



# SCHOOL EQUITY CAUCUS

*Making a difference for the public school children of Michigan*

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Dear Colleagues:

I hope you had a wonderful Memorial Day weekend, and are enjoying the last few days of the 2022-23 school year! Many legislators have gone north to Mackinac Island for the annual Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce conference, so there are not expected to be any votes in Lansing this week. Here is a summary of some of the things happening...

## 1. 2023-24 Membership Invoices Forthcoming

It's that time of year again when we remind you to be on the lookout for your 2023-24 School Equity Caucus membership invoice. Bucking the inflationary trend of the last year, we are pleased to announce that for the sixteenth consecutive year we will be able to keep our dues rates frozen!

Your membership in the Caucus remains critically important. In addition to the monthly *Caucus Newsletter* and published-as-necessary *Information Alerts*, your membership makes our efforts on your behalf possible. The Caucus has consistently helped set the tone for the school budget discussion by bringing the need and importance of school funding adequacy and equity to the legislative table.

If you are retiring or otherwise leaving your district at the end of the year, please consider sending in your Caucus invoice before departing. It's always much easier to demonstrate the value of Caucus membership to new superintendents once they have received the Newsletters and Alerts and better understand our focus and activities.

We appreciate your ongoing support as we advocate on your district's behalf in Lansing! The School Equity Caucus continues to make an impact, and we are determined to keep the cause of equity front and center for all students in the state of Michigan.

## 2. PERA Bills Reported Out of Committee

This week, despite concerted effort on the part of many education lobbyists, **HBs 4354-4357** were reported out of the House Labor Committee to the House floor for consideration. These bills would remove a number of items from the list of prohibited subjects of bargaining within the Public Employee Relations Act (PERA) including:

- Teacher placement
- Layoff and recall policies

- The evaluation process
- Discipline and discharge
- Merit pay
- Consolidation of services and intergovernmental agreements
- Third-party contracting

Another PERA bill, **SB 169** (sponsored by Sen. Cherry), was also reported out last week from the Senate Labor Committee and are on the Senate floor. This bill would require public employers to provide certain employee contact information (including name, home and work addresses, personal telephone, and personal email address) to the unions representing these employees. The contact information would need to be provided for all such employees within 30 days after the start of employment and every 90 days thereafter.

A related bill, **HB 4044** (sponsored by Rep. Koleszar), remains on the House floor after being approved by the House Labor Committee in March. This bill would eliminate the requirement that wages and benefits be “frozen” during negotiations as well as eliminating the prohibition on retroactive wage and benefit settlements.

Thank you to those of you who have been contacting your legislators to express their experiences and opinions on how these pieces of legislation would impact district operations, labor relations, and the bargaining process. Your voices are being heard! If you haven't yet done so, please find a time to make your thoughts known.

### 3. **Budget Action Expected Soon**

With the recent meeting of the state's Consensus Revenue Estimating Conference (CREC), “official” projected revenue numbers have been established for the coming budget year. This sets the stage for the final work on the 2023-24 budget among the members of the conference committee working to resolve the different budget packages proposed by the House, Senate, and Governor.

It is expected that these negotiations will be wrapped up in the near future, and that passage of the final budget will follow shortly thereafter – barring unforeseen delays approval should be completed by the end of June. We should begin hearing details of the compromise agreement in the next few weeks, and will share more information as it becomes available.

If you missed our summary of the CREC held on Friday, May 19, that Information Alert is again attached to the email accompanying this newsletter.

### 4. **A-F Report Card Repealed**

Last week Governor Whitmer signed into law P.A. 34 of 2023 (formerly HB 4166, sponsored by Rep. Koleszar). This law eliminates the “A-F” school report card system, as well as the requirement that MDE develop a ranked list of the state's schools. The state's main remaining accountability measure is the “School Index Score” ([School Index \(mischooldata.org\)](https://www.mischooldata.org)) which meets federal requirements under ESSA. This system has rankled many in the school community since its introduction as an oversimplification of complex educational measures, and its elimination has been well received.

## 5. Sinking Fund Expansion Also Enacted

In another welcome development, earlier this month Governor Whitmer also signed into law P.A. 26 of 2023 (formerly SB 63, sponsored by Sen. ). This legislation expands the allowable uses of sinking funds to now include school transportation vehicles and the parts required to maintain them.

## 6. Other Legislative Action

With the budget taking center stage, it is expected that the pace of policy bills may slow down for a time. Here is a status update on other bills of note:

- **SB 161** (sponsored by Sen. Geiss) and **SB 162** (sponsored by Sen. McCann) have both passed the House Education Committee after having previously passed the Senate. Among other provisions, SB 161 expands teacher certification reciprocity with other states and countries, making it easier for teachers to receive a Michigan certificate and endorsements similar to those they have previously held in other locales. SB 162 similarly expands reciprocity for school counselors. Both bills have the support of MDE. These bills are now on the House floor for final consideration.
- **HB 4279** (sponsored by Rep. VanderWall) was approved by the House Education Committee and has been sent to the floor of the House. This bill would permit an ISD to contract with another ISD to operate a CTE program, and would allow CTE millage funds to be spent on programming operated by another ISD. (The latter provision would only be applicable to those millages authorized after the bill's approval.)
- **HB 4549** (sponsored by Rep. Shannon) has also been reported from the House Education Committee to the full House. This bill would modify the requirements for substitute teachers through the 2024-25 school year to now include that they be a high school graduate, and at least 21 years old or enrolled in a teacher prep program. Under these provisions, a substitute would not be allowed to fill the same position for more than 10 consecutive days. The bill also stipulates that individuals could not be used to substitute in a special education classroom unless they were qualified to teach special education under state and federal law.

As part of the legislation, retroactive permission would also be granted throughout the 2022-23 school year for the practice of using current employees with a high school diploma as substitute teachers (as had been authorized for the 2021-22 school year).

- **SB 66** (sponsored by Sen. Chang) has passed the full Senate and is now in the House Criminal Justice Committee. This bill would require MDE to develop informational materials related to sexual assault and sexual harassment for student in grades 6-12. Districts would then be required to disseminate this information to their students, along with relevant district policies and contact information for the district's Title IX coordinator. These provisions would take effect with the 2024-25 school year.
- **SB 89** (sponsored by Sen. Cherry) remains in the House Natural Resources Committee after previously passing the Senate. This bill would require schools to

develop a drinking water management plan, and have hydration stations and other filtered water sources available in schools by the end of the 2024-25 school year.

- **HB 4233** (sponsored by Rep. Churches) has been reported from the House Labor Committee to the full House floor. This bill would allow school districts to collect union dues, thereby eliminating the prohibition enacted in 2012.
- **HB 4064** (sponsored by Rep. Carter) would allow MDE to develop or adopt one or more model curriculums for cursive writing, and would “strongly encourage” districts to incorporate one of these programs into their curriculum. The bill remains in the Senate Education Committee having previously passed the House.

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Best wishes for a successful conclusion to the school year! Thanks for your ongoing support of the School Equity Caucus!



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