

Legislative Information Meeting



Agenda

- **Welcome**
- **Legislative Update**
- **Legislative Questions and Answers**

***Presentation information is up-to-date as of April 28, 2025.**

Advocacy Efforts

Direct Advocacy

- Hosted Legislative Breakfast with members of the Missouri House & Senate
- Visits to the State Capital
- Legislative Committee meets weekly while legislature is in session

Collaboration through Professional Organizations

- Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA)
- Missouri School Boards Association (MSBA)
- Missouri Association of School Business Officials (MOASBO)
- Missouri Council of Administrators of Special Education (MOCASE)
- Missouri Association of Career & Technical Education (MOACTE)

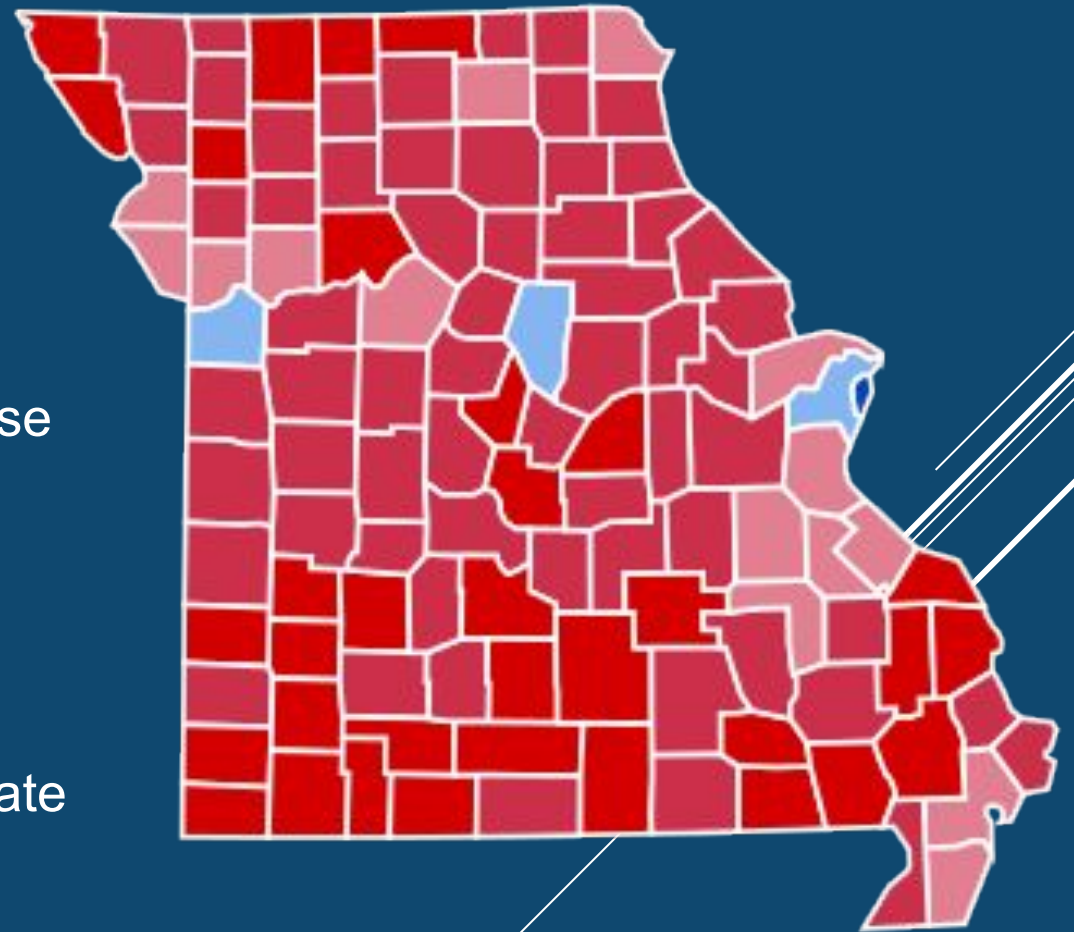
Legislative Update

Scott Kimble
Director of Legislative Advocacy
Missouri Association of School Administrators



