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Supporting St. Louis Public Schools

There are multiple ways for citizens to show their support for our schools, and the current one may be the most urgent.

This past session, despite a historic shortfall in the state budget, the Missouri Senate made a conscious effort to continue to make education our state's top priority. We maintained full funding of the foundation formula that provides the essential operations of schools throughout the state, and given the extent of the revenue shortfall, that was no easy task.

Education was a priority in my own legislation this past session as well, as I introduced bills that would have modified school attendance requirements to provide school districts the opportunity to stagger kindergarten start dates and lower the minimum age requirements for school attendance. I introduced legislation that would allow foreign language immersion charter schools the opportunity to enroll children as young as age four in order to take advantage of that prime language learning time. I've been a member of the Joint Committee on Education, and I have supported bills that increase early childhood education options.

This next election, a bond issue will appear on the ballot that would provide \$155 million in improvements without raising the current tax levy. This funding, combined with the low-cost bonds available through the federal stimulus program, would allow the district to get more "bang for the buck."

If you are familiar with St. Louis Public Schools, you know that a majority of the buildings are more than 75 years old. The maintenance and improvements of buildings this old will continue to be a critical issue facing the current and future generations of our children.

Please take the time to learn more about the Proposition S ballot initiative at slps.org by clicking the FACTS (Facility Advisory Committee for Tomorrow's Schools) button on the left hand side of the page. The proposition will be on the ballot on August 3.

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