



Missouri Equity Education Partnership-Action mobilizes those who support diversity, equity, and inclusion for ALL! Please see the calls to action outlined below and join us in bending the arc towards equity ensuring Missouri schools are a safe, welcoming space where folks can learn all things.

## CALLS TO ACTION

**[Call or email committees to urge DO NOT PASS on bills in executive session!](#)**

House Special Committee on Education Reform will vote on **[SB 727 \(Koenig\)](#)**, the **education omnibus**, which expands charters to Boone County and moves public money to non-public schools with little accountability. See below for talking points. We oppose *this bill*.

*Deadline is Tues 4/2/24, 9am*

House Elections and Elected Officials will vote on **[SJR 74 \(Coleman\)](#)** changing the initiative petition process by adding a concurrent majority of 5 of 8 congressional district majorities for signature gathering. *We oppose this bill. Deadline is Tues 4/2/24, 11am*

**[Submit written testimony to the Elementary and Secondary Education Committee!](#)**

**[HB 2184 \(Haffner\)](#)** has been returned in hopes that a sub can combine it with **[HB 1851 \(P. Brown\)](#)**. We have called for testimony before this, but we get another chance to advocate for including more of Brown's bill into this new version: growth model through the year, reliance on testing other than MAP. There will likely be a sub offered. The links above take you to the original bill texts

**[HB 1518 \(Hudson\)](#)** would allow organizations to discriminate based on beliefs and is poised for a Senate hearing. Students should feel safe on college and university campuses across the state and not have to worry about hate groups being able to legally form on campus. We're asking **[higher education students and educators to share their stories](#)** on any one of these topics:

- Why student clubs and student activities are meaningful to you.
- How clubs and activities have helped you develop leadership skills.
- The safety you feel accessing student activities without the fear of discrimination.
- Stories that share what it is like to be a higher education student in Missouri right now.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS VISIT**

**<https://www.missouriequityaction.com/>**

## RECAP OF LAST WEEK

**The Special Committee on Education Reform met twice last week.** On Monday it heard HB 2937 (Davidson), a bill that would completely overhaul funding of public schools by creating an Opportunity Savings

Account. It would divide 92% of current state funding among all Missouri students ages 5-21 and give each recipient a debit card; parents of any student—public, private parochial or Family Pace Education (FPE)—could then use the funds on the card to purchase a menu of qualified expenses. Money rolls over annually and any money left at graduation can be used for any post secondary educational opportunity or to purchase a home in Missouri. The 8% would go for teacher pay. Local funding would fund residential public schools. This bill was meant to get a conversation started, not necessarily pass. We testified in opposition based on our mission to ensure public funding to stay with public schools, and protecting equity. Currently the Foundation Formula helps ensure that all districts receive adequate funding by disbursing based on local contributions. We testified in opposition to this bill.

**On Thursday, the Committee heard SB 727 (Koenig)** which started life as a tax credit voucher bill with charter expansion but has grown into a 167 page omnibus with charter expansion limited to Boone County and the tax credits being non-refundable. However, it still does not protect IEP students from being denied access to non-public educational entities receiving state money, nor does it keep public funding exclusively with public schools. It also does not require any local input on charter expansion. We testified in person at this hearing because MoEEP did not submit on the record testimony in the Senate.

### **The Senate Select Com on Empowering Missouri Parents and Children heard two bills on Tuesday:**

**1164 (Black) Education Stabilization Fund** helps provide funding in the event of shortfalls. We are neutral on this bill but MNEA supports it.

**1290 (Carter) Classical Education** is a bill that provides grants to promote a classical education (Liberal arts, sciences and theological science. None of these were defined nor expanded upon with questions or testimony. We are watching this bill but do not think it will move forward.

**SB 819 (Ben Brown) Homeschool** activities was voted out unanimously in executive session in the form of a sub removing FLEX schools. Homeschoolers must participate in classes associated with activities (band, etc) to participate in extracurricular activities.

**HB 1989 (Pollitt), open enrollment**, was rereferred to this committee but has not been scheduled for a hearing as of publication.

### **OTHER COMMITTEES**

**HB 1518 (Hudson)** was referred to the Senate Committee on Governmental Accountability. No hearing is scheduled as of publication. This bill allows college organizations to exclude students as members or leaders due to the organizations sincerely held beliefs.

