

# MSTA ACTION



The Legislative bulletin of the Missouri State Teachers Association



## Governor outlines the 2015 budget

On Tuesday, Gov. Nixon introduced his budget recommendations for 2015.

In his State of the State speech, Nixon said, "My budget increases funding for our K-12 classrooms this year by \$278 million, and will put us on a path to fully funding the foundation formula next year."

The proposed funding source for the increase to the formula is General Revenue, as opposed to gaming funds which was the source last year. In addition to proposing a significant increase to the Funding Formula, the governor also recommended increasing the transportation line item by \$15 million.

The governor's budget requests \$26.8 million for the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). This is an increase of \$12.4 million to implement the new assessment plan which includes administering the ACT for every high school junior.

An increase of \$20 million was requested for the Missouri Preschool Program. The program is currently funded at \$10 million. The Missouri Preschool Program provides grants to start pre-schools.

The governor recommended \$5 million for Normandy schools in St. Louis. This would be issued in the supplemental budget, meaning it would be in the 2013-14 school year. The amount requested is what is expected to be needed by the district to continue operating this school year. The district's funds have been depleted by tuition and transportation costs of sending students to accredited school districts.

In the next few weeks, House Appropriations committees will begin meeting to review the governor's budget recommendations.

Other notable increases:

- \$8.5 million to the First Steps Program.
- \$10 million for one-time grants for broadband capacity increases.
- \$1 million to improve placement of teachers in underprivileged urban school districts.
- \$2.25 million to increase access to Advanced Placement exams and dual credit courses.
- \$1 million for dropout prevention and workforce preparation for at-risk youth.

| Program  | FY 2013 Expenditure | 2014 Appropriation | 2015 Governor Recommendation | Difference between 2014 Appropriation and 2015 Governor Rec. |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Foundation Formula                                 | \$3,009,388,411     | \$3,075,271,737    | \$3,353,283,124              | \$278,011,387  |
| Small Schools                                      | \$15,000,000        | \$15,000,000       | \$15,000,000                 | \$0  |
| Transportation                                     | \$99,797,713        | \$100,297,713      | \$115,297,713                | \$15,000,000   |
| Early Childhood Special Ed.                        | \$144,660,376       | \$144,660,376      | \$144,660,376                | \$0  |
| Career Education                                   | \$50,069,028        | \$50,069,028       | \$50,069,028                 | \$0  |
| PAT  | \$15,000,000        | \$15,000,000       | \$16,000,000                 | \$1,000,000  |
| High Needs Fund                                    | \$29,322,356        | \$36,155,141       | \$46,555,141                 | \$10,400,000   |
| Recruit and Train Teachers in Struggling Districts | \$1,000,000         | \$2,000,000        | \$3,000,000                  | \$1,000,000  |
| RPDCs  | \$0                 | \$1,000,000        | \$1,000,000                  | \$0  |
| Bright Futures                                     | \$0                 | \$100,000          | \$0                          | (\$100,000)  |
| Missouri Scholars and Fine Arts                    | \$200,000           | \$200,000          | \$200,000                    | \$0  |

## Senate Education Committee hears transfer bills

The Senate Education Committee met this week and heard five bills relating to school transfers that are taking place in the St. Louis area. The law states that students who reside in an unaccredited school district can have their tuition paid to an accredited school district in the same or an adjoining county. Currently, about 2,000 students are transferring from Riverview Gardens and Normandy school districts.

Even though the law has been in effect since 1993, it was enforced for the first time at the beginning of the current school year. Several complications have arisen since then and legislators are attempting to correct the law that many see as unsustainable.

Five legislators brought forward identical bills addressing the situation. SB485 (Rupp), SB495 (Schmitt), SB534 (Sifton), SB545 (Lamping), and SB595 (Walsh) were heard on Wednesday.

The legislation proposes that within unaccredited school districts, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education would accredit individual school buildings. If a child resides in the area served by an unaccredited building, he or she would be given the opportunity to attend an accredited building in the district.

It would allow accredited school districts as well as coalitions of accredited districts to operate charter schools within the unaccredited district.

The bill would allow receiving districts to set class size limits and student-teacher ratios to ensure that receiving students from unaccredited districts wouldn't overcrowd classrooms and school buildings.

It also contains a provision addressing transportation hardships for students residing in one school district but wishing to attend a closer school.

Under this proposed legislation, school boards of unaccredited districts could adopt longer school days, more hours of