

NCBEA Legislative Update

NCBEA

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Constant Communications with All Legislators in our Changing Political World is a Must

Inside this issue:

The first eight months of our new administration has been one of change from politics as we once knew it. Perhaps now, more than ever, it is essential that we, as business educators, keep abreast of what is happening in our local, state, and federal branches of government. To make finding contact information a little easier for you, we have once again included the following tips for you.

Think Locally

It's usually best to send letters to the representative from your local Congressional District or the senators from your state. Your vote helps elect them—or not—and that fact alone carries a lot of weight. It also helps personalize your letter. Sending the same "cookie-cutter" message to every member of Congress may grab attention but rarely much consideration.

Keep it Simple

Your letter should address a single topic or issue. Typed, one-page letters are best. Many PACs ([Political Action Committees](#)) recommend a three-paragraph letter structured like this:

1. Say why you are writing and who you are. List your "credentials." (If you want a response, you must include your name and address, even when using email.)
2. Provide more detail. Be factual not emotional. Provide specific rather than general information about how the topic affects you and others. If a certain bill is involved, [cite the correct title or number](#) whenever possible.
3. Close by requesting the action you want taken: a vote for or against a bill, or change in general policy.

The best letters are courteous, to the point, and include specific supporting examples.

Addressing Members of Congress

To Your [Senator](#):

The Honorable (full name)
(Room #) (Name) Senate Office Building
United States Senate

To Your [Representative](#):

The Honorable (full name)
(Room #) (Name) House Office Building
United States House of Representatives

Illinois	3
Indiana	3
Iowa	4
Michigan	4
Minnesota	6
Missouri	6
Ohio	7
Wisconsin	7

Finding Their Addresses

Senate and House of Representatives

[U.S. Senators \(web sites and mailing addresses\)](#)

[Write Your U.S. Representative](#) (A service of the House that will assist you by identifying your Congressperson in the [U.S. House of Representatives](#) and providing contact information.

U.S. Supreme Court

[Contact Information - US Supreme Court](#)

The Justices do not have email addresses, but they do read letters from citizens.

To Conclude

Here are some key things you should always and never do in writing to your elected representatives.

1. Be courteous and respectful without "gushing."
2. Clearly and simply state the purpose of your letter. If it's about a certain bill, [identify it correctly](#). If you need help in finding the number of a bill, use the [Thomas Legislative Information System](#).
3. Say who you are. Anonymous letters go nowhere. Even in email, include your correct name, address, phone number and email address. If you don't include at least your name and address, you will not get a response.
4. State any professional credentials or personal experience you may have, especially those pertaining to the subject of your letter.
5. Keep your letter short—one page is best.
6. Use specific examples or evidence to support your position.
7. State what it is you want done or recommend a course of action.
8. Thank the member for taking the time to read your letter.

Never

1. Use vulgarity, profanity, or threats. The first two are just plain rude and the third one can get you a visit from the Secret Service. Simply stated, don't let your passion get in the way of making your point,
2. Fail to include your name and address, even in email letters.
3. Demand a response.

Identifying Legislation

Cite these [legislation](#) identifiers when writing to members of Congress:

House Bills: "**H.R.**____"

House Resolutions: "**H.RES.**____"

House Joint Resolutions: "**H.J.RES.**____"

Senate Bills: "**S.**____"

Senate Resolutions: "**S.RES.**____"

Senate Joint Resolutions: "**S.J.RES.**____"

(Source: <http://usgovinfo.about.com/od/uscongress/a/letterscongress.htm>)

State Updates:

