



Missouri NEA Communications Briefing

Connecting the Financial Dots

School Funding, Budgets and Revenue Policy

MNEA believes that all students deserve the opportunity to attend a quality public school.

The Issue

The 2005 state school funding formula is now fully implemented, but the state has struggled to fund the full cost of that formula. In 2016, the legislature enacted Senate Bill 686 to reduce the cost of the formula by more than \$300 million. The legislature is now “fully funding” this cheaper formula, but the state is only funding pupil transportation costs at about 15 percent.

MNEA members across the state have seen some of the consequences of the funding situation. Lack of sufficient funding has led to layoffs, increases in class size and salary stagnation. The state now ranks 43rd in the nation in average classroom teacher salary according to NEA figures.

Despite these concerns, the legislature has continued to enact more state tax cuts, including income tax cuts in Senate Bill 509 (2014) and again in House Bill 2540 (2018). Meanwhile, federal tax cuts are likely to further reduce state revenues and are likely to force additional cuts in education funding.

Funding for school budgets and the taxes citizens pay to support them work as a “pay-it-forward” system. We pay taxes forward so that we can have public schools available in the future. Current public schools and colleges weren’t just paid for with this year’s taxes. They were also paid for in the past by taxes that were budgeted then to meet our communities’ needs now. Trying to interrupt the forward exchange by cutting taxes or essential services now can leave students in the future behind, both in the sense that costs will be higher and that meeting higher student needs later will be unaffordable.

Because the state budget is the instrument we have to plan for the future of school funding, we can best solve problems schools face by re-examining our state budget and having conversations about shared priorities.

A good public budget is one that plans for the future and the unexpected. A good tax system allows a state to pay for the public schools and other public goods for which it has planned.

MNEA’s Position

- MNEA believes that the state legislature should play a fundamental role in supporting great public schools for every child. The state should provide funding so that districts have adequate financial resources to hire and retain qualified teachers and other school staff and provide the resources they need to help prepare all students to succeed in life.
- Public schools are about opportunity and equality. MNEA believes that all students deserve the opportunity to attend a quality public school where they can develop the knowledge and skills to participate fully in our democracy and to succeed in this dynamic 21st century world.
- MNEA opposes tax changes that will undermine the future of public schools and will continue to support positive revenue solutions that will allow for full funding of the foundation formula, transportation aid, Parents as Teachers and other vital programs.
- MNEA believes Missouri should address the funding challenges now in a proactive way, rather than back away from its commitment to fund public education.

What This Means to Educators

Districts in Missouri rely on local, state and federal funding sources. Some districts have far less local funding than others. Students in those districts rely on state funding to support local schools where the local school taxes are not adequate. According to NEA research, Missouri ranked 49th in state share of funding for public schools in 2017-2018.

The state provided only 33.2 percent of school revenues, far below the national average of 47.1 percent.

One result of this lack of state support is that the average Missouri teacher salary sank to 43rd in the nation in 2017-2018. The average teacher salary is now more than \$11,000 below the national average.



Your Role

Public education issues will play a significant role in the next legislative session. Decisions on key policy issues such as school funding, bargaining rights, charter schools, alternative compensation and vouchers will be debated this session in Congress and the Missouri General Assembly. You can start helping create a better future by supporting MNEA's legislative effort.

Here's how you can participate:

1. Visit: www.mnea.org to sign up for the MNEA *Legislative Update* and keep informed on education issues throughout the legislative session.
2. Attend MNEA Capitol Action Days.
3. Attend an MNEA legislative forum in your area.
4. Sign up to become an MNEA Education Advocate at www.mnea.org/edadvocate.

MNEA also asks you to start a dialogue with your legislators to engage them in a discussion about public education and education issues. Together, we can make a positive difference for our students and our public schools.

For more information about this topic and other education policy issues, visit www.mnea.org/briefings
Find MNEA's Legislative Platform at www.mnea.org/Missouri/PlatformPriorities.aspx

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