



Cooperating School Districts

# Legislative Advocacy Information

**Bill Number:** SB 603

**Bill Sponsor:** Mayer

**Bill Summary:** Open Enrollment

Creates procedures for open enrollment of public school students across school districts boundary lines

## CSD Position:

**CSD is OPPOSED to this bill because of the negative effect it will have on public school districts in Missouri.**

- Many districts pass bond issues and tax levies to provide classroom space and appropriate staffing to ensure small class sizes for their resident students. Even though the class size may be set at 20, that does not mean that they necessarily want every class to have 20 students. Open enrollment would ensure that class sizes in many districts would be at the "set" level.
- Receiving districts would potentially spend a great deal of time defending themselves against admission decisions.
- Requiring districts to accept students from other districts would be a loss of local control.
- Parents of kindergarten or first grade students who would ordinarily select a private or parochial school for their child could now send them to another district at the expense of the resident district. This would further reduce the resources for students still attending the resident district plus weaken the enrollment of private and parochial schools.
- Due to the vast disparity which exists between per pupil educational expenditures among many school districts in Missouri, finding ways to ensure that either sending or receiving district taxpayers do not bear a heavy burden in educating children from other districts will be challenging.
- Time and resources spent on transporting students to and from other school districts will be an added burden on either the school district or the parent.
- Consideration should be given to determining the educational effects of open enrollment on these groups of students: Non-resident students who attend other school districts; students who stay in their home districts but who must contend with fewer resources; and students in receiving districts who experience larger class sizes and less individual attention.
- There are facilities and staffing implications for both the sending and receiving districts.
- Research shows little or no academic improvement in students who have been in open enrollment systems.
- Evidence from literature on open enrollment suggests that many parents choose that option for their children not because of enhanced educational opportunities, but because of convenience, child care or sports.

## CSD Suggestions:

1. Provide universal state-wide early childhood education, or at least universal early childhood education in poor, struggling districts.
2. Provide enhanced technology access for all students in the state or at least for students in struggling districts.
3. Think of time as one of our most valuable resources; look at all that public schools are expected to do and winnow down to what is important for schools to do.
4. Encourage the State Board of Education and DESE to take earlier intervening steps to correct school districts who are struggling to properly educate students. Give them more tools to intervene successfully.
5. Take a serious look at the school calendar and allow districts greater flexibility in determining their school year and school day.
6. Re-examine the value of the Carnegie Unit in determining high school completion.

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### About Cooperating School Districts of Greater St. Louis, Inc. (CSD)

CSD is a non-profit education consortium serving 61 public school districts in Missouri – more than one-third of the students in our State attend CSD member districts. CSD services to member districts include character education, communications, conferences, cooperative purchasing, educational video programs, insurance, legislative advocacy, professional development, and technology.

### CSD Contact Information

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