



Cooperating School Districts

PROPOSED 2010 Legislative Platform

Statement of Principle

We believe that every child should be given the opportunity to develop his or her talents to the fullest extent possible in order to attain access to the benefits of the American social, economic and political systems. There are many factors, tangible and intangible, that affect the quality of education provided to children in Missouri. Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis is committed to the principles of local control and quality education. We favor legislation that bolsters the local control of school districts by their boards of education. Further, we believe that quality education is a shared responsibility of the home, school, community, state and nation. We support local autonomy of school districts and oppose the unfunded mandates of new programs. As such, we urge that a moratorium be placed on mandating any new programs until all current programs are adequately funded.

Priority Positions

Following are key issues designated by the membership of Cooperating School Districts' 61 Missouri school districts:

TIF, Chapter 100, Chapter 353 & Other Similar Economic Statutes

1. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation to strengthen the definition of "blighted" in TIF legislation, Chapter 100, Chapter 353 and other similar economic statutes, and to provide school districts and other taxing entities with a greater voice on TIF committees, including increased voting representation for school districts on governing boards that grant tax abatements.
2. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation that allows school districts and other taxing bodies affected by TIFs, Chapter 100 or Chapter 353 tax abatements to have final say over the granting of such abatements as they affect school district revenue.

Collective Bargaining

3. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation that defines the parameters of collective bargaining for public school employees while preserving the local boards' authority to make final decisions in the best interest of their respective districts.

Tax Credits/Education Vouchers

4. Cooperating School Districts opposes legislation that would authorize interdistrict open enrollment for public school students. CSD supports student exchange programs between school districts when each school district approves the exchange.
5. Cooperating School Districts opposes legislation that provides for tuition tax credits, tuition tax deductions and/or educational vouchers.
6. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation that permits for the expansion of charter schools in school districts that have been unaccredited by Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education standards for four or more consecutive years, and creates high achievement and accountability standards that must be met by charter schools in order to retain their charter.

School Funding/Foundation Formula

7. Cooperating School Districts supports appropriations for public schools sufficient to fully fund the Foundation Formula, restore categorical programs such as Gifted and Talented, create a categorical program to provide full funding for English Language Learners (ELL), and supports reducing the number of years to phase in the full funding of the new Formula.

8. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation that would allow districts to phase in by school board vote an increase in their tax levy to the minimum levy of \$3.43 approved in the new Foundation Formula.
9. Cooperating School Districts supports restoring the allocation for professional development funding at the state level.

Property Assessments

10. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation mandating accurate property assessments statewide.

Missouri Human Rights

11. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation to extend school districts' immunity from liability to include suits brought under the Missouri Human Rights Act. Such immunity would also include school board members and school district employees.

Transportation

12. Cooperating School Districts supports full categorical funding for transportation.
13. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation that would exempt all public school districts from the motor fuel tax imposed under Chapter 142, RSMo.
14. It is the position of Cooperating School Districts that thorough safety research and scientific evidence must be demonstrated prior to a State mandate of installing seat belts on school buses. Furthermore, it is the position of Cooperating School Districts that seat belts should not be mandated unless full payment of all direct and indirect costs related to this mandate are covered by the State of Missouri without having a negative impact on the Foundation Formula or any other funding to Missouri school districts.

Bond Issues

15. Cooperating School Districts supports passage of a constitutional amendment that would reduce the voting percentage required to approve a bond issue to a simple majority.
16. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation to increase the constitutional limit for school district bonding capacity to 20 percent of assessed valuation.

Standing Positions

Following are key positions continually supported by the membership of Cooperating School Districts' 61 Missouri school districts:

17. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation to modify the Circuit Breaker law regarding property taxes for senior citizens or to provide homestead exemptions only if protection of school district property tax revenue is guaranteed.
18. Cooperating School Districts opposes legislation that would change the basic governance structure of the Missouri State High School Activities Association.
19. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation that would allow two years of CPI increases to be included in tax rate calculations consistent with the two-year reassessment cycle.
20. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation that provides new sources of revenue for school building construction and renovation, including statewide bond proposals.
21. Cooperating School Districts supports appropriations to restore State funding for all ~~required~~ Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) tests, end-of-course examinations, and any other required tests under No Child Left Behind.

22. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation that would exempt school districts from gross receipts taxes charged on utilities. If the General Assembly passes legislation to deregulate or restructure the utility or other industry, school districts must be compensated for any loss of revenue.
23. Cooperating School Districts supports any legislation that seeks to expand the number of annual school election dates.
24. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation that provides for funding for school and district technology to support instruction, including the costs for Internet access, connectivity, infrastructure, hardware and software.
25. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation which enhances the school district's ability to maintain a safe and orderly environment, including State funding for alternative programs for those students who have been suspended or expelled, appropriate security measures, and dropout prevention.
26. For the safety and welfare of children in the State of Missouri, Cooperating School Districts supports legislation that totally prohibits possession of firearms on all school premises, facilities, parking areas, grounds, vehicles, and at all school activities, with the exception of law enforcement officials, and that strengthens penalties for violations.
27. Cooperating School Districts supports legislation authorizing voluntary fully-funded preschool for all public school children in the state. Furthermore, it is the position of Cooperating School Districts that fully funding the preschool program would not have a negative impact on the Foundation Formula or any other funding for Missouri school districts.

Adopted by the Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis Conference of School Board Members and Superintendents on September 24, 2009.