Illinois

As previously reported, Illinois passed the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act (Public Act 99-0674) (PWR Act), in May 2016 and was signed by Governor Rauner in July 2016. From that legislation, the Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) framework was developed and recently adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education. The framework is a new system for school districts to award college and career pathways endorsements on high school diplomas, supporting students to avoid remediation in college through targeted math instruction during the senior year, and piloting competency-based high school graduation requirements. This is exciting news for CTE in Illinois. However, the legislative buzz in the State of Illinois is the adoption of a budget. All CTE funds are level in this budget. The Agriculture Education line item was increased substantially. Even though the budget was passed, K-12 education funding has not been passed. Education funding is the vehicle that drives funding to the K-12 programs. Senate Bill 1 is an Evidence Based School Funding Model being discussed by the Illinois legislature. Hopefully, Illinois will pass school funding legislation in the next few days and schools can start on time this fall. In addition to the previously reported HB1790, which established that teachers who received a CTE endorsement before January 1, 2015 need not take a basic skills test to renew their endorsement and SB 2912, which streamlined the hiring process for out-of-state applicants by making provision for a “short-term” substitute teaching license for individuals with 60 hours of college credit, two additional legislations were signed by the Governor that ease the requirements of CTE teachers in Illinois. HB 2470 removes the requirement that the 60 semester hours of coursework must be from a regionally accredited institution of higher education. The 60 credits may be from an accredited trade and technical institution (rather than just a regionally accredited institution of higher education). HB 3820, further eases the requirements for a career and technical educator endorsement, a part-time provisional career and technical educator endorsement, and a provisional career and technical educator endorsement on an Educator License with Stipulations; While the legislation is designed to ease the critical shortage of CTE teachers in Illinois, opponents have labeled the legislation “warm body” legislation.

Source for PaCE Framework <https://www.isbe.net/Lists/News/NewsDisplay.aspx?ID=1159>

Indiana

As an educator, you will want to keep your eye and follow House Bills (HB) and Senate Bills (SB). A great website for you to bookmark and frequent as you keep an eye on the progress of the reference bills would be: <http://iga.in.gov/legislative/2017/bills/>. *One Senate Bill especially to look at for Indiana business teachers would be SB 198: Focuses on schools in trial program for the Indiana Career Explorer system and how it might be used for Preparing for College and Careers courses.*

Be sure to bookmark Dr. McCormick’s weekly newsletter found on the web. The website is: <http://www.doe.in.gov/news/dr-mccormicks-weekly-update>. Here you will find not only Senate but House bills that are specific to the world of education in Indiana. In addition, you will find out information that might otherwise take time to trickle down to your classroom and email. Be sure to bookmark this site today!

Iowa

No reported news.

Michigan

SB 401/HB 4647—New Pension Legislation

Initial analysis of the pension legislation passed by the House and Senate has been completed. While the bills have not officially completed the legislative process, and been signed into law as of this date, several things are clear in initial analysis of SB 401/HB 4647:

- Unlike the initial versions of this legislation, new hires still have a choice between strictly a defined contribution (DC)/401(k)-style plan and a hybrid retirement system that combines a 401(k) with a traditional defined benefit system. The preservation of that choice is thanks to the massive outcry from MEA members across the state – well done and thank you!
- The hybrid option now contains more risk for both employees and employers, because of requirements that they split any shortfalls in funding. While there are protections in the bill to keep future Legislatures from deliberately underfunding the retirement system to cause hardship on educators and their districts, market crashes could cause additional out of pocket costs – and those costs do not have a cap, so they could be significant.
- The 401(k) option for new hires is improved under this legislation, providing more money from the employer up front and a better match for employee contributions. Current employees who previously chose the 401(k) option when they were hired will receive these increases. While this option falls short of being adequate for many members' retirement needs, it does bring the school employee 401(k) up to equity with what state employees and legislators receive.

