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MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

CHARLES W. SHIELDS
PRESIDENT PRO TEM

August 4, 2009

Mr. Mike Wood
Associate Executive Director
Missouri State Teachers Association
407 South Sixth Street
P.O. Box 458
Columbia, MO 65205

Dear Mike:

I am writing in response to your inquiry regarding the letter recently sent to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education from Senator Nodler and Representative Icet concerning the operating appropriation for the Career Ladder Program.

The Career Ladder Program is one of the longest continual public education performance pay programs in the nation. The program has an outstanding track record of investing in teachers who improve education in the State of Missouri. I am confident there is a great deal of support in the Missouri Senate for this program and the teachers in our state.

One of the challenges of funding the career ladder programs is the appropriating for fund payments for the program of the previous year – essentially funding a program in arrears. It is my desire to work with members of the Senate Appropriations Committee to develop a plan to move career ladder appropriations into the same year as the work of the teachers. This may take time to accomplish given our current fiscal situation, but I think it is a worthy goal.

Thank you for contacting my office regarding this important matter. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlie Shields".

Charlie Shields