

Dear Fellow School Psychologists:

I hope that all of you are keeping in contact with your legislators. As of this moment the House and Senate K-12 education bills have been heard in committee and are waiting for discussion on the respective floors of the two legislative chambers. There are differences between the House and Senate bills and so they will be heard in a conference committee after passage by the two bodies.

I would like to mention a few bills which I think may be of particular interest to you. One, House File 3793, would allow schools to skip giving a Tennessee warning to students where misbehavior has occurred and information is sought unless such information might lead to a student's expulsion.

Another bill, HF 3958, speaks to licensure via portfolio. This applies to teachers and perhaps administrators. It states that a qualified candidate may use licensure via portfolio to obtain an initial licensure or to add a licensure field. For clarification I called the Board of Teaching today and was told that this legislation does not apply to school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers.

During the last session legislation was passed which increased the safe schools levy by three dollars per student, from twenty-seven to thirty dollars. It also stated that these monies could now be used for hiring school student support personnel. This year a new piece of legislation is in play, HF 4071, which states that the three dollars added last session must be used for expanding the services of licensed school support staff. This wording was brought forth as an amendment twice in the Senate Education Policy Committee and the Senate K-12 Education Finance Committee. It is currently in the House bill but not in the Senate bill. IF YOU BELIEVE IN THIS WORDING CHANGE YOU NEED TO CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS SOON. Representative Tillberry and Senators Wiger and Scheid have spoken out in favor of this legislation. It is opposed by the school boards association. The school counselors are working hard to pass this legislation and I believe we need to do the same. Any thoughts you have would be welcomed.

Another bill in the House bill but not in the Senate bill at this time is HF 3629. Representative Slocum is the lead author in the House. This legislation would establish a temporary, three-year appeals process for high school seniors who do not receive a passing score on the state GRAD tests. I HOPE YOU WOULD TAKE A LOOK AT THIS BILL AND STRONGLY CONSIDER

CONTACTING YOUR LEGISLATORS REGARDING IT IF YOU FEEL IT IS SOMETHING THAT SHOULD HAPPEN.

The MSPA legislative agenda states that no student should be denied a diploma on the basis of a single test score. I have checked with the State Departments of Education in Wisconsin, Iowa, and the Dakotas and none require the passage of a grad test for receiving a diploma. This legislation is being opposed by the Minnesota Business Partnership, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and the Minnesota Department of Education.

Ralph D. Maves
MSPA Lobbyist