New school employees will have 75 days to choose whether they want to remain in the 401(k)-only plan or opt into the hybrid plan. As we move forward, MEA will be doing more analysis on this legislation and providing documents to help new hires work through that decision – please stay tuned for more coming from MEA in the coming months on this issue, as well as any updates to the initial analysis document as we learn more. (<https://www.mea.org/initial-mea-analysis-of-mpsers-legislation-available>)

House Bill 4163—Proposed Bargaining Ban on Calendar and Schedule

Leaders in the House are trying to corral enough votes to push through another damaging piece of legislation aimed at public schools. The bill could negatively affect a number of issues that influence students' learning conditions and school employees' job satisfaction:

- Teachers could lose prep time used to plan, grade, and collaborate
- Support professionals could be impacted as well, limiting bus drivers' input in scheduling routes, for example
- School hours could be altered without regard for educational needs
- Holiday breaks and year-round schools could be established without consulting those who know best what will and won't work

Legislature Passes Education Budget

A review of the budget's highlights is below:

Per Pupil Increase:

The final budget has the 2x formula and increased the foundation allowance between \$60 and \$120 per pupil, which is an increase of 0.7 percent to 1.6 percent. The lowest funded districts will see a larger increase, while higher funded districts will see less of an increase.

In addition, \$11 million has been appropriated to add \$25 per pupil for all high school students in grades 9-12, to reflect that it costs more to educate students in these grades.

At Risk Students:

At Risk funding increased by \$120 million to a total of \$499 million. It caps newly eligible Hold Harmless and Out-of-Formula districts at 30% funding. Currently eligible districts would receive an estimated \$777 per eligible pupil and newly eligible districts would receive an estimated \$233 per pupil.

MPSERS Cost Offset:

A little over \$23 million to offset increased MPSERS costs due to new MPSERS legislation.

\$100 million to maintain the current district contribution rate for MPSERS.

An additional \$200 million will be paid toward the MPSERS unfunded liability.

State School Reform/Redesign (SRO)

State School Reform/Redesign funding for CEOs has been eliminated.

Declining Enrollment:

No money has been provided for declining enrollment districts.

Educator Evaluations:

No additional money has been appropriated.

There are several changes to Boilerplate language. Three that are particularly important to us include:

- Labor Day Waiver Hearing includes a new requirement that if a district requests a waiver to begin school before Labor Day, the district must hold a joint hearing with the MDE to be held in the district before said waiver can be granted
- Establishes a penalty in an amount spent if a district or ISD uses funds appropriated under this act to pay for an expense relating to any legal action initiated by the district or ISD against the state
- Establishes a penalty equal to 5% of total state aid if a district or ISD enters into a collective bargaining agreement that does any of the following: establishes racial and religious preferences for employees; automatically deducts union dues from employee compensation; is in conflict with any state or federal laws regarding district transparency; includes a method of compensation that does not comply with the requirements of section 1250 of the Revised School Code, MCL 380.1250 (Merit Pay)

Community Colleges:

.9% increase

Higher Ed Budget:

2.9% increase

<https://mea.org/house-passes-education-budget/#more-3500>

<http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2017/07/14/snyder-michigan-budget/103694114/>

Minnesota

No reported news.

Missouri--the following has/is taking place in the Missouri legislation:

HB 93- Changes the laws regarding job training

The bill, among other provisions, establishes four adult high schools to be operated by a Missouri nonprofit organization. An "adult high school" is defined as a school for an individual who is at least 21 years old without a high school diploma, offers industry certification programs that include a high school diploma and provides on-site child care for students. This bill requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to grant a license to a Missouri-based nonprofit organization before January 1, 2018, to establish and operate four adult high schools with locations as specified in the bill.

This bill also modifies the definition of "new capital investment" by allowing costs incurred by a qualified company at the project facility prior to acceptance of the proposal for benefits to be considered new capital investment. The bill allows the Department of Economic Development to contract with other entities for the purpose of advertising, marketing, and promoting the Missouri Works Training program. Such marketing shall not exceed \$50,000 annually.

This bill also allows the department to provide assistance through the Missouri Works Job Development Fund to a consortium of companies if a majority of the consortium are qualified companies. Currently, Missouri Works Training projects are funded by redirecting withholding taxes remitted by a qualified company for new or retained jobs created by the company. Subject to appropriation, the bill allows the department to provide up-front funding from appropriations from the General Revenue Fund. For projects that utilize such funding, the amount of withholding taxes redirected for the project shall be reduced by the amount of funds received through the general revenue appropriation.

