

Rockwood School District State Legislative Platform

We do whatever it takes to ensure all students realize their potential. We support the local autonomy of school districts and oppose any unfunded mandates. The Rockwood School District is led by the principle that quality education is a responsibility shared by the home, school, community, state and nation.

The following legislative priorities have been adopted by the district Finance Committee:

A. PROPERTY TAXES

1. Supports accurate property assessments which reflect actual market values of real property, adequate funding of local assessors to perform property assessments, and appropriate oversight of the assessment process by the State Tax Commission.
2. Supports legislation that would require Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Chapter 100, or Chapter 353 tax abatement governing boards providing a minimum 50% pass through to school districts (similar to fire districts), including taxing authority representation in proportion to the impact on the taxing authority, and requiring voter approval if the governing authority does not follow the recommendations of the TIF Commission.
3. Supports legislation that would increase the uniformity, accuracy, and collection of personal property taxes (particularly motor vehicles) and providing legal recourse against intentional offenders.
4. Supports legislation that would provide for reassessment for 50% of all property annually or allow the sum of two years of CPI increases in property tax calculations to be consistent with the current two-year reassessment cycle.
5. Supports legislation to improve the property tax credit law regarding property taxes for senior citizens but does not support the establishment of property tax freezes or homestead exemptions.
6. Supports the current laws that require personal taxes on equipment leased through businesses by the state, political subdivisions, churches or charitable organizations.

B. STATE APPROPRIATIONS/FUNDING FORMULA

Rockwood appreciates the priority that the legislature has placed on education which has culminated in the passage of SB287, a needs-based formula.

1. Supports providing annual funding increases which are sufficient to fully fund the foundation formula, transportation, and any new programs and protect the number of years to phase in the full funding of the formula.
2. Supports ensuring that schools are provided funding as originally promised under SB287 by modifying the calculation of the State Adequacy Target for increases in the cost of education.
3. Opposes legislation that would mandate open enrollment.

4. Opposes legislation that would shift money from public schools to private schools.
5. Supports changes in the State Foundation Formula that increases the summer school funding.
6. Believes revenues generated by riverboat gambling and the lottery should not supplant normal increases in education funding but rather should fund additional unrestricted financial contributions to local school districts on a per pupil basis.
7. Supports providing a weighting for gifted students exceeding state averages for performance districts by modifying SB287.

C. OTHER STATE ISSUES/GOVERNANCE

1. Opposes legislation that diminishes local control of school districts.
2. Supports legislation that defines the parameters of collective bargaining for public school employees while preserving the authority of the local Board of Education as the decision-making body on all issues.
3. Believes if the General Assembly passes legislation which deregulates or restructures the utilities industry: 1) school districts must be compensated for any loss in revenue; 2) school districts should be exempt from gross receipts taxes charged on utilities.
4. Supports local legislation to increase the tax on cigarettes to a level that is competitive with other states.
5. Supports legislation to collect sales tax on Internet and out-of-state catalog sales.
6. Supports an amendment to the Missouri Constitution that would allow the voters of Missouri to provide a simple majority approval of general obligation bond issues.
7. Supports legislation to hold charter schools to the same accountability standards as public schools and opposes any legislation that would diminish funding to the state's public schools.
8. Supports maintaining the current laws regarding school start dates and attendance eligibility.
9. Opposes any additional limitations on state revenue growth such as a "Taxpayer Bill of Rights" (TABOR) given that the Hancock Amendment limits revenue growth.
10. Believes if it is mandated that student safety is improved through the use of combination lap/shoulder harness seatbelts or other design changes, all costs (including reduced bus capacity and retrofitting) must be fully funded by the state.
11. Supports exempting public schools from paying state motor fuel tax consumed by school buses.
12. Supports maintaining the current number of election dates that are available to school districts.

13. Supports improvements to the public education employment system for support staff (PEERS) to reflect benefits equal to the state's MOSERS (Missouri State Employee Retirement System) benefits while maintaining the current funding of PEERS.
14. Supports preserving the integrity of General Obligation Bonds issued by Missouri's schools and maintaining current laws on how the Debt Service tax levy is calculated.
15. Supports legislation to extend a school district's immunity from liability to include suits brought under the Missouri Human Rights Act. Such immunity would also include school board members and school district employees.

Federal Legislative Platform

1. Supports legislation that would require full federal funding of all services and related costs required by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), No Child Left Behind, Section 504, or any other federally mandated programs. All Federal mandates should be suspended until these programs are fully funded.
2. Supports local control of school district operations and finances to allow districts to spend money as they see fit.
3. Supports legislation to broaden eligibility of school district bond sales to meet the arbitrage exemption and bank qualification limitations.
4. Supports legislation that would provide financial assistance to local districts for capital improvements, to add new facilities or to improve aging facilities, and to address safety and security issues.