

*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

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Education Reform Bill Sent to House
***Senator Bartle Proposes Bold, Innovative Solutions for
Improving Public K–12 Education***

JEFFERSON CITY—Significant changes could soon be in store for Missouri’s public K–12 schools after the Missouri Senate voted today to advance a bill that allows for merit-based teacher salaries, year-round school schedules and multiple kindergarten start dates.

[Senate Bill 815](#), sponsored by Sen. Matt Bartle, R-Lee’s Summit, expands eligibility for the Teacher Choice Compensation Package to teachers in all school districts upon a majority vote of the local school board. Current law provides that only teachers in the St. Louis City School District are eligible to participate in the package, which allows them to receive merit-based salaries.

The measure also allows a school district to adopt a year-round educational program by a majority vote of the school board. Districts that move to a year-round program must meet the minimum number of school days required and have no break, including summer, longer than four weeks.

Lastly, SB 815 permits a school district to offer, by majority vote of the school board, two start dates for kindergarten. One start date must occur on the district’s normal starting date and the other must occur approximately halfway through the year. Parents would be allowed to choose their child’s start date.

“Some of the problems our educational system faces require intrepid, common-sense solutions,” Bartle said. “Offering financial incentives to our finest teachers will attract the best and brightest to the profession. Likewise, providing our school districts the flexibility to implement fresh approaches, such as year-round school and two kindergarten start dates, will give them options beyond the current one-size-fits-all policies.”

In addition, some of the cost-saving recommendations from the Senate’s “Rebooting Government” program, organized by Senate Leader Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, were added to SB 815. One such initiative permits a school board to adopt a policy allowing any student who has participated in three or more years of high school interscholastic athletics or marching band to receive one unit of physical education credit. This would satisfy the current requirement that a student must complete one P.E. credit to graduate.

“Education is one of the best investments our state can make,” Shields said. “Missouri’s economic future is tied directly to the strength of our educational system, and we must continually evaluate the best and most effective approaches to teaching our students and provide them with the skills they need to succeed.”

Senate Bill 815 now moves to the House for similar consideration.

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