## **Expected Actions This Week**

**There are two big items still on the plates of both houses: the FRA, and the budget. The House is currently scheduled to debate budget bills on the House Floor starting Tuesday 4/2/24.**

### **COMMITTEES**

**House Special Committee on Educational Reform, Tues Apr 2, 2024 9:30am, Hearing room 1**

[Watch the hearing](#)

This committee currently shows only an executive session for SB 727 (Koenig). See the Call to Action above.

**House Committee on Elections and Elected Officials, Tues Apr 2, 2024, 9am, Hearing room 6**

[Watch the hearing.](#)

This committee currently shows only an executive session for SJR 74 (Coleman). See the Call to Action above.

**House Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education, Wed Apr 3, 2024,8am, Hearing room 4**

[Watch the Hearing](#)

**The Oversight Committee voted to return two bills addressing assessment and accreditation back to the committee of origin in hopes a compromise sub can be created. HB 2184 (Haffner) has received a hearing, and there may be a sub offered. We have advocated for HB 1851 (P. Brown) for a variety of reasons.**

HB 2184 would make student achievement 50% of a school/district report card for public review and 50% student growth. This bill is very similar to NCLB in that it has accountability without any mechanism on assisting or advising districts on remedying low performance. We moved this bill from watch to *oppose* after the hearing. On the other hand, HB 1851 outlines a growth model that is locally driven and uses interim testing as part of the growth piece. It would also move accreditation to a third party agency, not named, but along the lines of North Central. Please see the call to action above.

## **FLOOR ACTION AND DEBATE**

**HB 2619 (C. Smith) is a DEI defunding bill that is poised for debate.** This bill has been slowly and steadily moving forward and could be heard at any time. It has implications for business, economy, and licensures across the state. People do not realize that DEI training has broad implications for Missouri. It will impact all protected classes. Please stay tuned for calls to action.

We are starting a very unpredictable phase of the legislative session, and will do our best to stay on top of action and post calls to action as things change. If you have not joined our companion organization, please [join Missouri Equity Education Partnership](#) and receive alerts via email. You can also follow us on [Facebook](#).

We understand that this can be exhausting and seem overwhelming, and truly appreciate everyone who has taken action this session, and in past sessions. Every email, every piece of written testimony, every share of the calls to action and updates moves the needle in some small way. Many small pushes over time is a force, though. Over the next several weeks, let's keep pushing to move the needle.

## **Talking points for SB 727 - Education Omnibus**

**SB 727** Is detrimental to the majority in our districts, community, and livelihoods.

**VOUCHERS** are tax dollars to private/religious and hit on all districts' revenue AND enrollment creating a ripple effect impacting all stakeholders. This bill is a voucher tax credit bill. It started as a REFUNDABLE tax credit, meaning folks could get back more than their tax burden. It is now NON-REFUNDABLE meaning the amount can't exceed the burden, but it still takes revenue from the coffers, and could change back easily.

**MAJOR STATE CUTS WILL BE NECESSARY.** State cuts to things like social services will be needed to fund the \$500M, and will affect the entire state and especially underserved communities' services.

**VOUCHERS AND CHARTERS WILL EXPAND** in future years. This has happened in other states. They start out voluntary and move to mandatory. This current bill expands charters into *districts who have not held a local vote or had local input on to desirability*. According to the Iowa Rural Education Association in 2023 before they passed vouchers, "With recent expansions to unlimited open enrollment to any public school in Iowa, combined with Iowa's current public investment in private religious schools and homeschool exceeding \$80 million, even small demonstration programs or pilot projects should be resisted; the camel's nose under the tent is soon followed by the humps." The 2024 platform cites dozens of financial issues, costs, and implications now that the legislation passed and the plan is in place.

**THE GOOD STUFF WILL BE BACK.** This bill has many provisions that are desirable and common sense. If those other bills are so good as to sway legislators now, they'll be back in the future, and we can remind them, "You supported this before!"

For additional information on school choice, please visit [School Choice Fast Facts and Statistics](#)

Thank you to Jere Hochman for the information behind this document. It is mostly his with some editorial changes.