



Capitol Report  
April 2, 2021

**Weekly Overview:** This week, the Senate perfected a number of bills, one of which would establish the Narcotics Control Act. Missouri remains the only state in the nation without a statewide prescription drug-monitoring program. The bill has been the main focus of Senator Holly Rehder (R-Scott) through her eight years in the House and was the first bill she filed this year in the Senate. The Senate also passed a bill dealing with motor vehicle inspections. During debate, Senator Bill Eigel (St. Charles) offered an amendment that would ban any entity in the state from requiring documentation that they received a vaccination against any disease in order to access transportation systems or services, or any public transportation facility. The amendment was debated for several hours before being adopted by a straight party-line vote. The bill will need another vote before being sent to the House for consideration. This concern of having to have a “Vaccine Passport” in order to travel has popped up across the country and this amendment was in direct response to this concern.

On Tuesday, the House finalized its version of the State’s \$34 billion budget and on Thursday sent those bills to the Senate for consideration. The highlights of the House budget is included in this report. In between budget work, on Wednesday the House Third Read 19 bills and also gave 11 other bills first round approval.

Next week, the House will likely work more House bills as they wait for the Senate to send more bills their way. In the Senate we expect a little less floor activity in order to let the Senate Appropriations Committee begin their committee work on the House budget bills. The deadline for the budget to be sent to the Governor is May 7<sup>th</sup>.

***In the news...***

- An estimated 880,000 Missourians became eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccination Monday under Phase 2 of the state’s vaccine rollout plan. The new phase includes additional categories of essential workers, homeless people, faculty and staff at higher education institutions and “disproportionally affected populations” such as racial and ethnic minorities. Data from the state’s COVID-19 dashboard shows that about 24.5% of Missourians have received at least one shot. Parson said 20,000 vaccine doses were administered in the St. Louis area last week through state-operated vaccination events. But Missouri continues to trail most of the country in vaccinations given, ranking in the bottom 10 among states, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data. The CDC says 28.2% of Americans have received at least an initial dose.

- Former Democratic state Rep. Courtney Curtis was sentenced to 21 months in prison on Wednesday for using campaign funds for his own personal expenses. He was also ordered to pay \$47,000 in restitution. United States District Judge Stephen Clark handed down the sentence nearly five months after Curtis pleaded guilty to three counts of wire fraud relative to his theft of funds from his “Curtis for MO” campaign account. Curtis, 39 of Ferguson, served as a state representative from 2013 to 2019.
- On Thursday, a bi-partisan group of Senators filibustered the appointment of Todd Graves as a curator for the University of Missouri. Graves is brother to Congressman Sam Graves and former Chairman of the Missouri Republican Party. Senate President Pro Tem Dave Schatz (R-Sullivan) has indicated that the Senate would again debate this gubernatorial nomination when they return next Tuesday.
- The decision by House Republicans to not fund Medicaid expansion dominated political news this week. The failure to include funding for the expansion resulted in numerous heated debates on Tuesday and Thursday. Many believe that the Senate will restore some funding for the expansion which would lead to interesting conference committee proceedings between the two chambers.

**BUDGET UPDATE:** This week the House finished crafting their version of the \$34.1 billion FY 2022 budget. The budget does not include additional funding for the expansion of Medicaid. The budget has now been sent to the Senate for further revision and it is expected the funding for Medicaid will become a major point for negotiation. Below are some of the key points of the House budget.

- Fully funds the foundation formula for elementary and secondary education,
- Restores \$67 million to higher education for core funding,
- MO Excels reduced by \$19,247,481 as Chairman Smith indicated federal funds will be available to fund the remaining project requests,
- \$2 million added to each State Tech and Missouri Southern State University’s cores,
- Requires each department to report to the General Assembly if any federal grant uses more than 5% in administrative costs,
- Reduces the cost-share road program by \$25 million as it has been indicated additional federal funds may be used,
- Funding to address the arrearages owed to counties for the housing and transportation of prisoners,
- 2% raise for state workers with the possibility of additional raises due to performance funding incentives,
- A rate increase for home based community services,
- A \$30 million one-time funding increase for long-term facility services,

**21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY MISSOURI EDUCATION TASK FORCE:** On Tuesday, the House Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education met in executive session to vote “do

pass" 18-1 on HB 581, sponsored by Rep. Louis Riggs (R-Hannibal). This bill establishes the "21st Century Missouri Education Task Force". The membership of the Task Force includes: three members of the House of Representatives with two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and one appointed by the Minority Leader, three members of the Senate with two appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate and one appointed by the Minority Leader, the Governor or his designee, 10 members as appointed by the Governor representing various interested parties, the Commissioner of Education and the Commissioner of Higher Education or their designees. The mission of the Task Force is outlined in the bill and includes, but is not limited to, evaluation of current educational process and funding including the use of technology and artificial intelligence to improve student outcomes. The Task Force will make recommendations for legislation as well as submit a report outlining a summary of task force activities to the General Assembly before August 28, 2022. The Task Force will suspend operations on January 1, 2023 and reconvene January 1, 2024 to provide updates and review recommendations to be presented by August 28, 2024.

