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## Missouri Parents Sue To Keep Children In Better-Performing Schools

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Seven Normandy, Missouri, school district parents are suing the state board of education in order to keep their children in better-performing schools. The lawsuit argues that the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) should not have restarted Normandy as a state-run district on July 1. The state did this in an effort to [...]



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The lawsuit argues that the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) should not have restarted Normandy as a state-run district on July 1. The state did this in an effort to [limit the number of students who could transfer](#) out of Normandy, reports Dale Singer for St. Louis Public Radio. The change was a measure of prevention on the part of the state in an effort to keep families who had just moved to the district from transferring out.

Joshua Schindler, who filed the lawsuit on behalf of the parents, said the lawsuit focuses on the language used in the transfer law.

“Basically,” he said, “167.131 clearly says that you have to maintain an accredited school. No one can say there is an accredited school in Normandy today. I’m hard-pressed to see what they are going to do and how they are going to get around this . You may say we’re splitting hairs, but in fact we are not. The statute says accreditation. It does not talk about no accreditation status at all ... There is a point where enough is enough.”

The board did not give the district a performance rating, which meant the district no longer had to comply with the transfer law, which allows children to attend better schools in the same or neighboring counties, with their home district paying for tuition and transportation, writes Elisa Crouch for *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

With almost 1,000 students transferring last year, the district was [pushed to the point of bankruptcy](#).

The creation of the new district allowed for students who had transferred last year to be allowed to transfer again this year, so long as they met certain conditions. This meant that when hundreds of transfer students reapplied for the program they were denied.

“Unfortunately,” Schindler said, “DESE changed the ground rules and said that not only did you have to be a resident, but your child had to have gone to Normandy schools. Imagine how fundamentally unfair it is for a little child who went to the Ladue school district, for example, or Clayton or Brentwood, and suddenly you disrupt that kid’s education and make them go back to Normandy. Or, with just a few weeks go to until school starts again, to make that family have to scramble.”

Because this happened in July, it was too late to apply for summer school.

Diane McCrary, one of the parents suing, stated:

“It’s summer. Schools are closed, and secretaries and people who would administer any placement test and financial aid aren’t there. People are gone for the summer.”

In support of the transfer law and allowing students to return to their better-performing schools, Adolphus M. Pruitt, vice president of the Missouri NAACP, and James V. Shuls, director of education policy at the Show-Me Institute, recently issued a [joint statement](#).

The lawsuit is being paid for in part by the Children’s Education Alliance of Missouri.



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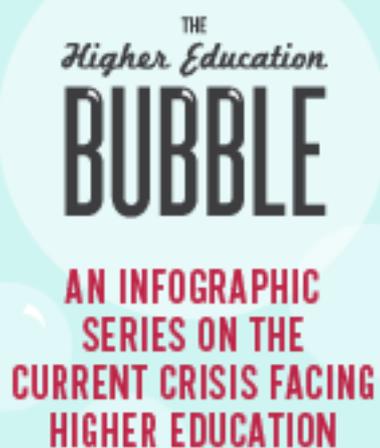
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