

## Karen Hill

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**From:** Charlie Glaes  
**Sent:** Friday, December 09, 2011 12:24 PM  
**To:** Karen Hill  
**Subject:** FW: [EmailDefender SPAM suspect] MASB Action Alert - Charles, Your Action Needed

Also include in board packet.

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**From:** Peter Spadafore and Don Wotruba [<mailto:pspadafore@masb.org>]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 05, 2011 1:01 PM  
**To:** Charlie Glaes  
**Subject:** [EmailDefender SPAM suspect] MASB Action Alert - Charles, Your Action Needed



In the last week, we've asked you to make phone calls to the House urging a no vote on [Senate Bill 618](#), the bill that expands the number of university charter schools without regard to quality. We're asking, once again, that you make this call. It's important that we keep pressure on state legislators to look at policy rather than politics when making decisions about the future of education in our state.

MASB opposes the legislation because it seeks quantity over quality in charter school expansion. Weeks of testimony from high performing charters illuminated that there are bright spots in the charter industry. But what isn't talked about is the fact that many charter schools operate on the persistently low achieving list and leave thousands of students behind. We need safeguards in the bill to ensure that only the best of the best are allowed to replicate and only in areas of the highest need. Legislators have promised a subcommittee to deal with quality. These quality safeguards must be a part of the bill, not part of a politically motivated exercise. Several times during the hearings on this bill, amendments were offered to address the quality concerns—they were defeated. Additionally, the bill removes any requirement for charter schools and cyber schools to report to the Michigan Department of Education on success.

[Click here](#) to call your legislator and urge him/her to **vote NO on Senate Bill 618**. SB 618 is the wrong choice for Michigan.

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Michigan Association of School Boards

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**Karen Hill**

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**From:** Peter Spadafore and Don Wotruba [pspadafore@masb.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, December 09, 2011 1:01 PM  
**To:** Karen Hill  
**Subject:** [EmailDefender SPAM suspect] MASB News from the Capitol

## News From the Capitol

### Government Relations



#### MASB News from the Capitol

Week of Dec. 5-9, 2011

[More Info](#)

#### In this Issue:

- *Legislators in House Seeking Changes to Charter Cap Bill*
- *Cyber Charter Expansion Still on the Agenda*
- *School Bond Loan Fund Cap Proposed*
- *Gov. Snyder Signs Matt's Safe School Law*
- *Let Your Voice be Heard at FRN*

#### Legislators in House Seeking Changes to Charter Cap Bill

It appears that progress on [Senate Bill 618](#) has slowed, due in large part, from the phone calls and emails from school officials demanding that any expansion of the charter cap come with mechanisms that ensure quality over quantity. We continue to ask that you email and call your member of the House to voice opposition to this legislation. Even if you've already contacted your member, it's imperative that you continue making phone calls and sending emails. MASB's government relations staff have been at the Capitol working this issue with legislators; it's clear that the message of common sense and data driven decision making is resonating with members of the House.

#### Cyber Charter Expansion Still on the Agenda

Although it's not received as much press as the bill that expands brick-and-mortar charters, the cyber charter expansion bill, Senate Bill 619, represents a dangerous path in online learning and flies in the face of national research trends and data driven decision making.

#### Bill Highlights:

- Removes the limit on the number of contracts that can be issued for cyber charter schools.
- Removes the requirements that cyber school students be previously enrolled in public school, and that a cyber school offers all grades K-12.
- Removes any requirements including demonstrated success for entities to operate cyber schools.



- Removes enrollment limits on cyber contracts and incentives for cyber schools to seek out high school dropouts.

#### *Bill Issues:*

- Cyber school operation has only been around a few years, coming into existence under Michigan's legislation to secure Race to the Top grants. There's not enough history, data or experience to demonstrate that the pilot program should be expanded.
- If the aim is to truly offer alternatives and options for parents and students, limiting the number of grades leaves families with fewer options when the cyber curriculum is exhausted.
- In order to operate a cyber school in Michigan, it's imperative that operators have a track record of demonstrated success and high levels of achievement. Removing accountability and rigor requirements results in a less than desirable program.

#### **School Bond Loan Fund Cap Proposed**

Senate Bills [770-772](#) propose amendments to the School Bond Qualification, Approval and Loan Act which governs the Michigan School Bond Loan Revolving Fund. As currently drafted, it would severely and unnecessarily hamper a school district's ability to access and borrow from the fund. Not only would this have a negative impact on districts, but also have a negative impact on the construction industry at a time when we can least afford it.

The proposal would put a total cap on the school bond loan fund of \$1.5 billion. We're currently at \$1.2 billion and will quickly reach that cap, thus preventing other districts from accessing the fund at all. The proposal would make it more difficult to access the fund for projects needed by districts because of new state mandates on technology; negatively impact a district's ability to refund bonds; give too much discretion and power to the Treasury department; create taxable value calculations for bond issues that would make them difficult to pass; and require ballot language that would cause voter confusion and distrust which would likely result in failure at the ballot.

A cynic may look at this bill and think Treasury is trying to end any financial assistance for school infrastructure. Michigan is already near the bottom of the list for the amount of state assistance that schools receive for buildings, and this bill would likely push us even lower.

#### **Gov. Snyder Signs Matt's Safe School Law**

Gov. Snyder signed House Bill 4163, Public Act 241, which requires that all school districts in Michigan have an anti-bullying policy in place six months from the adoption of the law (June 7, 2012). Districts may use existing policies on bullying and harassment if they satisfy the minimum requirements set forth in PA 241. For full details of the bill, see the [Nov. 21 issue](#) of *Headlines*.

This conversation is a decade old in the Michigan Legislature, and MASB has supported putting this legislation in place for many years. Michigan joins 47 other states in having a law on the books that requires an anti-bullying policy for school districts.

#### **Let Your Voice be Heard at FRN**

It's time to register for the annual Federal Relations Network Conference (FRN), Feb.

5-7 in Washington, D.C. FRN is the only national legislative conference for school board members. Join school board members from across the country and speak together—as one collective voice. Nothing is more powerful than witnessing 900 school board members advocating for their students to members of Congress and their key staff during NSBA's Day on Capitol Hill. Michigan traditionally has one of the largest delegations at the conference; let's keep that trend going! In addition to the wonderful conference speakers and programming, MASB hosts a formal briefing on Michigan-specific issues and a breakfast on Capitol Hill with Sen. Stabenow and Sen. Levin. Visit [www.nsba.org/frn2012](http://www.nsba.org/frn2012) to register or contact Cheryl Huffman, [chuffman@masb.org](mailto:chuffman@masb.org), 517.327.5915.

### **Contact MASB**

Contact Peter Spadafore, [pspadafore@masb.org](mailto:pspadafore@masb.org) or Don Wotruba, [dwotruba@masb.org](mailto:dwotruba@masb.org) with any questions.

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