Also, reported from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in Missouri:

Missouri to Offer New Career and Technical Education Certificate for Students

To help Missouri meet its goal of preparing all high school graduates for success, the State Board of Education approved requirements for a new career and technical education (CTE) certificate that students can earn in addition to a high school diploma. The requirements were developed in consultation with the state's CTE advisory council. Students must meet all of the requirements in order to earn the certificate.

"The CTE certificate helps recognize the skills our students are gaining in CTE courses that will help them succeed in life," said Commissioner of Education Margie Vandeven. "Students earning this certificate can show Missouri employers that they are prepared for the workplace."

Students entering high school in 2017-18 or thereafter will be eligible to earn a CTE certificate by meeting the following criteria:

- Meet all graduation requirements
- Qualify as a CTE concentrator
- Maintain a 3.0 grade-point average (on a 4.0 scale) in the CTE area of concentration
- Pass an approved Technical Skills Assessment and/or earn an approved Industry Recognized Credential or Certificate
- Complete at least 50 hours of work-based learning aligned with the CTE area of concentration
- Maintain at least a 95 percent attendance record overall for grades 9-12

- Demonstrate soft skills/business skills
- Achieve a score at or above the state standard on any DESE-approved measure of college and career readiness

Schools can assist students by helping them develop a [personal plan of study](#) that includes a focus on [CTE courses](#) such as agriculture, health sciences or **business**. The schools would monitor the plan of study to ensure student success.

Ohio

House Representatives Christina Hagan and Robert McColley, both Republicans, are the primary sponsors of HB 108, which is “Include financial literacy in high school curriculum.” In short the bill is written to amend sections 3301.079 and 3313.603 and to enact section 3333.89 of the Revised Code to require one-half unit of financial literacy in the high school curriculum, to require the Chancellor of Higher Education to prepare an informed student document for each institution of higher education, to require the State Board of Education to include information on the informed student document in the standards and model curricula it creates for financial literacy and entrepreneurship, and to entitle the act the "Informed Student Document Act." The bill was introduced and assigned to the Education and Career Readiness Committee on March 14, 2017 where it still remains for review and hopefully passage to the senate for review before the 132nd Legislative Assembly fiscal year is over.

Additional hearings are scheduled for September when legislatures return from summer recess. I have made my personal contact information available to Representative Hagan in an effort to attend those hearings and provide expert testimony on the value and importance of the bill to the students of Ohio. I have also reached out to Representative Andrew Brenner who is the chair of the Education and Career Readiness Committee and voiced my support of the bill, along with a recommendation for changes to the language of the bill to reflect Business educators alone, as opposed to Social Studies and Family and Consumer Science educators, as the best qualified professionals to teach Financial Literacy to students entering the 9th grade in 2018. This is based on the current Social Studies Standards which do not include Financial Literacy standards and the current Family and Consumer Science standards which only provide limited Financial Literacy standards. As compared to the National Business Educators Association Financial Literacy Standards which are specific, detailed, and much more inclusive of the information students need to know to become responsible stewards of their financial futures. Only time will tell if and when Representative Brenner and the Education and Career Readiness Committee will take any action on my suggestion, as well as the bill itself.

Wisconsin

No reported news.

Become a Business Education Advocate

NBEA supports national-, state-, and local-level efforts to ensure that business education is understood and valued by legislators, policymakers, business people, parents, and other critical audiences. NBEA's Legislative Advocacy Committee represents association members through ongoing liaison with Congress, federal officials, congressional committees, state legislatures, and other professional associations. Materials promoting business education are available to assist you in your conversations with these various audiences.

