Programs

Testimony continued yesterday in the House Education Reform Committee on the teacher preparation package.

This week the committee heard from several universities that generally supported the intent of the bill package. The universities together stated that they view the legislation as a positive focus and appreciate the input they have been able to provide to the bill sponsors. They did raise some concerns specific to HB 5603, including that establishing a 12-course requirement may limit innovation in reading instruction and prohibit flexibility for students that may have literacy instruction in other courses.

Additionally, a meaningful discussion was had regarding the necessity for teachers in the field to also be qualified in the areas the bill package addresses in order to have effective mentor teachers. Other points of testimony included the process of identifying eligible classrooms for student teaching opportunities and how feedback is given to students and universities. Several members indicated they would like to see uniformity across teacher preparation programs in the way this is done.

Rep. Daniella Garcia (R-Holland) indicated that new drafts will be offered to include the most appropriate evidence-based research practices. Additionally she called upon universities to consider that the majority of responsibility in student teaching falls on K-12, dismissing any financial concerns that the

universities raised.

The committee also favorably reported HB 5626 sponsored by Rep. Jeff Noble (R-Plymouth). The bill is a trailer bill to SB 574, legislation that allows public school academies to receive revenue from regional enhancement millages. A concern that MASA raised during the discussion surrounding SB 574 is the how this change will impact ballots. SB 574 expanded the definition of constituent districts to include PSAs and charter schools that meet certain requirements. For many areas in the state, requiring every school to be listed in a ballot question would add pages to ballots and increase costs for local units of government. HB 5626 corrects this unintended consequence by allowing all schools eligible for regional enhancement millages to be listed as “public schools.” MASA is supportive of HB 5526 as it corrects our previous concerns of SB 574 — a bill that MASA vigorously opposed.

Senate Revives Union Leave Time Legislation

The Senate Education Committee this week revisited legislation that should sound familiar. SBs 795 and 796, both sponsored by Sen. Marty Knollenberg (R-Troy), target union leave time and the accrual of retirement credit.

SB 795 prohibits the accrual of service credit under MPSERS for employees that are on leave or released time for professional service organizations. SB 796 prohibits paid released time for individuals to conduct union business even if the public employer is reimbursed for it. Under the proposed legislation, community colleges and public school employees would not be able to use resources for collecting dues from employee wages.

This is the third time that this legislation in some form has been proposed by

Sen. Knollenberg. In committee this week, he said that the intent of this legislation is to prevent taxpayers from paying for union activity, and that current practice allegedly facilitates a system in which private organizations benefit from subsidized work.

Supporters of this legislation reiterated the point several times throughout committee that public school employees release time takes dollars away from vital educational services, and therefore only benefits private organizations. To this point, opponents of the legislation demonstrated the ways in which leave time benefits schools, employees and local communities. Meaningful examples were shared of how current practice allows for collaboration and is in the best interest of our teachers and management.

MASA is opposed to this legislation for several reasons. Most significantly however is the added cost that SB 795 will have on the state and the burden on districts to account for the hours and minutes that will be disqualified from retirement service credit.

These bills passed the Senate last year and stalled in the House during lame duck. We'll continue to monitor the legislation and report back.

Federal Update from AASA

As advocates for K-12 system administrators, the Higher Education Act is not a natural fit. However, like with healthcare and tax policy fights we have engaged in previously, we learn that to advocate for superintendents means to work on anything that could impact schools. Through this, we are paying close attention to the Higher Education Act reauthorization conversations in both the House and Senate. We are keeping a particularly close eye on the elements that would impact teacher preparation and anything that could exacerbate teacher shortages in the future.

Last month, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce passed the Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education Reform (PROSPER) Act through their committee. This bill is premised on simplifying and streamlining the student aid system. The bill promotes a "one grant, one loan, one work-study, two repayment plans" structure, giving every student access to the same funding supports, no matter their study and career path. This means it eliminates TEACH Grants, Teacher Loan Forgiveness and Public Service Loan Forgiveness. This means a graduate working on Wall Street and one teaching in a rural school would have the same grants, loans and repayment options. This is very concerning, given the high expense of higher education and the financial sacrifice many teachers make by entering and staying in the public education system.

The PROSPER Act has passed through the House committee on a fully partisan vote (all Republicans voted yes, all Democrats voted no). Chairwoman Virginia Foxx has reiterated her desire to have a full vote on the House floor, but no such vote has been scheduled. Rumors are that there may be enough dissenters to keep it from passing. Also, this bill is not a priority for Speaker Paul Ryan, in a time of higher profile issues.

The good news is that the PROSPER Act would never pass the Senate.

Senators Lamar Alexander and Patty Murray are committed to working together in a bipartisan way to reauthorize this bill. Both the Republicans and Democrats have released their priorities for the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, which show very different commitments. The Republicans are focused on simplifying and streamlining the system. The Democrats are focused on increasing affordability and accessibility.

As these bills move forward, we will be asking for your support in protecting and improving programs vital to your workforce.

