



Missouri House of Representatives

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Missouri House Advances Open Enrollment Legislation as First Bill Passed in the 2024 Legislative Session

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – In a significant move to prioritize school choice and open enrollment, the Missouri House of Representatives swiftly passed the first bill of the year. HB 1989, which has passed the House for the past three years, underscores the commitment of Missouri legislators in providing expanded educational options in the state and empowering families to choose the best quality education for their children.

HB 1989, also known as the “Public School Open Enrollment Act”, grants K-12 public schools the authority to determine whether students from neighboring districts can enroll. The primary objectives of the bill include enhancing educational quality, fostering parental involvement, broadening access to programs and classes, and aligning curriculum options with individual beliefs. The legislation imposes a three percent cap on the annual number of students eligible to transfer under open enrollment, without mandating additional staff or programs for the participating districts.

“This bill allows the 900,000 students in the state of Missouri to have the opportunity of choice within the very system that their parents pay taxes to,” Pollitt (R-Sedalia) told his fellow House members. “Some opponents say this forces districts to compete with each other, but we build on competition. This bill places the choice with the local taxpayers, who have a student in a local district, and gives them the ability to shape the future of that district.”

The Missouri legislation additionally introduces the Parent Public School Choice Fund, accompanied by an \$80 million appropriation designed to support transportation and special needs education for qualifying students. Transportation responsibilities rest with parents, except for cases where the child qualifies for free or reduced lunch or has transportation specified in an individualized education plan.

The successful passage of the “Public School Open Enrollment Act” marks a great accomplishment for Missouri students, parents and districts. Pollitt affirmed, “I am grateful to those who voted in support of HB 1989 and trust in the legislation. I know topics on education are always a hard vote to make. This session we received the most votes ever for this piece of legislation. The bill will most likely see

some changes when it goes through the Senate and hopefully they are positive ones. I am fully hopeful for when the bill returns to the House, that it will garner even more support.”

Looking ahead in the remainder of session, Representative Pollitt remains fervent in his fidelity towards the betterment of all Missourians. The bill received approval from the House with a vote of 86-73 on Wednesday and now proceeds to the Senate for consideration.

Rep. Brad Pollitt, a Republican, represents part of Pettis County, District 052 in the Missouri House of Representatives. Rep. Pollitt was elected in November 2018. For more information, please contact Rep. Pollitt at 573-751-9774 or by email at Bradley.Pollitt@house.mo.gov

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