

MLA Legislative Update 3.26.24

Friday, March 22 marked the first committee deadline of the session, which means both the House and Senate must act favorably on bills that are not major appropriation or finance bills in order to move on for further consideration. We are still early in the game and will know more about the standing of the MLA bills following the upcoming Easter break.

Book Banning Prohibited (Senate Education Omnibus Policy Bill SF 3567)

Various bills have been introduced this session regarding prohibiting the banning of books. Representative Frazier introduced [HF4373](#) without a Senate companion bill, which has been re-referred to the Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee. In addition, MDE introduced ([SF 3567 - Line 77.6](#)), which has been included in the House and Senate Education Omnibus Policy bill for further consideration.

On Thursday, March 21, Gov. Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan held a Ban on Book Bans press conference at Como Park Senior High School. In addition to Gov. Walz and Lt. Gov. Flanagan, others who spoke in support of the bills include Rep. Frazier, Sen. Cwodzinski, School Librarian Sheri Chaffee-Johnson, and MLA Intellectual Freedom Chair Elect Ann Kaste.

View the [Ban on Book Bans](#) press conference for more information (video begins at 12:35). The Governor has made it clear he wants to sign this legislation into law and the legislature will put a proposal on his desk to sign. There is still time for massaging the specific language of this proposal as the omnibus policy bills head toward an eventual conference committee.

Metropolitan Library Service Agency

[SF 3567, line 77.1](#) includes language to employ an executive director who does not hold a master's degree in library science. This legislation would make MELSA the exception to MN Rule 3530.1000 CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY, part A. MLA is opposed to the bill and discussions are occurring. This legislation, along with the MDE book banning language has been included in the Senate Education Omnibus Policy bill for further consideration.

Local Option to Prohibit Guns from Public Facilities, Including Libraries

On March 12 the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee heard two bills related to giving local governments the ability to prevent firearms and other dangerous weapons from their owned or leased facilities: **HF 2828 (Hussein)**: Local governmental units authorized to prohibit or restrict possession of dangerous weapons, ammunition, or explosives in local government-owned or leased buildings and land and **HF 3672 (Pinto)** State preemption of local units of government regulating firearms repealed. The Public Safety Committee decided to lay these bills over and not advance them ahead of the policy committee deadline, meaning they are likely done for this session.

Licensed Media Specialist Liaison (State Library Services) & Digital Citizenship, Internet Safety and Media Literacy Advisory Council

The Licensed Media Specialist Liaison bill amends 134.31, Section 1 to create a State School Librarian position at State Library Services to support district and charter schools related to issues of intellectual freedom, media and digital literacy, and growing lifelong readers.

The Digital Citizenship bill establishes an advisory council comprised of classroom teachers, media specialists, parent-teacher organization members, librarians, etc., which will convene to make recommendations to the commissioner of education on best practices related to digital citizenship, Internet safety, media literacy and methods for instructing students to safely, ethically, responsibly, and effectively use media and technology resources.

The Senate request was [amended](#) to include the addition of two academic librarians. The bills were amended and re-referred from Senate State & Local Government to Senate Education Finance. We expect Chair Kunesh to include these proposals in her eventual omnibus supplemental education budget bill.

Bonding for Public Library Construction and Renovation Grants

While the Governor's budget currently includes \$1M for public library construction and renovation grants, Regional Public Library Systems are seeking \$20M in state bonding for public library construction and renovation grants, in addition to an increase to \$2M in the grant cap. Sen. Kunesh is the Chief Author of [SF 3592](#); we continue to seek confirmation of a House author. The March 22nd committee deadline does not apply to this bill, and we will continue to advocate for this request.

For further updates on the MLA legislative issues, visit the [MLA Legislative Advocacy site](#) and attend the upcoming Legislative Update with MLA Lobbyist Sam Walseth on Wednesday, April 3rd at 10:00. Register for the online update using the MLA Events Calendar.

Upcoming Online Legislative Updates with MLA Lobbyist Sam Walseth:

- Wednesday, April 3 at 10:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, May 1 at 10:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, May 22 at 10:00 a.m. - Last legislative update of the session.
Registration coming soon!

Submitted by MLA Legislative Co-chairs, Liz Lynch and Sarah Hawkins.