

Week of November 22, 2010



[Website](#) | [Biography](#) | [Newsroom](#)

Educated Citizenry 2020

We are swiftly approaching the end of 2010 which also concludes my term as chair of the Educated Citizenry 2020 Committee. Senate President Pro Tem Charlie Shields challenged the Senate in 2009 to create a plan that moved away from the typical year-to-year legislation to a more long-term vision. The idea behind this was to look forward for the good of our state in order to improve our quality of life and to become competitive in areas we were previously lacking. In response, the Senate voted to create a series of three committees to focus on long range goals through the year 2020. The three major areas are job creation, healthcare and education. The education committee has developed long-term goals to create educated citizens. Educated citizens are people who are fully able to participate in a democratic society, who have a passion for lifelong learning and who are prepared with the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve life goals.

This goal will be achieved using three benchmarks: Missouri kindergarteners will enter school with the essential skills and knowledge to be successful; 75% of Missouri students in every school district will demonstrate proficiency on the state's standardized achievement measure, as well as performing at comparable levels to the highest performing industrialized countries on international, standardized measures; Missouri will increase attainment of postsecondary degrees and credentials to 60% for all adults, which will be supported in part by an increase in retention rates in higher education.

Through discussion and research, the committee is developing recommendations around five major themes: access, accountability, teacher quality, school readiness, and governance. Recommendations on how to achieve our educational goals for Missourians are currently under consideration and will be available within the next few weeks.

We are excited about looking where our state needs to be in 2020 in the area of education.

Whether here in the 31st Senatorial District or across the state of Missouri, without growth in the realm of education, there can be no growth in our state's economic status. The two are directly related in that we will not be able to move forward and grow as a state without improving our state's education. By expanding our educational focus away from a strictly K-12 mentality, we can foster a deeper respect for the necessity of a life-long learning process. Utilizing pre-kindergarten and continuing to focus past post secondary education, ensures that well-rounded individuals remain an asset to our state's economic future.

As always, please feel free to contact me or my staff with any questions or concerns at any time. We look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions and trying to answer any questions you may have. You can reach us by phone at 866-277-0882 (toll-free) or 573-751-2272, or by fax at 573-526-7381.

Senator David Pearce serves Bates, Cass, Johnson and Vernon counties in the 31st State Senatorial District.

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