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The Stouffer Report: Session in Review - Education

This year may be remembered as the toughest in state history in terms of the budget. However, we were able to ensure Missouri's classrooms continue to receive the same amount of funding as last year.

Summer School: Part of the General Assembly's challenge this year was finding what parts of education are absolutely necessary at this time. [House Bill 1543](#) is a measure that addresses education funding, including summer school. Over the past few decades the scope of summer school has widened to include instruction outside core subjects. Under a provision of this bill, state funding will be limited to the core subjects.

Teacher Retirement: This issue received a lot of talk outside the Capitol this year. However, *inside* the Capitol, it was not discussed at all. [Senate Bill 714](#) addresses state employee retirement. Nowhere in this bill are teachers mentioned. However, many fear that in future years, it could. To be clear, there will be absolutely no changes to teacher retirement this year. In addition, it appears reforms to retirement of any kind this year will not become law.

How to Fund Education: This year we will be able to fund classrooms at the same level next year as we are this year, although it is less than what districts expected. However, the legislature did make cuts outside of education, in order to pass a balanced budget. In addition, some "hold harmless" schools are not affected by most budget increases or decreases for varying reasons. This will also be reviewed.

Career Ladder: Currently, teachers are paid for work they [complete outside of the classroom](#) at the end of the school year. Some were considering not paying

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teachers for work already completed. Instead, the teachers were paid for the work completed, but the program will not be funded for the next year and until the state's revenues improve.

Parents as Teachers (PAT): Due to budget constraints, PAT was reformed to keep the program in existence. This will mean some folks will have to pay a small fee to continue to have teachers work with them at home. Parents As Teachers has proven itself to work to prevent education recovery costs later in a child's life.

Higher Education: [Access Missouri](#), a program that provides scholarships that are particularly important to our students in small private colleges, will remain intact. In the future, the scholarship amounts will change to be the same for students in both public and private schools.

Thank you again for your feedback and prayers this year. Without them, it would have been an even more difficult task of putting together the budget for the next fiscal year.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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