

UP

the STREET

MSEA LEGISLATIVE UPDATES



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Issue 104

THE WEEK THAT WAS IN ANNAPOLIS

• **The BOAST Bill Is Back (Maryland Education Credit)**

The BOAST bill, as introduced for the last 10 years, is a voucher proposal masquerading as a tax credit. It is designed to shift public dollars to support donations to private schools. Governor Hogan is including the initiative, now dubbed the Maryland Education Credit, as part of his education initiatives again this session ([HB 453](#)). In addition to the stand-alone legislation, there is a separate \$5 million to create a new program to reimburse business entities for 50% of the amount they contribute to a student assistance organization to provide financial assistance to students attending non-public schools. This \$5 million corporate giveaway is on top of the \$15 million set-aside for the Maryland Education Credit.

[MSEA offered this response](#) to Governor Hogan's private school aid proposal.

• **On Second Look...Governor Hogan's FY17 Budget**

Last week, *Up the Street* detailed some of the highlights and lowlights in Governor Hogan's FY17 budget proposal. This week, the Department of Legislative Services provided their first [fiscal briefing](#) to various House and Senate committees for legislators to ask questions and learn more about some of the details. Upon further review, here are some new items:

- The Administration's plan to cut certain taxes and fees will be proposed as separate legislation. If fully adopted, the plan reduces general fund revenues in FY17 by \$23.2 million. The revenue loss grows to about \$145 million by FY21.
- The tax and fee cuts create a structural imbalance to the budget as early as FY19. If the General Assembly does not adopt any of the Administration's cut plan, the state has sufficient cash resources to maintain total budget balance throughout the entire five-year budget forecast.
- Education aid for Baltimore City declines by \$24 million due to increased wealth calculations and declining enrollment. Some counties (Carroll, Garrett, and Kent) with lower enrollments receive supplemental aid. The city and nine other jurisdictions with declining enrollment receive no such consideration of additional aid.
- The state's total contribution for teacher and employee pensions are projected to be \$1.68 billion in FY17. This includes the full actuarial payment, plus the required \$75 million supplemental payment, and another \$50 million from the sweeper provision enacted last year. The governor adds \$25 million on top of those pension supplements.

• **Have You Contacted Your Legislators to Demand Less Testing and More Learning?**

Legislators are finalizing bill language on a handful of bills that will help to reduce the time and high-stakes associated with testing. Students deserve time to learn and educators need time to teach. That is why legislators are working with MSEA and other education advocates to advance a number of less testing initiatives, including:

- Establishing a 2% cap on the amount of instruction time that can be used for mandated tests ([HB 141/ SB 407](#)).
- Creating transparency in testing through regular reporting to parents about mandated standardized tests ([HB 412](#)).
- Ensuring PARCC tests are not a mandated component of teacher and principal evaluations.
- Reducing the months-long disruption caused by the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment by changing it to a sampling test rather than a test given to every student.
- Applying to the federal government to seek innovation in testing so districts can experiment with performance-based assessments rather than PARCC.

Success on this agenda requires legislators to stand with educators, parents, and students. Please [send an email today by clicking here](#) and writing your own message about the important of reducing time on testing. If you have already sent an email, call your legislators using **MSEA's Legislative Hotline: 888-520-MSEA (6732)**.

- **News and Notes**

- *Appropriations Committee Gains a New Member and Subcommittee Chairman*
As Delegate Craig Zucker awaits appointment action from Governor Hogan to replace Sen. Karen Montgomery, the House Appropriations Committee has added a new member. [Delegate Kirill Reznik](#) has been added to the committee and will take over as the chairman of the Health and Human Resources Subcommittee.
- *Neither Snow Nor Sleet Nor...*
The U.S. Postal Service has nothing on the Maryland General Assembly. Even as the state and federal governments were officially closed on Monday and Tuesday, the General Assembly was in session Monday night and holding briefings and hearings on Tuesday. Only slight delays and scheduled adjustments impacted the beginning of the week. Kudos to the hardworking AFSCME members with the Department of General Services for having Annapolis in shape for our elected officials to do the people's business. Stay on top of any and all General Assembly updates by following the session online at <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov>.
- *2016 Legislative Priorities*
Each year, MSEA develops targeted legislative priorities that serve as our lead issues for that session. Please review and share our [2016 Legislative Priorities](#) with colleagues, advocates, and legislators and help us achieve our goals around school funding, less testing, and narrowing opportunity gaps for students.

CAMPAIGN 2016 (and 2018)

- **Educators for Hillary**

The Iowa caucuses are just days away, and educators across the country are rallying to support Hillary Clinton for president. You can join them by signing up to be an Educator for Hillary at www.strongpublicschools.org. There, you can create an activist account, link with friends, and help reach caucus goers and primary voters across the country to help elect a pro-public education champion.

- **Just Under the Wire**

With next week's candidate filing deadline looming, some new candidates are entering congressional races across the state. In the 1st Congressional District, Salisbury City Council member, and educator, Jim Ireton announced his campaign to unseat Representative Andy Harris. And in the 8th Congressional District, the late entry of Total Wine & More co-owner David Trone adds another wrinkle into an already crowded Democratic primary.

- **Looking Ahead to 2018**

Too soon? Josh Kurtz provides commentary and data in his [analysis of the 2015 campaign finance filings for state and local officials](#). Take a look and you can see how various races might be coming together, even three years out.

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