

MSTA has devised a systemic approach to address the Career Ladder issue with the next General Assembly and I wanted to take a moment to share those ideas with you.

The House and Senate finance chairs indicated this summer that the General Assembly would not fund in 2009-10 Missouri's Career Ladder due to a decline in state revenue. Evidently, they hadn't checked with their elected colleagues. Your e-mails, letters and phone calls have created so much heat that this topic has become the No. 1 issue legislators are dealing with in their home districts. Congratulations on your response, but that is only the opening salvo in what will be a long and concentrated battle.

I've outlined a series of activities and events that MSTTA will initiate to allow our profession to focus on the children we teach, the programs that will be lost, and the lives of teachers who have already begun the instructional programs that are a part of Career Ladder.

1. **Ongoing communications:** This letter is the initial step to inform our members in Career Ladder districts of what MSTTA and you, as individual teachers must do to ensure the continued funding of this program.

2. **Bookmark blitz:** You, your colleagues, family and friends may use a special bookmark that we've created to send a message to legislators and the governor. We are distributing these to our CTA leaders in school districts that have Career Ladder. Your CTA President will receive their bookmarks in the mail in the coming weeks. Our MSTTA field reps will have them as well, and they will be available at our fall open hearings. Please bring your completed bookmarks to open hearings, convention or contact your field rep. MSTTA will collect these messages and deliver them to legislators once the legislative session starts.

3. **Real stories:** We intend to provide opportunities for you, to directly address this ill-advised legislative decision through a video response to the general public via MSTTA's site and YouTube. Teachers recording their individual stories about what the loss of these funds really means to students and the teacher themselves can make a major impact on the legislature's decision regarding Career Ladder funding. It's simple...*you talk, we post.*

4. **Publicity in the community:** As the session approaches, I'll write an op-ed story that can be sent to newspapers throughout the state highlighting the successes of Career Ladder, and how

students will be hurt if the funding gets cut. To do that, I'll need personal stories from you on what the loss of these funds will mean to the children you teach and to your personal budget in these difficult economic times.

5. **Constant pressure:** We are encouraging you to attend your particular region's Capitol Day, when our members can share personal stories directly with elected officials. We have numerous Capitol days throughout the session, as some regions have multiple days scheduled. Please look at our Web site, www.msta.org, or contact your MSTA field rep or the state office as to the details for these functions. In this way, we keep the issue in the forefront with unrelenting pressure throughout the session. This is much more effective than one statewide day when once it ends, the pressure subsides. Our job is to keep the fires burning until legislators act favorably on Career Ladder.

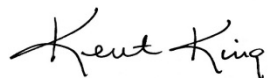
6. **Publicity in school buildings:** We will encourage CTA leaders to keep the MSTA bulletin board on your local campus updated throughout this spring, as new strategies may be unveiled. Keep an eye on msta.org/careerladder.

Please realize that we are still working out details on some of the issues and strategies I have mentioned. Without your commitment to not only act now, but to stay the course, we may not be able to persevere. The reality is that the economy is bad and revenue will be down this year. In these times, it is the legislature's job to prioritize what is important in the state budget. It is our job as citizens to help them make the right decision.

MSTA would hope to forward fund the ladder if possible, and that has a cost, but at the very least, we need to get this year paid for. You need to know what is being planned, so you can inform your fellow teachers, family, friends and the school board where you are employed as to what they can do to help.

Remember, MSTA is there for you, and with your help we will fight to ensure that funding Career Ladder remains a top priority for Missouri legislators.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kent King".

Kent King
MSTA Executive Director