[Facts Every Legislator Should Know About Business Education](#)

[Facts Every Business Should Know About Business Education](#)

[Facts Every Parent Should Know About Business Education](#)

[Facts Every Student Should Know About Business Education](#)

[Facts Every Counselor Should Know About Business Education](#)

[Facts Every Administrator Should Know About Business Education](#)

[NBEA College and Career Readiness Position Paper](#)

[NBEA College and Career Readiness Flyer](#)

[NBEA Business Partnership Flyer](#)

(Source: <https://www.nbea.org/newsite/member/index.html>)

Communicating With Elected Officials...Key to Our Success

Now that the November elections are over, we, as business educators, must communicate some facts about business education to our new elected officials.

- Business Education provides a skilled workforce for your state
- Business Education helps your state keep pace with technology updates
- Business Education promotes and develops school and business partnerships in your state
- Business Education promotes entrepreneurship in your state
- Business Education ensures the economic resilience of your state
- Business Education encourages companies to locate their businesses in your state
- Business Education encourages leadership in your state
- Business Education provides international trade opportunities in your state
- Business Education enhances the economic literacy of your state
- Business Education strengthens the productivity and prosperity of your state

(from <https://www.nbea.org/newsite/member/documents/Legislator>)

How to Lobby Your Elected Officials!

Who to Contact

Your Members of Congress were elected to represent you, so by all means, let them know what you think. Contacting House and Senate leaders during the build-up to an important vote can be extremely effective. The President's office also keeps track of communications on current issues. You may not get a personal response, particularly if your e-mail, phone call or letter is one of hundreds on the same topic, but be certain your message will be heard, loud and clear.

How to Contact Your Legislator

Technology has provided us with a range of opportunities to make our voices heard. Particularly when time is of the essence, e-mail, faxes and telephone calls are effective - nearly instant - communicators. Western Union also provides a low-cost opportunity to send a mailgram to your Member of Congress.

Bear in mind that an opinion on current legislation receives more attention than general observations. In general, for all types of communication, be as specific as possible. Keep it brief. Identify your subject clearly, give the name and bill number of the legislation you are concerned about. Be reasonable; don't ask for the impossible or engage in threats. Ask that your legislators state their positions on the issue; you are entitled to know.

E-Mail or Fax your Members of Congress. The Common Cause Take Action section will provide you with fax numbers and e-mail links for all Members who currently can be reached on-line.

Call your Members of Congress at their offices in Washington, DC or at their state offices. You can also call your Senators or Representatives by dialing **1-202-224-3121** (U.S. Capitol Switchboard) and asking for the Member by name. Although you most likely will end up talking to a staffer and not the Member, your call - your voice - will be heard.

Write your Members of Congress. Writing an actual letter has its merits as it can show officials that you are interested enough to set the time aside to write and mail in a letter. The following are some guidelines for writing letters to elected officials and was taken from a talk given by [Omar Ahmad at TED2010](#):

Write a personal (preferably hand-written) letter with appropriate letterhead (if available) to your congressperson. Adhere to the following as a template of what to put into the body of the letter - which should be about 4 parts long:

- In part one – make it known that you *appreciate the politician and especially their tough job*.
- In part two – make your point or political cause known *clearly and directly without attacking people, but instead attacking tactics*.
- In part three – provide the politician an *exit*.
- In part four – provide the politician a reason to use you as a *'nurturing agent'*. This is where you make it clear to the politician why you can help and why *only you* have the solution to the aforementioned political cause.

Put your return address on your letter. Envelopes get thrown away. **Be sure to re-write the letter at least once a month.** Send the original copy of the letter to your congressperson's district office. Send a copy of the letter to your congressperson's main Washington D.C. office.

Meet with your legislators and question them at public events. Keep questions short and to the point. Make sure your question is specific: "Will you vote for S. 1219?"* or "Will you make a public pledge to support this campaign reform effort?"

*In the above example, S. 1219 would mean Senate bill number 1219. Often there is a similar bill in the House of Representatives. An example might be HR. 1429.

Do not use a public forum as an opportunity to argue with a Member of Congress. If you disagree with his or her response or find it inadequate, discuss this with the Member after the forum, schedule a meeting in his or her local office or send a letter outlining your concerns.

