



State Senator

Rita Heard Days

District 14

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Website | Biography

Education Legislation One Step Closer to Becoming Law

In a previous column, I wrote about a bill I filed in the upper chamber, [Senate Bill 55](#), which would allow school districts in Missouri to maintain permanent records in a digital or electronic format. Since then, my legislation has been sent to the House of Representatives. It still contains the provision originally found in Senate Bill 55. However, it also turned into a rather large bill, which contains several provisions regarding education in our state.

Senate Bill 55 now includes a provision regarding teaching standards in Missouri. This act would require the [Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#) (DESE) to develop standards for teaching in Missouri public and charter schools by June 30, 2010.

According to the legislation, teachers must:

- Have students actively participate and be successful in the learning process
- Create forms of assessment to monitor and manage student learning
- Be prepared and knowledgeable of content
- Maintain students' on-task behavior
- Stay current on instructional knowledge, and
- Act in a responsible and professional manner.

School districts would be responsible for establishing key criteria by which teaching may be evaluated under these teaching standards, and DESE must provide model criteria that school districts in our state may use. These teaching standards and criteria would serve as the basis for the establishment of district performance-based teaching evaluations and teacher professional development plans.

Other provisions in Senate Bill 55 would:

- Exempt any motor fuel sold to be used to operate school busses to transport students to or from school or for other educational purposes from the motor fuel tax.
- Remove public career-technical schools from requirements and qualifications to participate in the A+ Schools Program.
- Change the definition of "bullying" as used in anti-bullying policies that are required by school districts. The definition of "bullying" would

include cyber-bullying and electronic communications.

- Create the GED Revolving Fund, which would be available to cover costs and expenses for GED test administration.
- Change policy regarding virtual courses for school districts and charter schools in Missouri.
- Modify state funding for elementary and secondary education, including the inclusion of the gaming revenues from the repeal of loss limits.
- Establish the “Foster Care Education Bill of Rights,” which would designate a staff person to be an educational liaison for foster care children. The liaison would assist with proper educational placements, transfers between schools, ensure the transfer of grades and credits, request school records, and submit school records that have been requested.

These are only a few of the provisions in this important education bill. To find a complete list of provisions in Senate Bill 55, please visit the Missouri Senate website at www.senate.mo.gov and type in SB55 in the bill search field. Since my bill had several amendments added on to it in the House, the Senate must approve these changes before the bill can be delivered to the governor for his signature.

The Senate produces a weekly general column covering Senate action throughout the legislative session. If you would like to read more on important measures my colleagues and I are working on in the General Assembly for the citizens of our state, visit www.senate.mo.gov and then click on Senate Newsroom. You can even subscribe to receive this great legislative resource, which is updated each week.

If you have comments or questions about any other matter involving state government, please feel free to contact my office at (573) 751-4106.

*Senator Rita Heard Days represents a portion of
St. Louis County in the Missouri Senate.*



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