LEGISLATIVE DEMOGRAPHIC FOR 2025

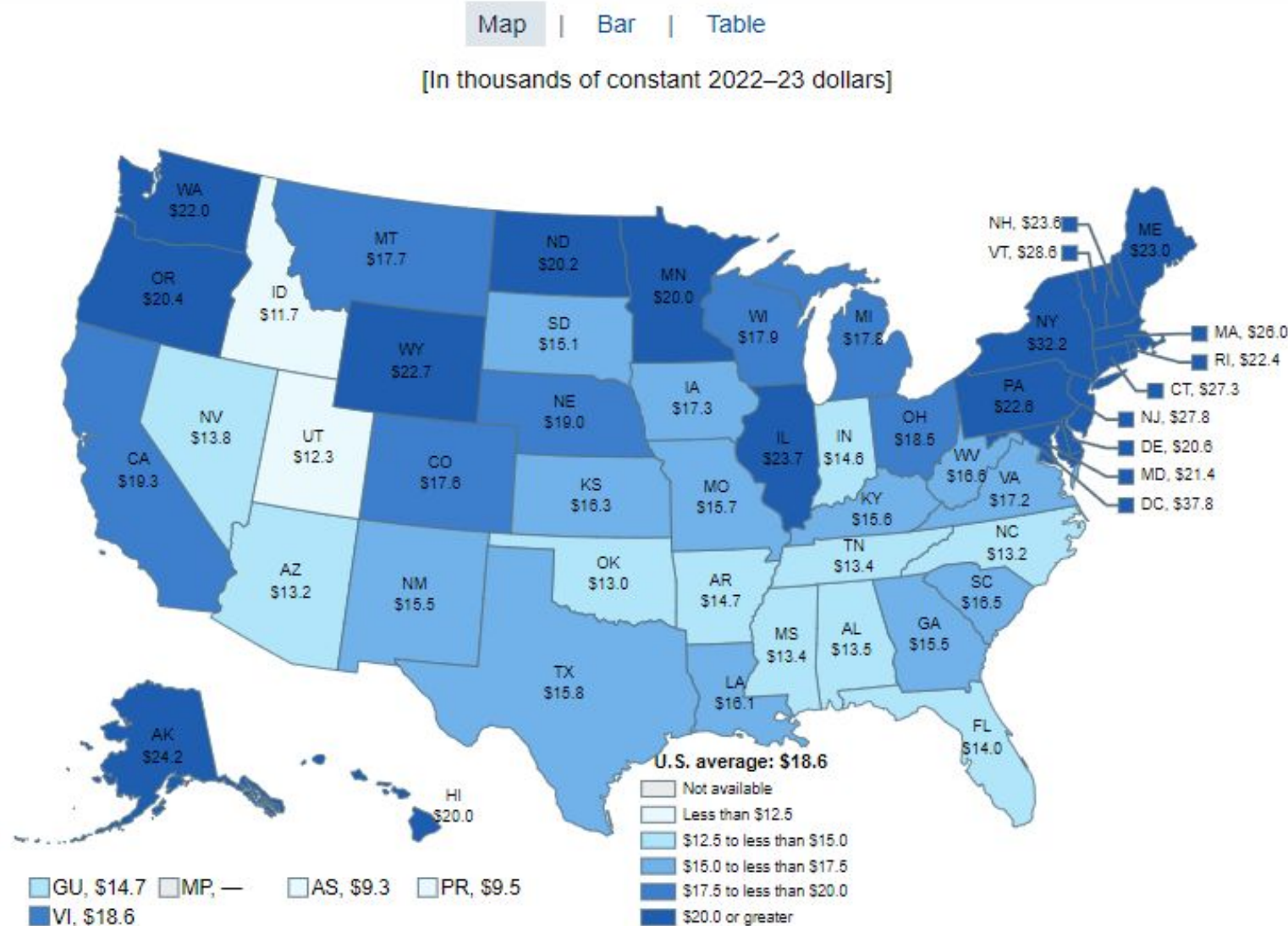
- ▶ Governor Mike Kehoe
- ▶ House of Representatives – 163 seats
 - ▶ 110 – Republicans
 - ▶ 52 – Democrats
 - ▶ 1 - Vacancy
 - ▶ Need 82 votes to pass a bill in the Missouri House
- ▶ Senate – 34 seats
 - ▶ 24 – Republicans
 - ▶ 10 – Democrats
 - ▶ Need 18 votes to pass a bill in the Missouri Senate



SESSION AT A GLANCE

- ▶ Bill filing was *prolific* this session.
 - ▶ Over a three-month period (December 1 to February 28), **2,667 bills were filed for the 2025 Legislative Session.**
 - ▶ For comparison, 2,590 bills were filed for the 2024 Legislative Session and 1,973 bills were filed for the 2023 Legislative Session.
- ▶ Our association is tracking approximately 650 of those bills.
 - ▶ Thus far, **the House has passed 141 bills this session.** **The Senate has passed 55 bills this session.**

Figure 1. Total expenditures per pupil in public elementary and secondary schools, by state or jurisdiction: School year 2020–21

