



MISSOURI SENATE

Jane Cunningham
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JEFFERSON CITY

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For Immediate Release:
May 15, 2009

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**Missouri to Benefit from Momentous
Education Reform Measures
Advanced by Senator Jane Cunningham**
*General Assembly Passes Comprehensive Education Bill
Including Merit Pay and Open Enrollment
for Children in Foster Care
Forwarded by Freshman Senator from Chesterfield*

Senator's Pledge to Reform Education Began During Days in the Missouri House

JEFFERSON CITY — Senator Jane Cunningham's education reforms aimed at ensuring a quality educational experience for all Missouri students — including an option for teacher performance-based pay in the St. Louis school district and open enrollment for children in foster care— were passed by the General Assembly this week (5/14).

Senator Cunningham's measures were among those included in [Senate Bill 291](#) — a wide-ranging education reform bill. In the bill, Sen. Cunningham's proposals that would create a method of teacher certification for individuals to teach in the areas of banking or financial responsibility and a measure that provides open school enrollment for foster care children were also successfully incorporated into the bill.

"We have passed more education reform this session in this bill than we have in my entire nine-year legislative career," Sen. Cunningham said. "I couldn't be more pleased that our state had the foresight and courage to move Missouri forward with these ambitious goals for our students and teachers," Sen. Cunningham said.

Senator Cunningham has lead the charge for school reform efforts during her entire 9 year legislative career including giving parents the choice on where they want to send their children to school, merit pay for teachers who voluntarily opt out of tenure, alternative teacher certification, and giving families all over the state the option to select internet courses for credit towards graduation to name a few. "It was an honor to work with

both Senator Charlie Shields (the bill sponsor) and Representative Maynard Wallace (the bill handler) to craft meaningful steps to reform our educational system,” Senator Cunningham said. “While these are baby steps to reform I believe that we are moving in the right direction for the future of our children,” she emphasized.

Senator Cunningham was instrumental in last minute protections for homeschoolers from Government intrusion and was tireless in negotiating the education bill with all parties involved. Senate Leader Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, applauded Sen. Cunningham’s contributions to the education bill. “I appreciate Sen. Cunningham’s efforts in helping advance education reforms this year that will enhance our students’ educational experience, create teacher performance standards, and allow teachers in St. Louis City’s school district to participate in a voluntary merit pay program,” Sen. Shields said.

Senator Matt Bartle, R-Lee’s Summit, echoed his praise for Sen. Cunningham’s commitment to education reform and passing the education bill. “Senator Jane Cunningham is a tenacious lawmaker with an ability to advance needed reforms, and she has done an outstanding job in her first year as a senator employing the same kind of skill and courage that made her successful as an education reformer in the Missouri House,” Sen. Bartle said. “The merit pay provision is one of the momentous pieces of legislation passed by this legislative body this year.”

Since her tenure in the Missouri House of Representatives — where she served as chairwoman of the House Education Committee from 2003-2008 — Sen. Cunningham has earned a reputation as an education reformer. She previously served as chairwoman of the Education Task Force and is currently on the Board of Directors of the American Legislative Exchange Council — the largest voluntary organization of legislators and business leaders in the country.

Senate Bill 291 now awaits the governor’s signature.

For further information about Senator Jane Cunningham and her legislation, you may visit her Senate website at www.senate.mo.gov/cunningham or contact her Chief of Staff, Lucy LePage, at (573) 751-1186.

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