



To: Missouri Senators

From: Phyllis Pasley, Executive Director - Missouri Alliance for Arts Education

Re: Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bills 4, 42, & 89

The Missouri Alliance for Arts Education (MAAE) opposes the Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bills 4, 42, and 89 as it is currently written.

MAAE has significant concerns that these bills will:

- circumvent local control
- drain financial resources away from serving students
- be inadequately funded
- increase teacher workload
- negatively impact teacher retention
- surpass available state-level resources for implementation at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- have a detrimental overall effect on the public school educational system
- have a subsequent negative impact on Missouri's economic future

MAAE supports parental involvement.

This legislation is disconnected from current educational practice which values, fosters and cultivates parental involvement. Teachers and school leaders have historically worked collaboratively with parents to adjust lesson content to help meet the individual needs of the student.

Encouraging and enhancing existing lines of communication between schools and the communities they serve will strengthen relationships within the community, and help students gain the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.

DETAILED TALKING POINTS

MAAE supports the premise of parental involvement in a student's education. Many Missouri schools already have procedures in place for parents to access information listed in the bill. Any parent who wishes to be involved already has the rights outlined in this legislation.

Many Missouri districts have already invested in "parent portals" providing access to information. A legislated, state controlled and mandated system would undercut local control and be a drain on resources to create a new system and maintain it. There does not appear to be any financial allocation to develop and maintain the new parent portal.

The strain on local resources to implement such a state-level mandate could be significant. The human resources, time and financial resources required to create and maintain the parent portal outlined in this legislation will increase the workload on a teacher workforce that is already underpaid, and in short supply. It will also divert resources away from providing needed student educational services. This legislation as written could have a profound negative effect as we work to retain Missouri's teachers and seek new ways to encourage people to enter the educational profession.

There will also be significant strains on state-level resources to implement the parent portal as described in the legislation. We recommend that a discussion with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education staff about the feasibility and costs associated with implementation be held. The information requested is all currently available at the local level.

There are also issues related to copyrighted material. Currently most districts invest in materials to serve their students' learning needs, and lack sufficient resources to purchase additional resources for parents. However, most districts have policies and procedures in place for any parent to work with district employees to gain access to instructional materials, and to adjust lesson content as needed. Teachers and school leaders recognize the value of parental involvement and have historically worked collaboratively with parents to adjust lesson content to help meet the individual needs of the student.

Encouraging and enhancing existing lines of communication between schools and the communities they serve will strengthen relationships within the community, and help students gain the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.