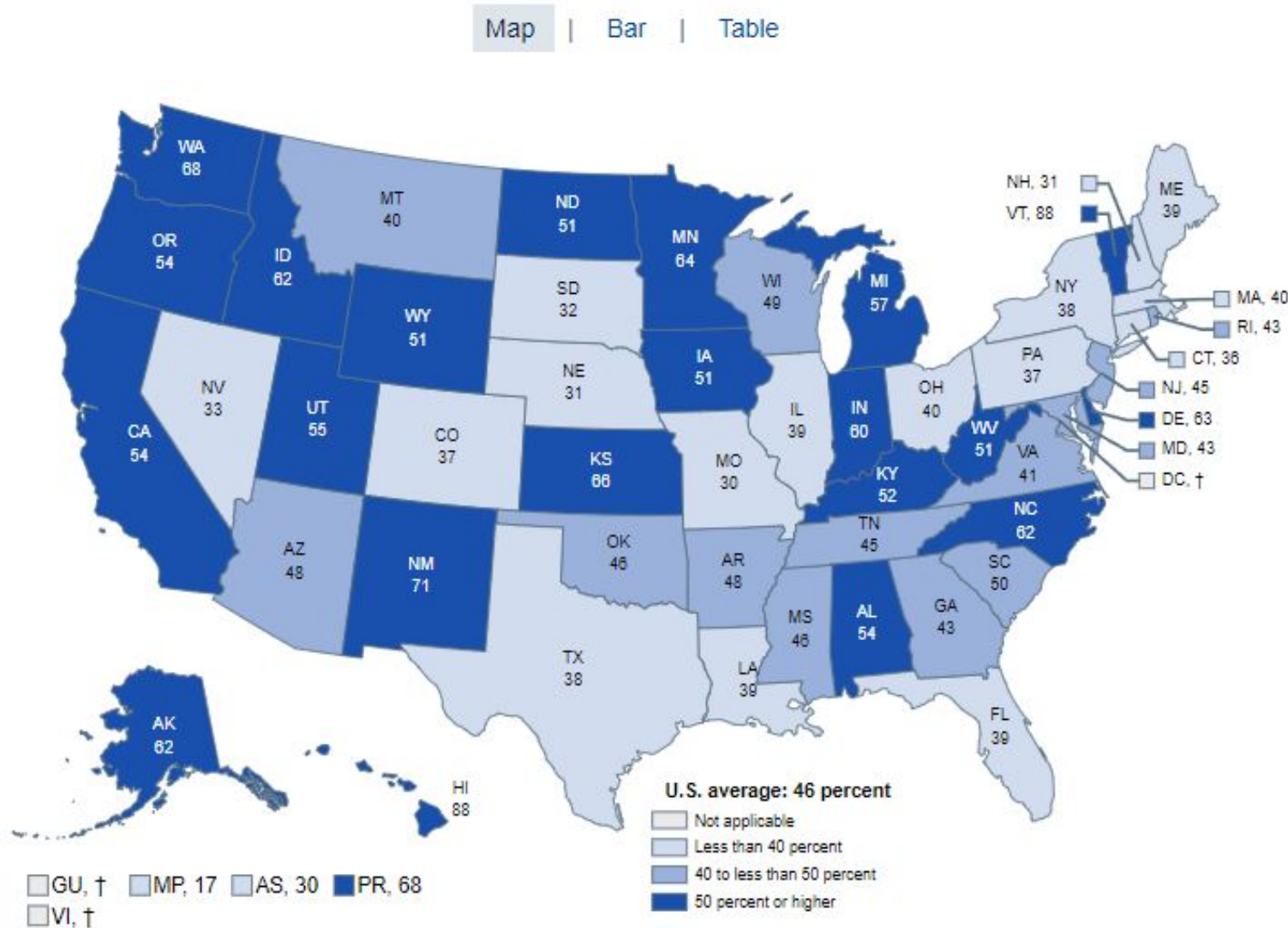


Expenditures Per Pupil for the 2020-21 School Year

Missouri: \$15,700
Rank: 34/50

Source: National Center for Education Statistics

Figure 3. State revenues for public elementary and secondary schools as a percentage of total public school revenue, by state or jurisdiction: School year 2020–21



