Nothing is politically right that is morally wrong.

MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Sen. Kevin Engler Announces Nearly $30 million More for Local Schools Under New School Formula

JEFFERSON CITY – Sen. Kevin Engler, R-Farmington, announced today that under the new public school funding formula, school districts in the 3rd Senate District will be receiving an additional $29.9 million more than what they would have received with the old formula.

"If we fail to educate our children, our society will fail in other areas in the future," said Engler. "The amount of funding that will go toward the local school districts in this area is indicative of our desire to provide our children with a valuable education."

Revamping the way the state funds public education was a high priority for lawmakers and Gov. Matt Blunt this session.

The rewritten formula, which increases funding for Missouri schools by $800 million annually, is based on student needs rather than on each district's property taxes. New funding will be phased in over the next seven years.

"Under the new formula, education funds in a more equitable manner than the previous formula," Engler said. "We now can give every child an equal opportunity to succeed, regardless of where they live in this state."

The new formula uses a school district's average daily attendance and calculates additional

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credits for each student beyond the state average percentage enrolled in special programs within that district. Some of the student needs that are included in the calculation for extra credits include students that qualify for free or discount lunch programs, students enrolled in special education, and students with low English proficiency.

After those credits are added to the average daily attendance of the district, the total is multiplied by the proposed state minimum spending amount per student which is $6,117.

The measure also includes provisions that balance the needs of both rural and urban school districts. One new facet is known as the dollar value modifier. It takes into consideration the cost of living in each school district and adjusts a district's total amount by how much education a dollar can buy in various regions of the state. In addition, there is no cap on the amount the dollar value modifier can add to a district's total funding.

The formula also sets aside $15 million annually for school districts that have less than 350 students in their average daily attendance. These traditionally rural, smaller school districts can use these funds for purposes such as distance learning, extraordinary transportation costs and rural teacher recruitment.

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Note: Attachment 1 provides a comparison of the new and current foundation formulas where both are fully-enacted for FY 06.

An informational meeting regarding the new foundation formula will take place on Monday, June 6th, in Farmington. Please contact Jarad Falk @ 573-756-5572 for more information if you would like to attend.