

SAC Legislative Bulletin

The official legislative newsletter for the School Administrators Coalition (SAC) which includes

MASA, MAESP, MASSP, MO-CASE, MUSIC, MO K-8, MARE & MSHSAA

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FULL FUNDING OF FOUNDATION FORMULA TOP PRIORITY OF GOVERNOR AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEADERS

On January 11, Gov. Blunt made his "State of the State" address to General Assembly members and to the public at large and made full funding of the new foundation formula a top priority for this legislative session. In earlier presentations to the House and Senate, respectively, the Speaker of the House, Rod Jetton, and President Pro Tem of the Senate, Michael Gibbons, had, also, made full funding of the new formula a top priority for the session. In addition to recommending an increase of 122.1 million dollars to fund the formula, the governor recommended appropriating an additional 15 million dollars to fund the small schools add-on that was included in the new formula legislation. Other education increases included six million dollars to fund the states High Needs Fund, one million dollars more for the "Parents as Teachers" program, a 1.8 million dollar increase for the A+ School program and maintaining level state funding for MOREnet.

	2006 Appropriation	Governors Recommendation
Foundation Formula	\$1,882,305,259	\$2,701,597,891
Small Schools Program	0	\$15,000,000
Line 14 At Risk	\$413,188,959	Now Included In Formula
Transportation	\$162,067,713	\$162,067,713
Special Education	\$149,617,982	Now Included In Formula
Remedial Reading	\$11,096,925	Now Included In Formula
Early Special Education	\$96,311,209	\$96,311,209
Gifted	\$24,870,104	Now Included In Formula
Career Ladder	\$37,684,374	\$37,284,374
Career Education	\$52,880,428	\$52,880,428
Parent Education/PAT	\$31,304,651	\$32,304,651
School District Trust Fund (Prop C)	\$748,700,000	\$770,300,000

The recommendations of the governor will now go to the House Appropriations Committee for consideration and committee action. School administrators are urged to contact their state representatives and senators and ask them to support the governors budget recommendations.

School administrators are, also, encouraged to contact the governors office at www.gov.mo.gov/constituentform.htm to express their appreciation for his efforts to make full funding of the foundation formula a top priority.

MAJOR ISSUES LOOM FOR SESSION

Although few bills have been filed at the present time, several major issues relevant to the public schools may be addressed by the filing of bills over the next few weeks. These issues include:

1. The Sixty-Five Percent for Instruction Requirements or, sometimes, referred to as "Our Students First Legislation" - Much has been written and said about this proposal during the fall. The governor provided high visibility for the issue by making it a key provision in his legislative platform. The proposal is being promoted across the nation by a Washington-based organization entitled "First Class Education". The organizations goal is for all states to pass a law by the end of 2008 requiring each school district to spend at least sixty-five percent of its operating budget on classroom instruction. The definition of classroom instruction has become quite controversial because it excludes a number of student support services such as librarians, counselors, and nurses. It, also, excludes the salaries of school principals, any teacher training or curriculum improvement costs, and tuition payments made by school districts.

Recently, due to lack of support from a number of legislators, newspapers and education associations, proponents of the legislation have announced intentions to make changes in the proposed legislation. Rep. Muschany has announced that he will include the following changes when he files a bill to implement "Our Students First" legislation.

- a. The language of his bill will set a target rather than a mandate for instructional expenses percentages.
- b. The definition of instructional expenses will be expanded to include librarians and counselors and the percentage target will be increased to 66.67% of operational expenses.
- c. Each school district will be required to report the statewide target and their districts percentage of instructional expenses on their annual report card.

The School Administrators Coalition (SAC) is opposed to legislation proposing a sixty-five percent solution and encourages school administrators to discuss their reasons for opposing this issue with their state representatives and senators. (See reference link above.)

2. Tuition Tax Credits Last year, the School Administrators Coalition (SAC) joined Education Roundtable associations in successfully opposing **HB 639**. **HB 639** would have created a state tax credit for contributions to an educational assistance organization certified by the Director of the Department of Economic Development. The educational assistance organization would make scholarships available to "qualified students" who could use the funds to attend private, parochial, home or other public schools. Eighty percent of the amount contributed could be claimed as a tax credit with no limit on the total contribution or credit available to each contributor. The total statewide contribution per year would be limited to forty million dollars. Eligible students would include students whose family income is no more than 185% (original language) of the free or reduced lunch eligibility level and who reside in the St. Louis or Kansas City School Districts or in an unaccredited or provisionally accredited school district.

It is widely anticipated that this or similar legislation will be filed this session and receive

consideration by either the full House or full Senate. The School Administrators Coalition remains strongly opposed to this legislation and will address the reasons for that opposition in future bulletin editions.

3. School Bus Seat Belt Mandate Following a study by a state School Bus Safety Task Force in the summer of 2005, the governor announced an initiative to make lap/shoulder belts mandatory on all new school buses in Missouri. Information provided by the Missouri Association of Pupil Transportation (See reference link above.) has indicated that 1) ninety-nine percent plus of student injuries and fatalities occur outside the bus and 2) the cost of fully implementing a mandate to place lap/shoulder belts on all buses over a period of time is very expensive and would be difficult for the state to finance.