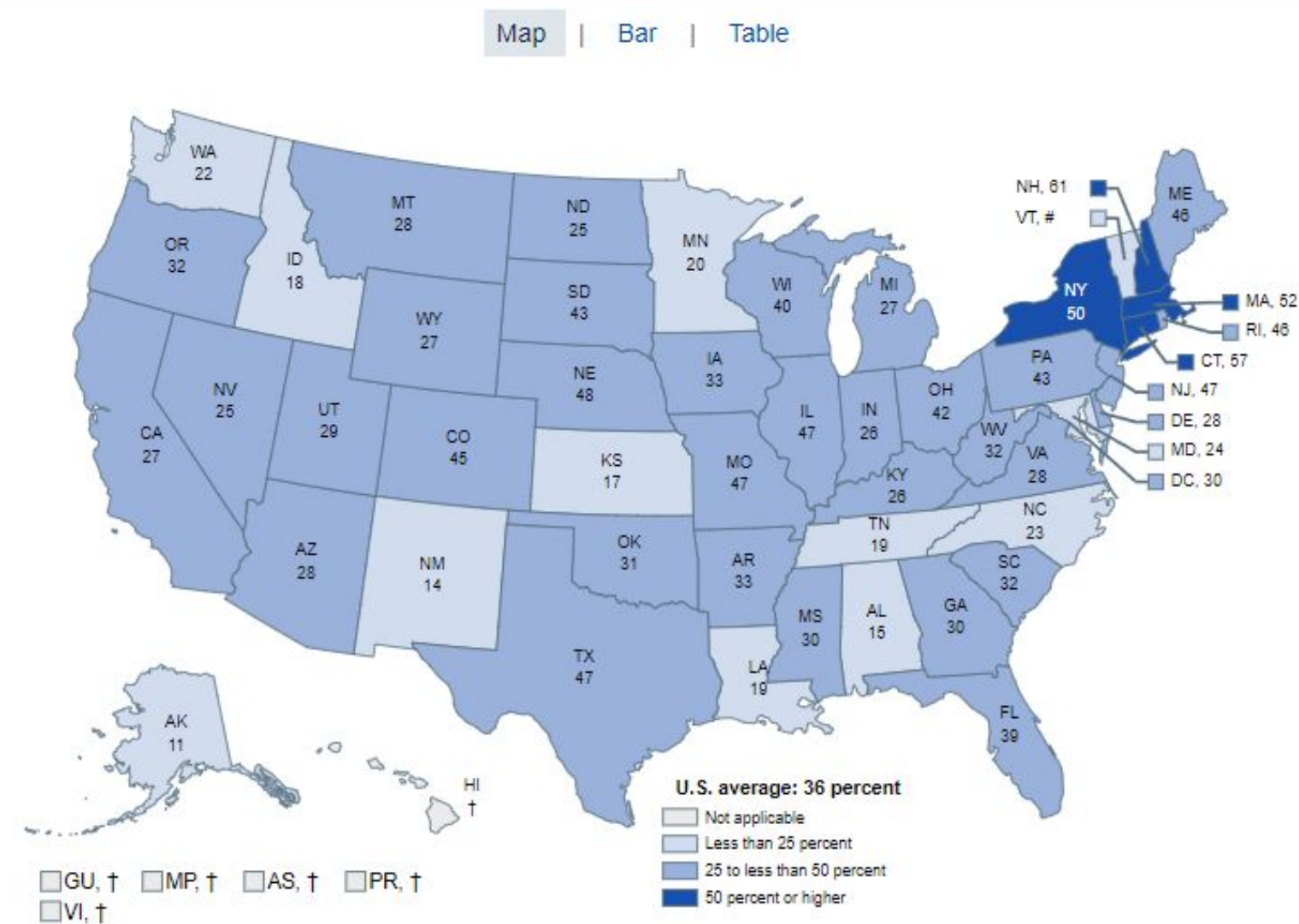
Percentage of State Funding

Missouri: 30%
Rank: 50/50

We are last!

National Education Association Data also places Missouri 50th for the 2022-23 school year.

Figure 4. Property tax revenues for public elementary and secondary schools as a percentage of total public school revenue, by state or jurisdiction: School year 2020–21



Percentage of Local Funding

Missouri: 47%
Rank: 7/50

National Education Association Data places Missouri 5th for the 2022-23 school year.

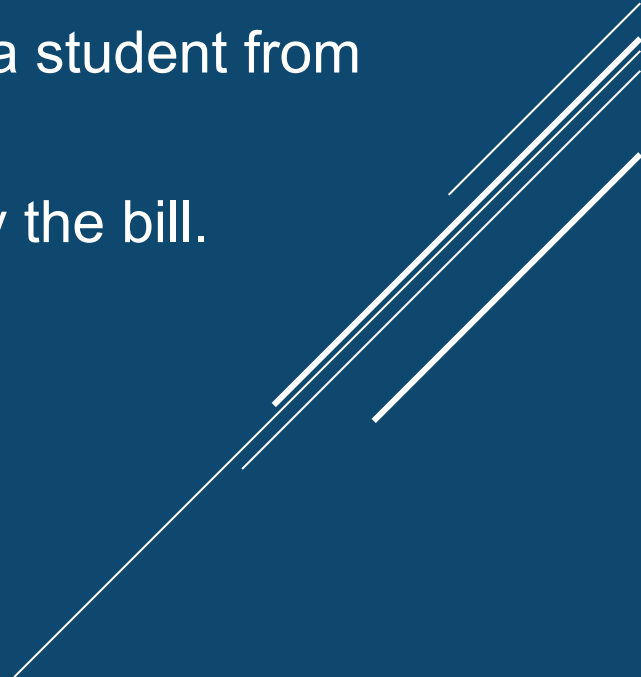
BUDGET UPDATE/FORMULA/TRANSPORTATION

- ▶ The budget must be completed by May 9 at 6:00 PM.
- ▶ Foundation Formula – \$3.985 billion was appropriated by the Missouri House of Representatives (that is a \$200 million increase over the current year; however, the Foundation Formula called for approximately a \$500 million increase which means their version underfunds the Foundation Formula by \$300 million).
 - ▶ The Missouri Senate Appropriations Committee; however, appropriated the full amount – approximately \$500 million.
 - ▶ If that additional \$300 million comes to fruition, what would that mean for SSD?
 - ▶ Whose version will prevail?

