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To: Council About Parochiaid
From: Cara Spagnuolo
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Re: Legislative Update

Senate Package Could Lift Charter CAP

A “reform” package the Senate Education Committee is expected to take up this month could lift the cap on state university-chartered public academies and expand dual enrollment, shared time and schools of choice options. Sen. Phil Pavlov, (R-St. Clair) Chair of the Senate Education Committee said he thinks it’s likely. In the August 16th issue of MIRS he was quoted as saying, “We have to take a hard look at creating more opportunities for parents and students. We need a bigger education marketplace and look at why schools have let students down in certain areas.”

According to the University of Washington Bothell’s National Charter School Research Project (NCSRP), as of 2010, Michigan had the sixth most charter schools in the country. So far, there’s no implementation date and it looks like there won’t be many changes in terms of who can authorize charter schools. It appears the focus will be more on who will be operating charters. The package will also likely contain bills expanding cyber schools and addressing the new education authority Gov. Snyder has established.

The package includes SB 618-624:

- **SB 618 Sen. Pavlov (R-St. Clair)** Education; public school academies; revisions to provisions concerning formation, operation, and termination of public school academies, urban high school academies, and schools of excellence; provide for, and allow school districts to contract with outside entity for provision of teachers.
- **SB 619 Sen. Colbeck (R-Canton Township)** Education; public school academies; certain requirements and limitations on authorizing cyber schools; revise.
- **SB 620 Sen. Robertson (R-Grand Blanc)** Education; public school academies; conversion schools; provide for.
- **SB 621 Sen. Hansen (R-Hart)** School aid; other; conditions under which public school may receive school aid for instruction provided to nonpublic school students at nonpublic school site; revise.

- **SB 622 Sen. Emmons (R-Sheridan)** Education; students; dual enrollment eligibility; modify in career and technical preparation act.
- **SB 623 Sen. Emmons (R-Sheridan)** Education; students; dual enrollment eligibility; modify in postsecondary options act.
- **SB 624 Sen. Pavlov (R-St. Clair)** Education; school choice; geographic requirements for schools of choice; remove, and require districts to participate based on available space.

The Senate Education Committee heard a presentation from James Goenner, President and CEO of the National Charter School Institute on September 7th. Goenner said the state's role is to fund education and set standards and measurements. But it should give enough freedom for implementation. He said the two questions that should be asked are: Are the kids learning and are the finances being taken care of? He said he supports removing "the exclusive geographic franchise of districts," when the state funds the students, not school districts. That model is in keeping with Snyder and Pavlov's plans to expand charters, which are taxpayer-funded, and mandate schools of choice participation. According to MIRS, Goenner was the only person to testify today at the roughly one-hour hearing. Others turned in cards, including Katharine Barr, who founded Michigan Communities for Local Control (MCLC), which opposes the so-called "forced choice" component.

Sen. Goeff Hansen (R-Hart) has a bill expanding public schools' ability to provide services for non-public students. David Hecker, President, AFT Michigan responded by saying, "As students across Michigan start school this week, they are unfortunately learning the wrong lessons from the legislature." "These proposals are not rooted in research about what works to increase student learning, but in partisan ideology. We need our legislators to be focusing on proven strategies to enhance student achievement, not dismantling our public schools and attacking teachers for political gain." President Hecker went on to add that by requiring financially strapped districts to educate private school students without allocating any funding, legislators are reigniting the battle over vouchers—a proposal voters already decisively defeated at the ballot box. "Not only is this an end run around the will of Michigan voters, it is a failed idea, with voucher programs failing to produce achievement gains in Milwaukee, Cleveland, Washington, D.C., and other cities:

<http://www.aft.org/pdfs/teachers/vouchertrackrecord0211.pdf>"

Private Schools Ask for State Funds

Private school advocates have asked an informal legislative panel for state funds that would cover the "administrative costs" of meeting state requirements. However, public school officials lashed out at the idea of taking money away from public schools. On August 31, MIRS reported that Brian Broderick, executive director for the Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools, told the 13-member House Education workgroup that "non-public schools" have to

complete certain administrative tasks to meet state standards for being recognized as a school. That's why he came to ask for "mandated services reimbursements" for non-public schools.

