



MISSOURI SENATE
Jefferson City
NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Senators Renew Call for Audit of Jennings School

News Reports Question District's Financial Accountability

JEFFERSON CITY — Sen. Tim Green, D-Spanish Lake, and Sen. Rita Heard Days, D-Bel-Nor, renewed their request today, originally mailed on February 28th, to Missouri Governor Matt Blunt, calling on the governor to request Missouri State Auditor Susan Montee to conduct a state audit of the Jennings School District. Their letter follows an article in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* pointing to alleged fiscal and administrative mismanagement at the school district.

“We must not allow this developing situation in Jennings to become a repeat of the fiscal and administrative crisis that befell Riverview Gardens School District,” Sen. Green said. “We must be good stewards of taxpayer dollars and provide objective information to the elected school board members, teachers and patrons of the district.”

The *North County Journal* reports the Riverview Gardens Board of Education suspended former superintendent Henry Williams last year following the release of a state audit that said he had received \$158,400 in extra payments over four years. The county charged Williams with the five criminal counts three days later. His trial is scheduled to begin March 31.

(MORE)

After the state audit uncovered the school district's financial and academic problems, the state revoked the district's accreditation.

According to news reports, the Jennings School District administration has allowed reserve funds to dwindle, hired unnecessary administrators and failed to properly implement a \$1.5 million computer program.

Senators Green and Days also contend the Jennings School District has:

- Failed to renew the contract of Superintendent Dr. Kay Royster due to fiscal and administrative mismanagement;
- Allowed teacher funding to decrease from 64% in the 2004-05 school year to just 35% in the 2006-07 school year;
- Allowed district executive salaries to increase 120% from 2004-05 to 2006-07, while other administrators received 30% raises; and
- Overseen a \$1 million increase in the purchase of media supplies from 2005-06 to 2006-07.

Bridgette Alexander-Humphries with the Missouri National Education Association also accuses the Jennings School District of failing to enforce student discipline codes which she says resulted in an injury to a teacher.

Sen. Days notes local elected school board members have called for a state audit.

“By having a state audit, the elected school board members will have information that will allow a more informed discussion on the future of the district and the administrative and fiscal practices at the Jennings School District,” Sen. Days said. “We just want to make sure the district is meeting the needs of its students while spending tax dollars wisely.”

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