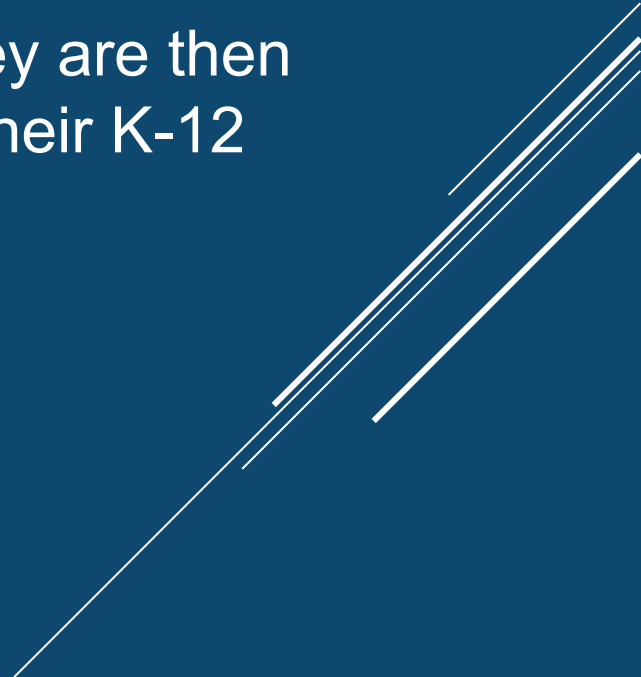
BUDGET UPDATE/FORMULA/TRANSPORTATION

- ▶ **Voucher** – \$50 million was appropriated by the Missouri House of Representatives for the state's voucher tax credit program (a.k.a. Empowerment Scholarship Accounts).
 - ▶ The Missouri Senate removed the \$50 million appropriated for the state's voucher tax credit program
 - ▶ Our position is that public money should go to public schools. If private schools want to follow the same laws and regulations that public schools do, they can have the public money.
- ▶ **School Transportation** – \$376.5 million (\$15.2 million increase over the current year)
- ▶ **Minimum Teacher Salary Grant** – \$33.4 million (no increase over the current year)
- ▶ **Career Ladder** – \$68.525 million (\$800,000 decrease)
- ▶ **Prop C** – \$1.3 billion (no increase)

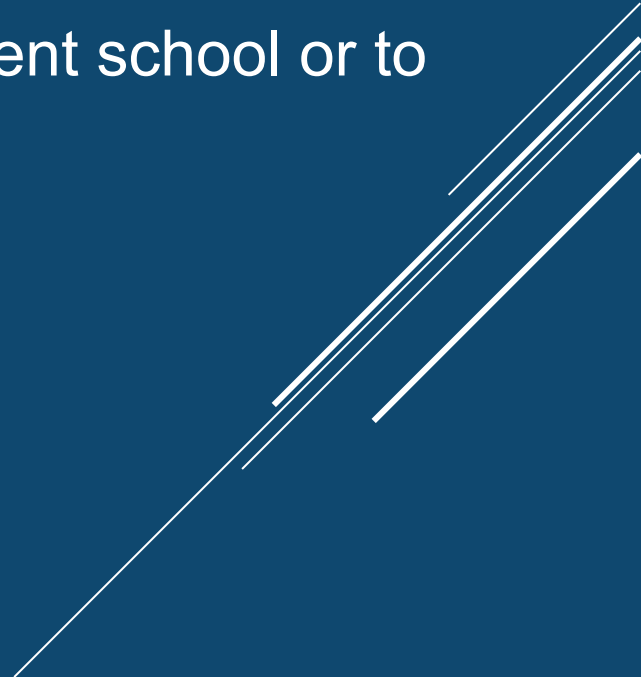
HB 711 – OPEN ENROLLMENT

- ▶ Open Enrollment is a policy allowing students to attend public schools outside their resident district.
 - ▶ House Bill 711 creates a "voluntary" open enrollment program as the bill allows districts to decide whether they want to participate.
 - ▶ However, it should be known that nothing in the bill precludes a student from leaving their resident district.
 - ▶ Thus, every school district could potentially be impacted by the bill.
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HB 711 – OPEN ENROLLMENT (CONT'D)

- ▶ If a district decides to participate in the open enrollment program, the bill permits the district to limit the number of students the district will accept.
 - ▶ Districts may restrict the number of transferring students to 3%-5% of the previous school year's total enrollment (thus, 3%-5% can leave each year).
 - ▶ Once a nonresident student is admitted into the program, they are then permitted to stay in the nonresident district for the length of their K-12 schooling.
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HB 711 – OPEN ENROLLMENT (CONT'D)

- ▶ The bill states that the nonresident district must count the nonresident student as their own for purposes of state aid.
 - ▶ No “local funding” from the resident district will be distributed to the nonresident district.
 - ▶ Parents will be responsible for transportation to the nonresident school or to an existing bus stop location in the nonresident district.
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HB 711 – OPEN ENROLLMENT (CONT'D)

- ▶ Language in the bill states that nonresident students with a 504 plan, dyslexia diagnosis, that are in the gifted program, EL program or have an IEP, should receive services similar to those a regular resident would receive.
- ▶ If necessary, transferring students/parents would have the opportunity to develop a new or amended IEP or 504 plan and to evaluate services available at the nonresident district.
- ▶ The nonresident LEA, parent, or both shall have the opportunity to reevaluate such student to determine what comparable services may be required under section 162.700 or the special education programs or services for which such student may be eligible.
- ▶ The nonresident LEA shall provide the student and parent with prior written notice documenting the services and supports that the nonresident LEA determines appropriate to meet the student's needs. The nonresident LEA shall offer the transferring student 10 business days to accept or decline the acceptance of the nonresident LEA.

