



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

Robert Mayer  
25<sup>th</sup> Senate District

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 331  
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

A Weekly Column for the  
Week of **January 31**, 2005

Contact: Irene Murray  
(573) 751-3859

# Working For Better Schools and Roads

I recently earned appointment to the legislature's Joint Committee on Education, a bipartisan panel of Senate and House members primarily charged with revising the "foundation formula," a complex – and by most accounts, flawed – equation used to calculate state aid to public schools.

A number of Missouri school districts are challenging the school funding formula's constitutionality in the courts. I share what I know to be a widely held belief that lawmakers, not the courts, have a responsibility to revise the way school funding is set. Legislators wrote the current formula, legislators wrote the prior formulas and I'm confident that legislators can and will revise the formula to meet today's needs.

Having joined the Senate's standing education committee shortly after swearing in as a senator in January, I'm in on the ground floor where school-friendly legislation first advances. There's rarely a better view than from the front row, and committees are the front row in the legislative process. My experiences with my own three children in school further drives home the importance of constantly working for better schools.

I'm fortunate to be able to serve with a great slate of Senate and House colleagues on this important panel. Working together, I'm confident we will be able to draft a legislative strategy that ensures every Missouri child has access to a quality, fairly funded education.

My colleagues and I on the joint education committee know that the quality of a child's education largely dictates the opportunities afforded in adulthood, and we know it takes an adequate amount of money distributed equitably to provide a high quality public school system.

\*\*\*

I met this week with my Senate and House colleagues in a joint session to hear Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) Director Pete Rahn's State of Transportation address. Rahn, who became MoDOT's director last year after successfully heading up New Mexico's transportation agency for several years, summarized MoDOT's "Smoother, Safer, Sooner" roadway improvement initiative and discussed the positive impact made by increased funding gleaned through the recapturing of car and fuel tax revenue that, until recently, had been diverted to other agencies.

Delivery of the address is one of several accountability- and credibility-boosting requirements set in motion by the House and Senate in 2003.

*Senator Robert Mayer represents the people of Wayne, Ripley, Butler, Stoddard, New Madrid, Pemiscot and Dunklin counties in the Missouri Senate.*