



NEWS RELEASE

State Senator Gary Nodler
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GENERAL ASSEMBLY GIVES FINAL APPROVAL TO EDUCATION REFORM MEASURE SPONSORED BY SEN. GARY NODLER

JEFFERSON CITY -- The General Assembly today gave final approval to key education reform legislation sponsored by Sen. Gary Nodler, R-Joplin, that will make a variety of improvements to the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP), bringing Missouri's educational standards into line with the new requirements established under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

"The way that the MAP program is currently constructed, our students are set-up to fail," said Nodler. "The MAP test was pulled together in an environment of isolation without a national standard to build on. With the new federal guidelines, we will be able to write a test that aids education, not one that serves as an obstacle."

Passed in 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act brought new accountability measures to schools and expanded student testing requirements.

The current MAP test categorizes proficiency as above students' current grade level. That standard led to about half of Missouri's schools failing to make "adequate yearly progress" under the federal No Child Left Behind law. Failing to make progress for several years can lead to penalties, including a requirement that children be allowed to transfer to other schools.

Senate Bill 1080 will require that by June 30, 2006, the State Board of Education align the performance standards of the MAP test so that the performance standards meet, but do not exceed, the performance standards of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exam.

Students would be tested every year, as required under the federal standards.

"This reform measure will allow Missouri's children to compete on a level playing field," Nodler said.

SB 1080 has been endorsed by virtually all Missouri's educational organizations including the Missouri State Teacher's Association, Missouri School Board's Association and the Missouri National Education Association.

In addition, a house committee substitute amends language onto SB 1080 that establishes new qualifications for the Board of Governors of Missouri Southern State University – Joplin. Five voting members will be selected from Missouri's Workforce Investment Area Southwest region, which includes: Barton, Jasper, Newton, McDonald, Dade, Lawrence and Barry counties, with no more than three coming from any one county. Two voting members will be selected from any other county in the state.

Having been truly agreed and finally passed by the Legislature, SB 1080 will now be sent to the governor to be signed into law.

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