HB 711 – OPEN ENROLLMENT (CONT'D)

- ▶ Many concerns remain:

- ▶ **School Consolidation** – Even if a school district does not close and consolidate, the loss of students in the district will affect all remaining students as there will be less revenue to provide a more robust educational experience (e.g., loss of programs such as choir, band, scholar/debate teams, FFA, DECA, and athletic programs).
- ▶ **Less Money in the Classroom** – Open enrollment pits public schools against one another. Money will be directed at recruitment of students (i.e., advertisements via leaflets, billboards, radio, etc.). Schools will also be forced to “one up” one another for the best facilities. Schools that can will, while schools that cannot will lose out.
- ▶ **Loss of Community Support** – If individuals are living within their resident district but sending their children to a nonresident district, those individuals might be less likely to support ballot measures to increase their taxes in the resident district.

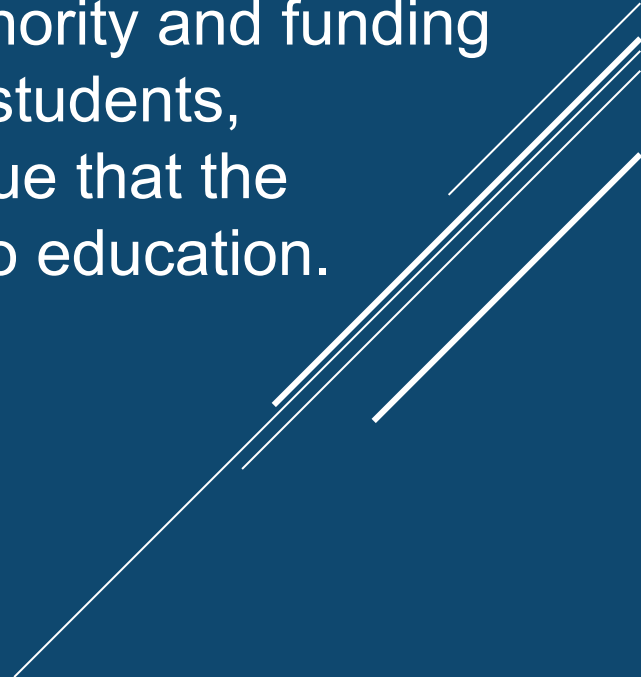
HB 711 – OPEN ENROLLMENT (CONT'D)

- ▶ **Financial Planning Problems** – School districts might be forced to hold larger sums of money in reserve in case swings in student population occur.
- ▶ **Impact on Special School District** – The current verbiage in the bill is a mess as it pertains to Special School District. Are the students Special's students or are they the nonresident district's students? How will funding work? How will space be accounted for? There are so many questions surrounding how this bill will impact your district.
- ▶ **Voluntary In the Future?** – If passed, do not expect for the “voluntary” status to remain. The legislature will push for involuntary status in the future.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION UNCERTAINTY

- ▶ On March 20, 2025, the President signed an executive order that directed the Secretary of Education to take all necessary steps to facilitate the closure of the U.S. Department of Education and “return education authority to the States.”
- ▶ Eliminating the U.S. Department of Education requires an act of Congress.
 - ▶ H.R. 899 – filed by Representative Thomas Massie (R – Kentucky, 4th Congressional Dist.)
 - ▶ “The Department of Education shall terminate on December 31, 2026.”
 - ▶ While this bill has been filed, this is not the bill that Congress will pursue. That bill has not even been written yet and it will likely be filed by the chair of the House Education and Workforce Committee.
 - ▶ At present, the consensus view is that this bill cannot not pass because it would need 60 votes to overcome a U.S. Senate filibuster.
- ▶ However, federal law does not prevent those overseeing the Department of Education from eliminating positions. **There was a recent 50% reduction in force (4,133 employees down to 2,183).**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION UNCERTAINTY

- ▶ The idea of eliminating the U.S. Department of Education has been a recurring topic, particularly among conservatives, who argue it gives the federal government too much control over education, which they believe should be primarily handled by states and localities.
 - ▶ Proponents of elimination often argue for returning more authority and funding to states, while critics warn of potential negative impacts on students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and argue that the department plays a vital role in ensuring equity and access to education.
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION UNCERTAINTY

- ▶ The department plays a crucial role in distributing federal education funding and eliminating it could disrupt how these funds are distributed.
- ▶ **Keep in Mind**: The U.S. Department of Education was created in 1979. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) became law in 1975 (then known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act). IDEA funding, prior to the creation of the U.S. Department of Education, was distributed by a combination of federal agencies and departments.
- ▶ **If** elimination comes to fruition (**which we do not believe that it will**), distribution of IDEA funding would likely encounter “bumps in the road.” Frankly, that it is likely to happen with all of the staffing cuts that have been made.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION UNCERTAINTY

- ▶ A number of executive orders have been issued – 129 had been issued as of April 18, 2025.
- ▶ In addition to the executive order seeking for the U.S. Department of Education to be eliminated, a number of other executive orders have been issued regarding public education.
 - ▶ Anti-DEI
 - ▶ Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling
 - ▶ Gender Equity
- ▶ At present, many executive orders are subject to litigation.
 - ▶ Most recently, on April 24, a federal district court in New Hampshire ruled that the President's executive order regarding diversity, equity and inclusion should be temporarily halted.

