

Quality Education Act Voted Out of Senate Education Committee

Legislation Would Shift School Accountability to Focus on Academic Growth and Achievement

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI, UNITED STATES, February 21, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – The Missouri Senate Select Committee on Empowering Parents and Children today passed the Quality Education Act, which would change Missouri’s system for evaluating school performance to focus on academic growth and achievement, while allowing parents to have better transparency about a school’s performance.



“

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Dean Johnson, CEO of Quality Schools Coalition

The bill, SB 1366, known as the Quality Education Act, was introduced by State Senator Curtis Trent (R-Springfield.) The education reforms, which have raised student outcomes in other states, are desperately needed, according to [Quality Schools Coalition](#), because Missouri is now below the national average in key academic outcomes. The Quality Education Act has also been filed by State Representative Mike Haffner (R-Pleasant Hill.) That legislation, HB 2184, has been heard by the House Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education.

Back in 2009, Missouri scored in the top half of all states in the key categories of 4th and 8th grade reading and math, according to the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), often referred to as the Nation’s Report Card. Fast forward to the latest NAEP scores in 2022 where Missouri students now score in the bottom half of states in each of those four key metrics. The neighboring states of Illinois, Iowa and Tennessee, which all weigh academic growth greater than Missouri, moved up the state rankings in every one of these key education metrics.

“Passing the Quality Education Act is the single greatest step Missouri can take to improve the quality of our public schools,” said Dean Johnson, a former public-school administrator and the current CEO of Quality Schools Coalition. “The longer we go without focusing school accountability on academic growth and achievement, the further we’ll fall behind other states.”

Currently academic growth only accounts for 24% of a school’s Annual Performance Report (APR) in Missouri, with student achievement also accounting for 24% of a district’s score. Missouri’s school accountability system currently puts too much focus on compliance and paperwork, rather than actual educational outcomes, according to Quality Schools Coalition. Education experts view academic growth to be the truest measure of school quality, because it measures the academic improvement students make over the course of a school year. This metric is even more critical as Missouri students attempt to recover from COVID-related learning loss.



NAEP RESULTS

	Missouri			
	Percent of Students Proficient			
	2009 State Ranking	2019 State Ranking	2022 State Ranking	2009 to 2022 Change in Rank
ALL STUDENTS				
Grade 4 Reading	11	28	35	Moved down 24 places
Grade 4 Math	21	29	28	Moved down 7 places
Grade 8 Reading	15	24	32	Moved down 17 places
Grade 8 Math	23	28	28	Moved down 5 places

Under the Quality Education Act, 50% of a K-8 school’s performance rating would be based on student academic growth and 50% would be based on student achievement outcomes. Sixty percent of a Missouri high school’s performance rating would be measured by academic growth and college and career readiness, while student achievement and graduation rates would make up the remaining 40%.

“The academic growth of students is the truest measure of whether our schools are delivering a high-quality education and yet in Missouri it only accounts for 24 percent of a school’s performance rating,” said Rep. Mike Haffner. “Our neighboring states are prioritizing academic growth while Missouri is falling behind in providing a quality education to our next generation of leaders. We must pass the Quality Education Act so we can start measuring what matters and rewarding the teachers and schools that are moving kids forward in their academic

performance.”

The Quality Education Act would also ensure all Missouri public schools receive a report card that clearly describes how the school compares with statewide outcomes in academic growth, achievement, graduation rates, and college and career readiness. The report card, which would be easily accessible on DESE and the school’s website, would help fix the lack of transparency that Missouri parents and citizens encounter when trying to find information about school quality.

“In a world where information is increasingly at our fingertips, Missouri makes it very difficult for parents to determine if their local schools are providing a quality education,” said Sen. Curtis Trent. “The frustrating part is that it’s within DESE’s power right now to give parents and taxpayers more clear, accessible information on how well schools are educating students and they have so far failed to do so. By passing the Quality Education Act, we can bring much needed transparency to our public schools, while prioritizing academic growth and achievement, instead of rewarding schools for filling out paperwork.”

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