

To: Council About Parochial Board of Directors
From: Cara Marie Dobie and Courtney VanCamp
Date: December 7, 2018
Re: Legislative Report

Innovative School Districts Narrowly Pass House

HB 6314 and HB 6315, sponsored by Rep. Tim Kelly (R-Saginaw Township) would allow schools to apply and operate as 'innovative' school districts. These districts would receive additional resources, have more individualized student instruction and aid and would operate year-round. Also, under HB 6315, student count and provisions for hours of pupil instruction mandated under the School Aid Act would not apply to innovative districts.

Many public school advocates are concerned that these bills could potentially open up the door to arrangements with private organizations, and that public funds could eventually be shifted to private schools. Another controversial element of the package is the creation of a new Education Accountability Policy Commission. This new body would be appointed by the Governor, with the understanding that Governor Snyder would accomplish this task before Governor-elect Whitmer took office. It is feared that the non-elected Commission could usurp some of the responsibilities of the State Board of Education, including ordering the closure of schools that fail to meet state standards.

Schools would be required to apply for this status by March 1st of each year and would be evaluated by the superintendent of the public institution and the Department of Education Innovative Council. The bills passed the House by narrow margins (56-53 and 57-52, respectively). They will likely be taken up in the Senate next week.

Legislators Urged To Flunk 'A-F' Grading Bill

HB 5526, sponsored by Rep. Tim Kelly (R-Saginaw Twp.) aims to create a new "A-F" school grading system, heavily based on standardized test scores. This bill also includes a measure that would close schools based on these ratings. Many oppose this bill, including the State Board of Education and the Michigan Education Association.

The plan would be the third performance rating system for schools since 2012.

Teacher Preparation Bill Package Pass House

On Wednesday this week, several bills regarding teacher preparation requirements passed the House. The bills, specifically aimed at institutions training future educators, include: HB 5598, sponsored by Rep. Daniela Garcia (R-Holland), HB 5602, sponsored by Rep. Tim Kelly (R-Saginaw Township), HB 5603, sponsored by Rep. Tim Kelly (R-Saginaw Township), HB 5604, sponsored by Rep. Pamela Hornberger (R-Chesterfield) and HB 5605, sponsored by Rep. Jim Lilly (R-Park Township).

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HB 5598 would require all full-time faculty members teaching in a teacher preparation program to complete at least 30 hours of continuing education per school year.

HB 5602 would require the Michigan Department of Education to develop and implement an innovative educator corps program. The teachers chosen for the program would receive a yearly stipend between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

HB 5603 would amend the reading coursework requirements for teacher certification. Currently, elementary-level teacher applicants must complete 6 credit hours in the teaching of reading. This bill would require the Superintendent of Public Instruction could only grant a provisional teaching certificate to an individual who has earned at least 12 early elementary credits with at least 9 later elementary credits in the teaching of reading.

The bills have sent to the Senate.

State, Local School Boards Support TCA Call For No Action

The Tri-County Alliance for Public Education's (TCA) statement that lame duck legislative session isn't the time to "rush through questionable education reforms" has gained a large amount of support. TCA's statement is speculated to be referring to the creation of an A-F grading scale. The State Board of Education voted earlier this month to adopt a similar position to the TCA and are joined by multitude of Michigan school boards.

'No Leave Time On Public Dime' Bill In Year-End Picture Again

SB 0795 and SB 0796, sponsored by Sen. Marty Knollenberg (R-Troy), prohibit school districts from having to pay for "leave time" when employees are representing their union. Senate Democrats opposed these bills, including Sen. Gregory, who pointed out that these bills seemed unnecessary, as they were not something school districts asked for. SB 0796, which prohibits districts from engaging in bargaining agreements involving union leave time, was also opposed by Democrats with the addition of some Senate Republicans.

Sen. Hopgood and Sen. Knezek both offered amendments to SB 0796 & neither passed. Both SB 0795 and SB 0796 passed in the Senate and are heading to the House.