IDEA FUNDING

- ▶ When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) first became law in 1975, Congress declared that federal funding would cover up to **40%** of the cost of serving students with disabilities, yet Congress only funds it at about **13%**.
- ▶ This underfunding puts enormous strain on state and local budgets. States vary in terms of how much money they allocate to serving students with disabilities, and they rely on federal dollars to increase their capacity to serve students with disabilities.
 - ▶ In the 2023-24 school year, IDEA was funded at 13%. The total appropriation for IDEA that year was **\$15.4 billion**. As such, that means public schools nationwide missed out on approximately **\$32 billion**.

ADVOCACY/ENGAGEMENT

- ▶ The need for staff and families to engage has never been greater.
- ▶ If you think your perspective doesn't matter, consider this...
 - ▶ Example: Amendment 2 - Sports Betting
- ▶ So, how do you engage?
 - ▶ **Presence** – In my opinion, nothing compares to being physically present.
 - ▶ What if you can't make the two-hour drive there and back (you have a full-time job and a life)?
 - ▶ Calling, emailing or commenting on social media all work (they're not as good, but they do work).
 - ▶ Form letters are not ideal. Change it up, even just slightly, especially the first part of the message.
 - ▶ **Informed** – However, for your presence to be effective, you need to be informed.
 - ▶ How do you become informed? You lean on your school district leaders and your associations. And, if you feel like you're not getting the information needed from those entities, tell them!
 - ▶ MNEA drafts a bulletin every night along with a weekly summary that usually comes out on Thursday or Friday evening. MSTA drafts a weekly bulletin. But you can ask for more!
 - ▶ **Localize the Issue** – Talk about impacts to your students, building and district.
 - ▶ **Persistence** – As with anything, persistence is key. Continued (not oppressive) follow up is necessary.
 - ▶ Be respectful but courageous! You can correct misunderstandings and misinformation

Legislative Q&A

Dr. Michael Maclin, Superintendent

Dr. Kelly Grigsby, Deputy Superintendent

Kevin Andert, Chief CTE/Operations Officer

Legislative Questions & Answers - Impact on SSD

How will recent legislative changes impact SSD, its partner districts, and the services we provide? What is the district doing to prepare for these potential changes and to counter negative narratives about students with disabilities and the value of our programs?

SSD is actively monitoring legislative developments and working closely with partner districts, legal counsel, and advocacy groups to prepare for any potential impacts. At this time, no programs have been cut, and core services remain unchanged. We are also committed to reinforcing the value of our students and staff by leading with a strong, inclusive message that celebrates the strengths of our disability community. SSD will continue to advocate for the rights and needs of those we serve.

Legislative Questions & Answers - Funding

How will the State of Missouri's decision to not fully fund the school aid formula impact SSD's operations, and are there any expected changes to transportation services as a result?

While SSD is monitoring the the conversations regarding the level to which the school aid foundation formula will be funded, there are currently no changes to operations or transportation services. As mentioned by Mr. Kimble, the Senate budget chooses to fully fund the foundation formula. We remain committed to maintaining reliable services for students and will communicate any adjustments if future funding decisions require them.

Legislative Questions & Answers - Funding

With ongoing concerns about federal and state funding cuts, staff and families are wondering how these changes might impact SSD—particularly when it comes to legally required special education services, IEP/504 compliance, reading and dyslexia support, transportation, staffing, and Medicaid reimbursements. How will SSD respond to potential funding reductions, and what could that mean for students and staff?

SSD is closely monitoring potential federal and state funding changes. While funding reductions could present challenges, legally required services—such as IEP/504 supports—must still be provided under IDEA and Section 504. At this time, there are no changes to transportation, staffing, reading/dyslexia services, or Medicaid-funded supports. SSD is committed to protecting critical services, supporting staff, and maintaining transparency. We will continue advocating for resources, planning proactively, and communicating transparently as the funding landscape evolves. It is possible there may be lags in receiving federal funding. This is why the District carries a fund balance. It allows us to pay our expenses while we wait on revenue.

Legislative Questions & Answers - SPED Process

With recent and proposed legislative and executive actions, many educators and families are concerned about the future of special education. Will IEPs or 504 plans be impacted or lost? How might changes at the federal or state level—especially reduced oversight or shifts in responsibility—affect services, protections under IDEA, and SSD’s ability to serve students? How can staff reassure families, particularly at the elementary level, during this time of uncertainty?

Students will not lose their IEPs or 504 plans due to recent legislation. These services are protected under federal law through IDEA and Section 504, and SSD is legally required to provide them regardless of changes in political leadership or administrative structure. While we are closely monitoring developments at both the state and federal levels, including any shifts in oversight, SSD is committed to maintaining the services and supports our students depend on. We encourage staff to reassure families that their child’s rights remain intact, and we will continue to communicate transparently as more information becomes available.

Legislative Questions & Answers - Executive Orders

With recent federal executive orders and proposed shifts in oversight from the Department of Education to Health and Human Services, how might SSD operations, staffing, and services be impacted? How quickly do executive orders take effect, and what should families and staff expect in the near future?

