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Governor Signs Education Bill Handled by Sen. Pearce

JEFFERSON CITY—A comprehensive elementary and secondary education bill Sen. David Pearce (R-Warrensburg) handled in the Senate during the 2010 legislative session was signed into law by the governor recently.

[House Bill 1543](#) makes several changes to state laws relating to K–12 school employee liability, safety practices and funding, among other provisions. One of the major provisions involves changing the funding mechanism for the Career Ladder program (which pays teachers additional money for extra work, such as afterschool tutoring) by funding it upfront rather than in arrears if an appropriation is made. Another major change under the bill allows for the Parents as Teachers program to be need-based by serving low-income families first. It also allows school districts to implement a sliding-fee scale based on income and family size for services so those who can afford it may help defray costs.

In addition, the measure contains several provisions relating to school safety, such as adding "cyberbullying" and electronic communications to school district anti-bullying policies; expanding the reporting of acts of violence to include all teachers at the students' school building; expanding employee immunity from following established discipline policies to include, but not be limited to, policies of student discipline; and allowing all public school districts to require a school uniform or restrict student dress.

"This bill contains many well-thought out and necessary provisions that will help increase safety and improve procedures at Missouri schools," Sen. Pearce said. "The changes to Career Ladder funding will ensure the program goes through the regular appropriations process, so teachers are paid for the extra work they do. For Parents as Teachers, the families who need services the most will be more likely to receive them."

Most of the provisions within the bill take effect Aug. 28.

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