

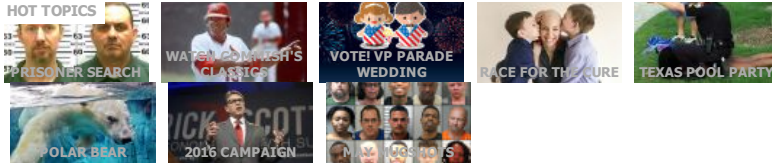


Fast, Easy Loans
\$100 and up in minutes

START HERE
Subject to approval.

2015 PULITZER PRIZE WINNER

90°
Clear



Home / News / Local / Education

School transfer law fix? For some families, it would create a new problem

June 10, 2015 12:15 am • By Jessica Bock

23



Enlarge Photo

For two years, Diane McCrary's daughter has been able to attend one of the region's best public middle schools. And she was enrolled and ready to start this fall at Clayton High, another top performer.

But as sent to Gov. Jay Nixon, the Legislature's measure to modify a controversial student transfer law would change that: Before she enrolls in a higher-performing school, she must first spend a semester in one of the worst.

About 200 students are in a similar situation.

All live in the unaccredited school districts of Normandy and Riverview Gardens — and as such are entitled under the current transfer law to enroll in superior public schools. But the group of 200 have never attended the failing schools in their neighborhoods.

Most — like McCrary's daughter — previously enrolled in private schools. In 2013, when the Missouri Supreme Court upheld the state's transfer law, they migrated to high-performing public schools tuition-free.

Now, a bill that has cleared the Legislature would deny transfers unless those students first attended their home school districts for a semester.

"We're in a horrible situation," said McCrary, a longtime resident of the Normandy district.

The current transfer law, which requires a home district to pay the cost of tuition and transportation, nearly bankrupted Normandy last year.

The Legislature has attempted to create a fix the past two years; Nixon last year vetoed the Legislature's bill, which included an option for students to transfer to private, nonreligious schools. That option does not exist in this year's version.

But the bill has been criticized for failing to include a tuition cap. Normandy's finances remain fragile, and Riverview Gardens officials also have said without a tuition cap, the

Virtual schools offer students another option, but questions persist



A bill allowing a virtual school option in Missouri is awaiting action from Gov. Jay Nixon

Read more

Legislative session leaves many frustrated, but GOP got some priorities through



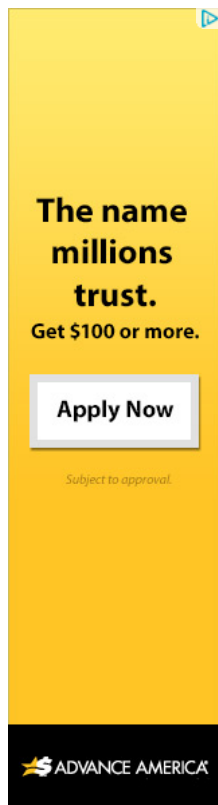
Nixon stresses the positive in his assessment. Read more

Nixon says he will give 'thorough review' to student-transfer bill



Legislation would give students charter and virtual school options.

Read more



**The name
millions
trust.**
Get \$100 or more.

Apply Now

Subject to approval.

ADVANCE AMERICA

district will continue to drain resources from students who choose to stay.

The provision in the bill says that students in unaccredited districts must attend an unaccredited school for one semester before transferring to an accredited school within their district. If those slots are full, students in unaccredited schools in urban or metropolitan areas such as St. Louis, Kansas City, St. Joseph, Springfield and Columbia may then transfer out of the district to an accredited one. They also may leave for an approved charter school or a virtual program.

Under the current law, all students living within a failing district's boundaries have the option to transfer.

The Children's Education Alliance of Missouri, which supports the expansion of school choice, is urging Nixon to sign the bill. But the organization also recognizes that the measure is not perfect and will hurt some families.

"The resilience and willingness to fight for their kids' education has been enormous," said Peter Franzen, associate executive director. "They have been subjected to a very bumpy road."

House bill sponsor Rep. David Wood, R-Versailles, said the semester requirement is to prevent people from moving to unaccredited districts or claiming residency, simply to be able to then transfer to schools elsewhere.

"We don't want to penalize them, we just want to stop parents from taking advantage of the situation," he said. He said the provision wouldn't apply to students entering kindergarten or first grade.

McCrary has lived in the footprint of Normandy schools for 15 years. Her daughter went to private school before transferring to Brentwood Middle School two years ago. She is signed up to start as a freshman in August at Clayton High.

Most private schools completed their enrollment process months ago. And selling her home — which was down \$17,000 in a recent appraisal — is not an option, McCrary said.

"It's stressful because we don't really know," she said. "We've gone through this twice now." Last summer, she was one of seven parents who filed a lawsuit when the State Board of Education took steps that would have cut off transfers for students living within the newly formed Normandy Schools Collaborative.

After the suit was filed, the board reversed its decision and allowed students to transfer who had not attended Normandy schools but lived in the district.

Now, McCrary and other families in similar circumstances are waiting to see what will happen to the bill. They would like to be grandfathered in, McCrary said.

A spokesman from Nixon's office said Tuesday that the bill continues to be under review.

Copyright 2015 stltoday.com. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Tags Private School, Jay Nixon, Education, St. Louis, Diane Mccrary, Transfer Law, David Wood, Normandy, Missouri Supreme Court, Children S Education Alliance Of Missouri

MOST POPULAR STORIES

More than 50 arrested in two-day effort aimed at St. Charles County heroin trafficking
 Why Americans are getting new credit cards
 Shooting at St. Louis playground leaves neighborhood in mourning
 No hard liquor? No female overnights? Mizzou frats up in arms over proposals
 Maplewood-Richmond Heights cancels football due to lack of interest
 Bicyclist dies after being struck by vehicle in St. Louis
 Second St. Louis firefighter charged with stealing construction equipment
 What should Chicago zoo do with worker who criticized 'rude ass white people?'
 Taylors give \$92.5 million to 13 recipients, including Arch, Forest Park
 Former youth minister files race discrimination suit against Florissant church

Popular Articles and Offers

ADS BY ADBLADE



27 Athletes With Seriously Smokin' Wives
Buzzlie



Download a free toolkit and understand the essentials of planning your estate.
Wells Fargo Advisors



Calculate your payments now. No credit check required to get started!
MORTGAGE RATES HIT 2.67%



20 Stars Who Died Tragically Young
Answers

MORE FROM STLTODAY.COM

- Lindbergh High School teacher found dead in Fenton park of apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound (STLtoday)
- Webster students in London show entitlement mentality (STLtoday)
- Something is amiss at SLU (STLtoday)
- Man convicted of killing girl, 4, in oven wants new trial (STLtoday)
- How about another memorial to criminals? (STLtoday)


FROM AROUND THE WEB

- Ever Googled yourself? A popular website reveals more than major search engines, simply enter your name and state. What will you discover? (Instant Checkmate)
- Why New Jersey doesn't let you pump your own gas (Fortune)
- Say Goodbye: 10 Cars Being Discontinued in 2015 (Insider Car News)
- Bronx Boy, 14, Killed in 'Point Blank' Shooting Caught on Surveillance Video (The New York Times)
- Kayak Suspect Moved Paddle Away as Fiancé Died, Prosecutors Say (The New York Times)

SPONSORED LINKS

AdChoices

Put your #PassionToWork



START SEARCHING

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH
monster