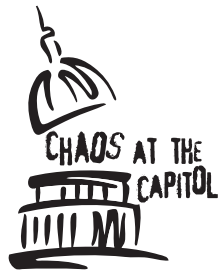


## School Reform Messages

Particularly in light of requirements under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), several school reform bills are being debated at the Capitol and could end up as part of the negotiations over the state budget or public employee health plan.



### Senate Bills 636, 637, 638 – Neighborhood Charter Schools

The bills have passed the Senate Education Committee and are pending before the full Senate. **MEA opposes these bills.**

- These bills are a way to expand charter schools with even less accountability or oversight. These schools would receive state funding, but they would not have to adhere to the same rules and policies of traditional public schools.
- Increasing the number of charter schools is the basis for this legislation. But, in a report to the Legislature, the Commission on Charter Schools found that the overall impact of charter schools on the public school system in Michigan is questionable.
- In a study of 2,403 charter schools in 15 states, researchers at the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University found students in more than 80 percent of charter schools either performed the same as—or worse than—students in traditional public schools on math tests.
- We should be investing resources in our public schools, which are open to all students, instead of basing education reform on the unproven “success” of charter schools.
- Collective bargaining agreements would no longer be in place when a local school is converted to a “neighborhood school.” Teacher tenure would no longer apply. That means a loss of job security and protection.
- Certified, trained and qualified teachers could be replaced with anyone, since these bills allow the superintendent of public instruction to establish alternative routes to certification.

*Continues*

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## House Bills 4787, 4788, 4789 – School Reform/Takeover

These bills allow so-called “failing schools” to be targeted for special help. Schools with chronically low student achievement would be placed under the oversight of a state reform/design officer and operated as a “redesigned school” with modified staffing rules that could be negotiated with employees.

The district could authorize special charter schools, or “turnaround schools,” that would provide students with an alternative education option.

Rep. Tim Melton (D-Auburn Hills) is the primary sponsor of the legislation. The bills have passed the House and have been referred to the Senate.

### **MEA supports this package of bills as passed by the House.**

- The bills make positive contributions to improving the education of children and working conditions of employees.
- Control over the school is given to someone with experience and the authority to reform the school.
- The bills protect the rights of employees to bargain changes in working conditions. It also expands bargaining rights to include the ability to bargain over the privatization of support services, the terms of a leave of absence to teach in a charter school, and the first day of school.
- Creation of a turnaround charter school is the last resort, not the automatic first option. Extensive oversight of the charter schools is provided.

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