MARCH 15, 2024

Legislative Update

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Dyslexia Screening Bills Clear Senate, Head to House

The Senate voted this week to approve bipartisan bills mandating early screening and a "multi-tiered system of support" for dyslexia in schools beginning with the 2027-2028 school year. Under **Senate Bill 567**, public schools would have to provide prescreening for dyslexia through the "Read By Grade Three" examinations in kindergarten through third-grade. School districts and charter schools would be required to screen fourth- through 12-graders who have demonstrated possible indicators of dyslexia traits or decoding learning challenges. **SB 568** calls for requiring teacher preparation programs to teach about dyslexia, instructional accommodations, and other relevant topics. Senate passage sends the bills to the House, where they were assigned to the Education Committee.



Senate Bill Proposes Changes to Teacher Probationary Period

Senators Kristen McDonald Rivet and Dayna Polehanki introduced **Senate Bill 744** on March 6, calling for changes to the five-year probationary period for teachers required by the Teachers' Tenure Act. The bill would allow teachers who receive an effective rating before July 1, 2024, to count that rating towards their required three positive year-end performance evaluations. The bill also specifies the ratings would not have to be consecutive and could include the year-end performance evaluation in the final year of the probationary period. SB 744 was referred to the Senate Education Committee.

Senate Panel Discusses Mandatory Kindergarten

The Senate Education Committee heard testimony this week on legislation that would change kindergarten from optional to required in Michigan beginning with the 2025-2026 academic year. **Senate Bill 285** would require school districts to provide kindergarten and children to enroll in school at the age of five instead of six. Half- and full-day kindergarten options would be available, and exemptions for homeschool, private, or religious schools would be allowed for kindergarten as they currently exist for other grade levels. A substitute adopted by the committee revised wording in the bill to stipulate that each school district providing first grade must offer kindergarten. No vote was taken on the bill.





Mental Health in Schools the Focus of Off-Capitol Complex Committee Meeting

During a meeting held at Sterling Heights High School on March 11, associations representing school psychologists, social workers, and counselors in Michigan presented before the House Education Committee, on the documented shortage of mental health professionals in schools. They asked legislators to support more targeted funding for attracting and retaining staff as well as increased investment in successful programs.

House Committee Reports School AED Bills with Changes

After hearing testimony last week on a two-bill package for modifying school cardiac emergency plan requirements, the House Regulatory Reform Committee unanimously reported House Bills **5527** and **5528** to the full House on March 13, with several changes. The adopted substitute changed the required placement of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) from within 1-3 minutes of a cardiac emergency, to "accessible locations through the school's campus and athletic facilities that are easily retrievable." The substitute also, among other things, reduced the emergency response plan review period to every three years.

MDE Presents on Efforts to Raise Graduation Rates

At the March12th **State Board of Education Meeting**, the Michigan Department of Education presented details about its progress of increasing the percentage of students who graduate from high school—goal 5 in **Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan**. Among the successes it discussed were the Early Warning Intervention and Monitoring System, Personal Curriculum, middle school and high school graduation rate guidance, and expansion of secondary school programs. **Read more**