Executive orders do not automatically change existing laws like IDEA or Section 504, which continue to protect students' rights. SSD has not eliminated any programs in response to these directives and remains committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and legally mandated supports. Should federal certification requirements or oversight structures change, we will assess the impact carefully and keep families and staff informed. Our focus remains on protecting services and supporting our students and staff.

Legislative Questions & Answers - Class Sizes/Caseloads

How might recent or proposed legislation impact SSD's programming, services, and class sizes? What changes, if any, should families and staff expect?

At this time, SSD is not making any changes to programming, services, or class sizes as a result of current legislation. However, we are closely monitoring policy developments and potential funding impacts. If adjustments become necessary in the future, SSD will prioritize maintaining quality services to support student success, and we will communicate clearly with families and staff every step of the way.

Legislative Questions & Answers - Staffing

How will recent or proposed legislative changes affect staffing at SSD? Are there plans to downsize, should educators or support staff be concerned about job security, and could these changes impact staff pay scales?

SSD is not making any staffing changes in response to recent or proposed legislation. As part of our 5-year Righting the Ship plan, we are adjusting staffing to better align resources with student needs. These changes are strategic and not driven by legislation. At this time, legislation is not impacting staff pay. We remain committed to supporting our team and will continue to monitor policy developments and communicate any future changes.

Legislative Questions & Answers - Open Enrollment

How would changes to open enrollment laws affect SSD's operations, services, and partnerships with local school districts?

If open enrollment laws change, SSD will review the final legislation in collaboration with legal counsel and partner districts to determine the impact. At this time, there is no immediate change to how SSD operates. Any adjustments will be carefully planned to ensure continuity of services for students and clear communication for families and staff. SSD remains committed to serving students with disabilities across St. Louis County, regardless of legislative shifts.

Legislative Questions & Answers - DEIA

With recent state and federal actions targeting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) initiatives, many staff are concerned about how these changes will impact SSD's services, staffing, language around equity, and support for students with disabilities—especially in diverse communities. How will SSD respond to these pressures while ensuring protections, individualized supports, and equitable outcomes for all students?

SSD remains fully committed to equity, inclusion, and the individualized support our students deserve. While we must comply with state and federal laws, our core values—including equity across communities and honoring all identities—have not changed. We will continue to provide legally required services, uphold protections (including for LGBTQIA+ individuals), and use inclusive practices that meet the diverse needs of our students and staff. As guidance evolves, we will communicate clearly and support our teams with training and resources.

Legislative Questions & Answers - Early Childhood SPED

How might recent or proposed legislative and funding changes impact Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), especially given its unique grant-based funding structure? What plans does the district have in place to support the program and its staff if that funding is reduced or eliminated?

SSD recognizes that ECSE is funded differently from K–12 programs and is closely monitoring any potential changes to grant funding. At this time, no changes have been made to ECSE funding or operations. However, we are proactively reviewing contingency plans to ensure continued support for students and stability for staff if funding shifts occur. Our commitment to early intervention and early childhood education remains strong.

Legislative Questions & Answers - Related Services

How are related services—such as OT, PT, SLP, ABA, and emotional and behavioral health supports—being affected by recent policy or funding changes? Will students still have access to these services in school, or are there plans to shift them to private providers?

At this time, there are no changes to the delivery of OT, PT, SLP, or ABA-related services. These supports are protected under students' IEPs and must be provided as required by law. SSD continues to prioritize clear communication with families and encourages providers to direct any specific concerns to school teams for the most accurate and updated information.

Legislative Questions & Answers - Retirement

How will recent or proposed policy changes impact the Missouri retirement system (PSRS/PEERS), and what does that mean for current and future SSD employees?

There are no changes to current policies that impact employee retirement accounts. SSD continues to follow all state and federal regulations regarding PSRS/PEERS contributions, and retirement benefits remain secure. It's important to note that retirement funding is managed separately from education funding. We will keep staff updated regarding any future changes.

Legislative Questions & Answers - Engagement

With growing concerns around funding, policy changes, and public discourse, how can SSD staff and families effectively advocate for students, protect essential services, and support one another? What are the most appropriate and impactful ways to get involved, communicate with legislators, and partner with the district to influence positive change—while staying informed and within professional guidelines?

Advocacy is most powerful when it's personal. Families and staff can make a meaningful impact by sharing their experiences, highlighting how SSD services benefit students, and speaking up about the importance of protecting special education funding and student rights. Effective ways to advocate include contacting legislators, writing letters or emails, attending town halls, and participating in community conversations.

Key messages to share:

- Preserve funding for special education and related services
- Protect IEP and 504 rights
- Support early intervention, inclusive education, and equitable access for all students

To find and contact your state legislators, visit house.mo.gov and senate.mo.gov. Advocacy efforts are most effective when rooted in respect, clarity, and personal connection. Whether you're a staff member or family advocate, your voice matters—and sharing it helps protect the supports our students rely on.



GET MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.ssdmo.org/leadership/advocacy>

QUESTIONS

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