A substitute was adopted which allows public school teachers and board members to be appointed to the task force.

The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Rules-Legislative Oversight.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION:** On Tuesday, the House Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education met in executive session to vote "do pass" 12-7 on HB 101, sponsored by Rep. Bradley Pollitt (R-Sedalia). This bill provides a definition for a "school innovation team" and for a "school innovation waiver" and allows school innovation teams to submit a plan to the State Board of Education (SBOE) for a state innovation waiver for a variety of purposes as outlined in the bill. Plans submitted to the SBOE must include the provision of law for which the waiver is being requested, as well as demonstrate the necessity of the waiver, provide measurable performance targets and goals, and demonstrate support for the plan, along with additional requirements as provided in the bill. The bill provides the SBE specific criteria for the evaluation of submitted plans and permits the SBE to make modifications to the plan with the cooperation of the school innovation team. The full bill summary may be found here: [HB 101](#)

A substitute was adopted which better defines the purpose of the visiting scholars program.

The bill has been referred to the House Committee on Rules-Legislative Oversight.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT:** On Monday, the House Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education conducted a public hearing on HB 64, sponsored by Rep. Patricia Pike (R-Adrian). Currently, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will reimburse school districts for the costs of special education for high-needs children with an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

exceeding three times the current expenditure per average daily attendance as calculated on the District Annual Secretary of the Board Report for the year in which the expenditures are claimed. This bill states that any money reimbursed to a school district, with 500 or less students, is excluded from such calculation. This bill specifies that a school district shall submit the cost of serving any high-needs student with an IEP to DESE.

Testifying in support were representatives from Missouri School Board Association, Missouri NEA, Bronaugh R-7 and Missouri Association of School Administrators. Supporting testimony submitted through the online portal include several private citizens.

There was no testimony in opposition and the committee took no further action on the measure.

**CHARTER EQUITY FUNDING:** On Thursday, the Senate Committee on Education met in executive session to vote “do pass” 7-1 on SB 218, sponsored by Sen. Tony Luetkemeyer (R-Parkville). This act modifies the calculation of the amount a school district with one or more pupils attending a charter school shall pay to the charter school. Under this act, provisions of current law setting forth aid payments for charter schools shall only apply to school years ending on or before June 30, 2021. For school years beginning on or after July 1, 2021, each charter school and each school district responsible for distributing local aid to charter schools shall include as part of their annual independent audit, an audit of pupil residency, enrollment, and attendance in order to verify pupil residency in the school district or local education agency. The full bill summary may be found here: [SB 218](#)

A substitute was adopted which included compromise language regarding the funding amount for charter schools and includes a provision requiring a “true up” for special needs students.

**RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOLS:** On Thursday, the Senate Committee on Education met in executive session to vote “do pass” 8-0 on SB 259, sponsored by Sen. Cindy O’Laughlin (R-Shelbina). Under this act, a recovery charter high school may be operated in an urban school district containing most or all of Kansas City. This act defines a “recovery charter high school” as a charter school for students in grades nine through twelve who are in recovery from substance use disorder or dependency. Such charter school must educate all available eligible students who are in recovery from substance use disorder, substance dependency, or co-occurring disorders such as anxiety, depression, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); must meet state requirements for awarding a high school diploma; and must support students in working a strong program of recovery. A recovery charter high school shall enroll all pupils in the district in which it operates; nonresident pupils eligible to attend a district’s school under an urban voluntary transfer program; nonresident pupils who transfer from an unaccredited district; and any nonresident pupil, who is in recovery from substance use disorder, substance dependency, or co-occurring disorders. Admission shall be limited to

pupils who are in recovery from substance use disorder, substance dependency, or co-occurring disorders. The full bill summary may be found here: [SB 259](#)

A substitute was adopted which changed the definition from “recover charter high school” to “pilot recovery high school program” and requires the school district to apply to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to establish the program.

**WORKFORCE EDUCATION OMNIBUS:** On Thursday, the Senate Committee on Education met in executive session to vote “do pass” 8-0 on SB 265, sponsored by Sen. Karla Eslinger (R-Wasola). This act modifies provisions related to workforce development in elementary and secondary education. Its main provisions are:

- SCHOOL INNOVATION WAIVERS
- STUDENT CAREER AND ACADEMIC PLANS
- FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID
- AID FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
- CAREER PATHWAYS SYSTEMS
- PUBLIC SCHOOL RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF MISSOURI (PSRS) and PUBLIC EDUCATION EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF MISSOURI

The full bill summary may be found here: [SB 259](#)

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