



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
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School Funding

Budget Reflects Third Consecutive Increase

JEFFERSON CITY – It's the time of year when the temperature starts to cool just a bit from the dog days of summer, leaves are just now beginning to change colors, and our children are a month or so into the new school year. Schools across the state are filled with students eager to take on the challenges their knowledge quests take them on. This past legislative session, we lawmakers were able to give students, teachers and parents a big tool in that quest for knowledge: more money.

The money we spend to educate our youngest children in the basics to our older students for their professional degrees will have an impact long after any of us leave the Capitol Building. The work of the Senate Education Committee and the Joint House-Senate Education Committee is responsible for large gains in elementary and secondary education as well as higher education.

This is the third year in a row that we have increased the amount of funds to the re-designed Foundation Formula. Schools across the state are seeing a combined increase of \$132.6 million compared to last year's budget, continuing our commitment to fully funding our Foundation Formula. In addition, we passed an extra \$15 million for the continued funding of the Small Schools Grant Program. State funding for our public schools is increasing and becoming more equitable.

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For the second year in a row, colleges and universities in Missouri will see more money as well. The higher education budget has been increased by about \$100 million, with our community colleges and our public four-year universities seeing their funding going up 4-5 percent. In addition, we've increased the number of state-funded scholarships and the amount of money in those scholarships. Students who test in the top 3 percent of their college entrance exams will get a \$3,000-per-year scholarship (up from \$2,000-per-year), and those who are in the top 3-5 percent will get a new \$1,000-per-year scholarship. We've also moved to rein in the rising cost of a college education by capping tuition increases by our higher learning institutions.

The Lewis and Clark Discovery Initiative will bring much-needed infrastructure improvements to our colleges and universities across the state, ensuring that a world-class education can be had at our world-class facilities.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.mo.gov.

Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.