Watered-Down Uncertified Sub Teacher Bill Moves

HB 4421, sponsored by Sen. Holly Hughes (R-White River Township), aims to expand eligibility for substitute teachers to noncertified instructors. The new requirements for a substitute include 60 hours of college credit or an associates and 2 or more years' experience in the area they would be teaching. This bill would only apply to those who wish to teach in Industrial Technology or Career Tech.

Sen. Hopgood was the only member of the Senate Education Committee to cast a "no" vote on this bill. Supporters of this bill claim it would help alleviate a shortage of substitute teachers. Other bills that

were taken up by this committee today include SB 0885, sponsored by Sen. Mike Shirkey (R-Clarklake), which allows schools to begin their school year after Labor Day.

Additionally, a Senate bill package regarding comprehensive school safety was taken up today. The legislation makes schools report to the Office of School Safety instead of the Michigan State Police and schools are no longer required to submit to safety inspections. The package also lacks school safety plan funding.

2018 Election Results

Democrat Gretchen Whitmer will be the next governor of Michigan, and Garlan Gilchrest will be the Lieutenant Governor, after they defeated Republican Bill Schuette and Lisa Posthumus Lyons in the November 6 election. Democrats clinched the top of the ticket races, with Jocelyn Benson defeating Mary Treder Lang for Secretary of State, and Dana Nessel edging Tom Leonard for Attorney General. Senator Debbie Stabenow was also elected to a fourth term after surviving a strong challenge from political newcomer John James. Democrats were also able to flip two U.S. House seats with Haley Stevens defeating Lena Epstein in the 11th District and Elissa Slotkin defeating Mike Bishop in the 8th. Fred Upton (R-St. Joseph) staved off a tough challenge from Democrat Matt Longjohn to win his 17th term and avoid being the third Democratic pickup in Michigan's Congressional delegation. In the 13th District in Southeast Michigan, Rashida Tlaib won her race becoming the first Muslim-American woman ever to be elected to Congress.

For the state legislative races, the "Blue Wave" that would have been necessary for Democrats to win majorities in the State House and State Senate failed to materialize. The success at the top of the ticket did not translate to the huge gains they would have needed to overcome large Republican majorities in both chambers of the Michigan Legislature. The Democrats picked up five seats in the State House and five seats in the State Senate to bring the partisan totals for next year to 58-52 GOP in the House and 22-16 GOP in the Senate. That likely means that the next Speaker of the Michigan House will be Lee Chatfield (R-Levering), and the next Senate Majority Leader will be Mike Shirkey (R-Clark Lake). Both caucuses will hold their official leadership elections later this week.

Elsewhere on the ballot, three constitutional changes were approved as Proposals 1, 2 and 3 all passed by large margins. Proposal 1 will legalize the sale of marijuana in Michigan for recreational use to persons age 21 and older. Proposal 2 will create an independent redistricting commission to draw legislative maps. Proposal 3 makes numerous changes to voting laws, including restoration of straight party voting and no-reason absentee voting.

Justice Beth Clement was overwhelmingly reelected to the Michigan Supreme Court. As of this writing, the second seat is still too close to call, with incumbent Kurtis Wilder narrowly trailing Megan Cavanagh. Michigan voters also selected candidates for statewide educational boards. Bryan Barnhill and Dr. Anil Kumar were elected to the Wayne State Board of Governors, Brianna Scott and Kelly Tebay were elected to the MSU Board of Trustees, Jordan Acker and Paul Brown were elected to the U of M Board of Regents, and Judy Pritchett and Tiffany Tilley were elected to the State Board of Education.

Both the House and the Senate will be in session tomorrow before a two week break. House session is currently scheduled for the weeks of November 27th, December 4th, December 11th, and December 18th. Senate session is currently scheduled for November 27th, December 4th, December 11th, with tentative session scheduled for the week of December 18th.

We will be following up with a more extensive election overview with a complete list of legislators for the 2019-2020 session.