
To: Missouri General Assembly
From: Missouri Catholic Conference
Re: Normandy, Riverview Gardens and School Transfers
Date: April 30, 2014

The lives of children – their educational future – will be profoundly affected by how you respond to the crisis facing the unaccredited districts of Normandy and Riverview Gardens. Where ought one turn to for guidance? Start with the parents.

Parents are the primary educators of their children. This is their God-given right and duty. If you are looking for direction, consider the dreams of these parents for their children. If you do this first, the practical solutions will fall in place.

The hope of many parents is for better public schools in their own communities. Other parents wish to send their children to a Catholic, Lutheran or other religious school, or to a nonsectarian private school. Still others wish to transfer their child to an accredited district.

All of these dreams can and should be recognized as legislation is crafted to address the problems in Normandy and Riverview Gardens.

The Archdiocese of St. Louis has already declared its willingness to welcome students and provide a quality education with only modest state assistance.

Accredited districts can do their part by reducing tuition rates and making incoming students feel welcome.

Lastly, there should be a renewed commitment from both the state of Missouri and local people to bring Normandy and Riverview Gardens back into the fold of accredited and outstanding public schools.

Some may consider these goals to be at odds with each other. They are not. Educating children does not have to be a battlefield dominated by experts and entrenched interests.

This year a handful of courageous legislators have stepped forward and tried to find solutions for the crisis in our unaccredited districts. The Missouri Catholic Conference (MCC) commends these legislators and prays for this continuing leadership as the 2014 session enters its final weeks.

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