The School Administrators Coalition (SAC) is opposed to a lap/shoulder belt mandate for school buses and supports prioritizing student safety on school buses through the continued use of compartmentalization practices.

SUMMER SCHOOL PENALTY

Bills introduced in both the House and the Senate would either eliminate or significantly alter the summer school penalty that was enacted last session. **SB 644** filed by Senator Charlie Shields (R-34) would phase out the summer school penalty as the old foundation formula is phased out, would attach only to the monies received through the old foundation formula calculation and would apply only to reductions in ADA that exceed 15% of the 05-06 summer school ADA. The Senate Education Committee met on Tuesday, January 17, and heard **SB 644**. Educational organizations spoke in support of the bill. The testimony of the School Administrators Coalition noted support for total elimination of the summer school penalty. However, absent total elimination, the bill provides a reasonable alternative. Newton Learning testified in opposition to the bill but noted that changes to the penalty provision are needed and **SB 644** is a step in the right direction.

A number of bills have been filed in the House relating to the summer school penalty. Rep. Brian Baker (R-123) filed **HB 1273** which would eliminate both the summer school and gifted penalties. Rep. Doug Ervin (R-35) filed **HB 1136** which would also eliminate both penalties. And, Rep. Terry Swinger (D-162) filed **HB 1304** which would increase the summer school count to 1.5 times the weighted ADA for summer school and would eliminate both the summer school and gifted education penalties.

BOND CEILING LIMITS

Sen. Luann Ridgeway (R-17) and Rep. Brian Baker (R-123) have introduced joint resolutions in the Senate and House to place on the ballot a constitutional amendment to increase the bonded indebtedness capacity from 15% to 20% of the value of taxable tangible property. These resolutions, **SJR 31** and **HJR 41**, respectively, would allow fast growing school districts, and districts in need of building improvements and renovations, to better meet the needs of their districts while remaining below the constitutional ceiling on bonding capacity. The School Administrators Coalition supports both resolutions.

MSHSAA LEGISLATION

Two bills have been filed regarding the eligibility of students to participate in sports or other school extracurricular activities. **HB 1195** sponsored by Rep. Cunningham would prohibit public schools from joining or retaining membership in any statewide activities association which prevents tuition paying students from participating in school sports or prevents tuition paying students with good attendance from participating in any school activity.

HB 1196 sponsored by Rep. Cunningham would require school districts to establish policies and procedures to allow parents to withhold permission for a child to join school clubs or participate in extracurricular activities. Beginning next year, school districts would be required to obtain written permission for a student to be a member of a club or participate in an extracurricular activity.

The School Administrators Coalition (SAC) which includes the Missouri State High School Activities Association is opposed to both **HB 1195** and **HB 1196**. If passed, **HB 1195** could certainly increase recruiting pressures on high school athletes and **HB 1196** would require a sizable amount of administrative time to be utilized without documentation that there is a problem for a significant number of students at the present time.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Senate Education Committee, chaired by Sen. Gary Nodler (R-32), met on January 18, 2006 and heard the following bills: **SB 580, SB 644, SB 590, SB 857, SB 654, SB 655**, and **SB 650**. Only two bills, **SB 644** and **SB 580** (Shields R-34), related to K-12 education. SB 644 would alter the summer school penalty enacted last session. (See above article). MASA testified in support of elimination of the penalty and acknowledged that **SB 644** would be an appropriate alternative should elimination of the penalty not be feasible. **SB 580** would require representatives from DESE, Higher Education and the Department of Economic Development to meet at least twice yearly and then report annually to the General Assembly on progress toward improving transitions through the educational process and into the work force.

HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The House Elementary & Secondary Education Committee, chaired by Rep. Jane Cunningham (R-86) met on Wednesday, January 18, in a joint informational session with the Senate Education Committee. Jacqueline Lain, Director of Performance Evaluation Services with Standards & Poors, provided information regarding the schoolmatters.com website and outlined for the Committee the types of data available on the website at no cost to individuals and school districts. Mary Cohen, SRR with the U.S. Department of Education, provided the Committee with an update on NCLB. Ms. Cohen noted that enlightened administrators make a difference in education and further noted that high school performance will be a particular focus of the U.S. Department of Education with particular emphasis on math and science.

ABOUT THE SESSION

The 93rd General Assembly, 2nd Regular Session convened on Wednesday, January 4, 2006 at noon and will adjourn on Friday, May 12, 2006. Senator Gary Nodler (R-32) continues to chair the Senate Education Committee, and Rep. Jane Cunningham (R-86) continues to chair the House Elementary & Secondary Education Committee. The spring break for the legislative session will occur from March 16-27.

SB287 Budgeting Workshops

MASA, MoASBO and MSBA working in cooperation with DESE are sponsoring regional workshops to assist school administrators in calculating state revenues using the new state foundation formula. We believe you will find these workshops to be extremely valuable as

you prepare district budgets for the 2006-2007 school year. For more information click on the link below.

<http://www.mcsa.org/masa/>

According to our records, the following individuals represent at least a portion of your school district.

Senator(s)	Representative(s)
Missouri Association of Rural Education Chris Koster (R) Phone: (573) 751-1430	Shannon Cooper (R) Phone: (573) 751-1484 David Pearce (R) Phone: (573) 751-2272 Michael McGhee (R) Phone: (573) 751-1462

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