Peter Spadafore, assistant director of government relations for the Michigan Association of School Boards, said the money would amount to vouchers. He said, "I think it's definitely an unconstitutional move. "The constitution, as pointed out today by the speaker, was amended in 1970 to prohibit public dollars going to private schools and the voucher movement has been unsuccessful a number of times in the past. Michigan voters have flat out rejected the idea of public dollars going to our private schools." Spadafore also noted that he was concerned that this would further drain the state School Aid Fund. "This would exacerbate the problem," he said. "Whatever dollar amount you pick would be dollars that would not be there to support public education that the voters have time and time again insisted on supporting. We're trying to educate as many students as possible with limited resources. Further shelling public dollars out of the School Aid Fund would exacerbate that problem."

Paul Stankewitz, policy advocate for the Michigan Catholic Conference, disagreed. "I don't think it's about taking money from anybody," he said. "I don't think people realize there is that compliance list. Most people think non-public schools are just off on their own, but there are a lot of things we have to do."

Rep. Earl Poleski (R-Jackson) said he interpreted Michigan laws as trying to avoid the kinds of payments Broderick and Stankewitz were asking for at the meeting. Poleski said the non-public schools were just inviting more state oversight if they were going to ask for funds.

The 13-member House Education Reform Group has been taking testimony throughout the summer with interest groups and individuals about what changes should be made to the way Michigan runs its schools. According to MIRS, other workgroup testimony came from Don Wotruba, director of legislative affairs of the Michigan Association of School Boards, who talked about the considerations that should be made during consolidation.

Convincing parents and community members of the need to consolidate can be a challenging task, he said, when they want to preserve their community identity, school pride, and sports programs' reputations. He also made the case for considering flexibility in the setup of school boards in the consolidation process. "Legislators are going to have to entrust in voters to make the right decision," he said.

The education reform workgroup is currently made up of Reps. Poleski, Bill Rogers (R-Brighton), Paul Scott (R-Grand Blanc), Deb Shaughnessy (R-Charlotte), Kevin Cotter (R-Mt. Pleasant), Thomas Hooker (R-Byron Center), Bob Genetski (R-Saugatuck), Margaret O'Brien (R-Portage), Ken Goike (R-Owosso), Tim Melton (D-Auburn Hills), Sean McCann (D-Kalamazoo), Douglas Geiss (D-Taylor) and Rudy Hobbs (D-Lathrup Village). (*Melton subsequently left the Legislature to take a job with StudentsFirst).

Committees of Interest to CAP:

House Education

Paul Scott (R- Grand Blanc), Committee Chair
Thomas B. Hooker (R-Byron Center), Majority Vice-Chair
Hugh D. Crawford (R-Novi)
Tom McMillin (R-Rochester Hills)
Ray A. Franz (R-Onkama)
Kurt Heise (R-Plymouth)
Holly Hughes (R-Montague)
Aric Nesbitt (R-Lawton)
Margaret E. O'Brien (R-Portage)
Amanda Price (R-Holland)
Deb Lynn Shaughnessy (R-Charlotte)
Ken Yonker (R-Caledonia)
Lisa Brown (D-West Bloomfield), Minority Vice-Chair
George T. Darany (D-Dearborn)
Lisa Howze (D-Detroit)
Rudy Hobbs (D-Lathrup Village)
David Rutledge (D-Ypsilanti)
Thomas Stallworth III (D-Detroit)
Douglas A. Geiss (D-Taylor)

House K-12 Appropriations Subcommittee:

Bill Rogers (R-Brighton), Chair
Earl Poleski (R-Jackson) Majority Vice Chair
Jon Bumstead (R-Newaygo)
Phil Potvin (R-Cadillac)
Joan Bauer (D-Lansing), Minority Vice Chair
Brandon Dillon (D-Grand Rapids)

Senate Education

Phil Pavlov (R-St. Clair), Chair
Judy Emmons (R-Sheridan), Vice Chair
Patrick Colbeck (R-Canton)
Hoon-Yung Hopgood (D-Hamburg), Minority Vice Chair
Coleman Young II (D-Detroit)

Senate K-12 Appropriations Subcommittee

Howard Walker (R-Traverse City), Chair
Bruce Caswell (R-Hillsdale), Vice Chair
John Pappageorge (R-Troy)
Hoon-Yung Hopgood (D-Hamburg), Minority Vice Chair