E-mails, faxes, letters and other written communications to Members of Congress have maximum impact when they concern pending legislation. To learn when key legislation is coming up, see the "Take Action" section in [Common Cause's Website](#). This includes late-breaking facts on pending legislation and background information.

How Laws are Passed in Congress

After a Senator or Representative introduces a bill, it is assigned to the appropriate committee, according to subject area, for mark-up. Here it is studied and rewritten. Hearings are held to solicit both public and special-interest views.

During mark-up, the committee considers the specific language of a bill and may amend or change it. When the bill clears the committee, it goes to the floor for general debate and action.

Once both houses pass a bill, a conference committee made up of both Senators and Representatives works out any differences between the House-passed and Senate-passed versions.

The final conference version must be approved by both houses, then the bill goes to the President to be signed into law. The President may veto the bill. In that case a two-thirds veto override vote in both houses is required for the bill to become law.

When to Lobby

At any point in this process you may want to personally lobby your Representative, Senators, the House and Senate leaders or the President. There are special times in the legislative process when your letters and calls can be especially productive.

When a bill is introduced and assigned to a committee, you can contact your legislators to request that they cosponsor the bill. Obviously, the more cosponsors a bill has, the more likely it is to gain support and move through the legislative process.

If the bill is bottled up in committee and appears unlikely to ever emerge, you might contact your Members of Congress and urge them to get the bill moving.

In the Senate, a minority of Senators can stop passage of a bill by launching a filibuster, essentially an endless debate. Many campaign finance efforts over the years have fallen victim to Senate filibusters. The votes of 60 Senators are needed to end a filibuster and allow action on a bill. You might contact your Senators and urge them to fight obstructionist filibusters blocking action on important legislation.

When legislation is about to come up on the floor of the House or Senate, you could contact your legislators and urge support for the position you advocate.

Other Ways to Make Your Voice Heard

In addition to communicating with your legislators, there are other ways to influence issues you care about.

Letters-to-the-Editor

A letter-to-the-editor gives you a chance to inform thousands of people about a critical piece of legislation. Many people read these sections of the newspaper, especially elected officials. Even if it is not published, your letter might inspire an editorial on the same subject.

When writing a letter-to-the-editor, observe how long the average published letter is, and keep your letter within this length. Make your letter concise, avoid rambling, be specific. Be certain to sign your name and give your address and telephone number although the latter will not be published. Most newspapers do not print anonymous letters, although they may withhold your name if you feel strongly

about it. Newspapers often receive more letters than they can print, so if your letter is not published the first time, try again.

An Opinion Piece

Many newspapers feature a section opposite the editorial pages (often called the Op-Ed page) for citizen opinion. If you are comfortable writing, consider submitting an article on a subject you know and care about.

Talk With Reporter Or Editor

Stop by your local newspaper's office and chat with reporters or editorial page editors. Give them special information like editorial backgrounders - updates on issues prepared by Common Cause especially for the media. You can find editorial backgrounders in Common Cause's News and Information section.

Radio Call-In Shows

Let others know what you think. Ask questions of those who appear on these shows. Ask a Representative or Senator how he or she intends to vote on an upcoming issue. Encourage listeners to call their Members of Congress. Radio talk shows are also great opportunities to mention Common Cause and our issue fights.

Distribute Action Flyers

Distribute informative flyers on reform issues in your community. Give them to friends and neighbors, or hand them out at your local library or public meeting place. Urge other citizens and community groups to become active.

Encourage Membership

Join us and ask your friends to join. The more members we have, the more clout citizens will have in the battle to clean up Washington.

Reach Out to Other Organizations

Bring up issues at meetings of other groups you belong to, and enlist others' support in letter-writing and grassroots lobbying campaigns.

<https://www.change.net/articles/lobby.htm>

Thank you to the following individuals who helped to make this newsletter possible:

NCBEA State Legislative Contacts

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2016-17 NCBEA Committee

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