Feb. 9, 1839

*This Date in Missouri Senate History*

On *This Date in Missouri Senate History*, the date was Feb. 9, 1839, the day Missouri started its own public school system.

In the 19 years Missouri had been a state, home- and private schooling were the only means by which a person received a formal education. Years before, the Virginia model of state-run education was starting to gain ground, and was something Thomas Jefferson hoped to see spread into more states.

Henry Geyer had served in the territorial Legislature in 1818, and then in the Missouri House of Representatives from 1820 to ’24, and again in 1834 and ’35. He came up with what is known as the Geyer Act, which established not only public education in Missouri, but also started the road to the University of Missouri system.

The Geyer Act enacted the same design for education we know today: state, county and city funding; age range for schooling; and a superintendent of schools. Not much really became of this landmark legislation at first, because there was no funding mechanism put into place until 1853.

Feb. 9, 1839, the date marking passage of the Geyer Act, on *This Date in Missouri Senate History*.

(Sources: *Nevada Daily Mail*, Feb, 8, 2007, and Archives of the University of Missouri)