

*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*



*Free and fair discussion
is the firmest friend of truth.*

MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 13, 2010

Senate Gives First Round Approval to School Funding Phase-In Adjustment

Bill Addresses School Funding Phase-In Scenario in Tough Budget Years

JEFFERSON CITY – Facing a multi-year budget crisis, today the Missouri Senate gave first round approval to Senate Bill 943 that would adjust the phase-in of full funding for Missouri school districts. The bill creates two scenarios based on the state’s ability to fund schools at certain levels as well as takes summer school programs back to core subjects, makes funding for the Career Ladder program upfront, and requires a study by the Joint Committee on Education on the adequacy of school districts’ local efforts.

Senate Leader Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, said adjustments are necessary due to Missouri’s on-going budget crisis.

“We are facing revenue shortfalls for years to come” said Shields. “That is why it is important we create the framework now for how school funding should be fairly distributed in the case we cannot meet our increased funding goals for K-12 education in future budgets.”

The bill would create two scenarios to address future shortfalls in funding of school districts. Both scenarios are based on actual school funding levels in Fiscal Year 2010. In the first scenario, if funding is above FY10 levels but below the phase-in level, the state will adjust the percent of phase-in to match appropriated money. In the second scenario, if appropriated moneys fall below FY10 levels, then 10 percent would be taken from the 16 highest hold harmless districts, followed by an equal division of the differences between the appropriated level and the projected phase-in level among all districts by weighted average daily attendance.

The measure would also change state funding for summer school beginning with the 2010-2011 school year. According to the bill, summer school attendance included in a district’s average daily attendance can only include hours where students are enrolled in core subject areas for that grade. School districts could continue to offer summer school programs that are non-academic or enrichment activities at their own expense.

“We have found a way to continue summer school programs that have been proven to help those students who have fallen behind in core subjects to still have the opportunity to catch up so they graduate on-time,” said Shields. “But the state can no longer afford to pay school districts that offer non-academic summer school programs.”

The bill also changes the funding mechanism for the Career Ladder program that pays teachers for afterschool mentoring. Under the bill, the program would be funded upfront in the budget process rather than in arrears.

The bill also requires the Joint Committee on Education to conduct a study and report its findings to the General Assembly by Dec. 31 concerning distribution of state school funding and adequacy of districts’ local efforts.

The bill must receive a final vote of approval from the Senate before advancing to the House for similar consideration.

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