

# State Senator Robert Mayer The Mayer Memo

Senator Robert Mayer - Serving Butler, Dunklin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Ripley, Stoddard & Wayne Counties



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## Parental Involvement = Student Success

JEFFERSON CITY — Missourians play an integral role in their children's education — both at home and in school. Thanks to legislation passed by the General Assembly this year, the second week in September is now designated *Parent and Family Involvement in Education Week* to encourage greater involvement of parents and families in education.

With the special week now part of our schools' yearly calendar, Missouri schools are working to explore new ways to strengthen vital parent-school partnerships.

I think all of us can agree how important the role of parents (or other significant adults) is in increasing the chances of students' academic success. Decades of research show that when parents are involved, students do better in school, parents become empowered, teacher morale improves, schools get better, and communities grow stronger. The results can be measured in better school attendance, higher grades and test scores, higher graduation rates, and greater enrollment in post-secondary schools.

Research also shows parental involvement in education positively impacts students' well-being, through enhanced self-esteem, more positive attitudes and behaviors, and a decreased use of drugs and alcohol.

Because students spend 70 percent of their time outside of school, it's important for parental involvement to begin — and continue — at home, through home-learning activities, such as reading practice, and other positive activities designed to stimulate learning. Other things parents can do include: communicating with your child's teacher, going to open houses, attending parent/teacher meetings, visiting your child's school, getting involved with after-school activities, helping with classroom learning, or

committing time to fundraising groups, booster clubs, or volunteering. Parents can also become involved by serving on school organizations and committees, seeking a school board post, or by working as paraprofessionals.

Education has long been a focus of mine, and as the chair of the Senate Education Committee and vice-chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am very pleased to have played an important role in making education our state's highest budget and policy priority — another key component of our children's academic success.

During the past four budget years, Missouri has delivered \$1.2 billion in new support for education — the largest education funding increase without new taxes in state history. And this year — for the first time ever — Missouri's total funding for higher education tops \$1 billion.

School funding is only part of the equation for our students' academic success. Parents and families must become actively involved to ensure a child's success in school — and life. When that happens, there are tremendous rewards for everyone.

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