

MISSOURI EDUCATION NEWS

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Education News

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Missouri Ranks 41st in the Nation for Teacher Pay

Teacher Pay Is Insufficient To Meet Rising Debt, Housing Costs in Many Areas

Missouri ranked 41st in the nation for its average teacher salary in 2004-05, according to the American Federation of Teachers' (AFT) annual teacher salary survey. Nationally, anemic teacher salary growth continues to lag behind inflation and precludes many teachers from finding affordable housing and paying off student loans.

The average teacher salary in Missouri for the 2004-05 school year was \$39,064, up 2.2 percent from the previous year. Missouri was ranked 32nd in the nation for beginning teacher salary, at \$29,281, an increase of 1.2 percent from 2004.

The average teacher salary nationally in 2004-05 was \$47,602, a 2.2 percent increase from the previous year. This falls short of the rate of inflation for that year, which was 3.4 percent. Between 2003 and 2005, the buying power of the average teacher salary decreased by almost \$800.

The 2005 salary survey also examines the impact of rising housing costs and student loan debt payments on teachers in America's 50 largest cities. The study concludes that the incomes of mid-career teachers in these cities will limit them to purchasing lower-priced homes. In cities such as Seattle, Oakland, Los Angeles and San Francisco, many career teachers will never be able to realize the middle-class dream of home ownership.

Other states in the Plains region ranked in the AFT survey as follows: Nebraska was ranked 36th in the nation, at \$39,441; Kansas was 38th, at \$39,351; Iowa was 39th, at \$39,284; North Dakota was 49th, at \$36,449; and South Dakota had the lowest average teacher salary in the nation, at \$34,039.

16 Public Schools Honored as "Gold Star Schools"

Sixteen public elementary schools in Missouri have been selected as "Gold Star Schools" for 2006-07, state education officials announced today. The schools will be

formally honored May 3 at a forum in Jefferson City.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has conducted the Gold Star Schools program since 1991-92. The program now operates in conjunction with the national Blue Ribbon Schools program, which is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education.

Missouri's Gold Star Schools must meet the academic performance criteria used to evaluate schools in the Blue Ribbon program. In addition, Gold Star Schools must complete a written application to provide evidence that they are using research-based strategies and practices to improve student achievement.

The following schools have been named Gold Star Schools for 2006-07:

- **Avenue City Elementary School**, Avenue City School District Mrs. Rebecca Grimes, Principal
- **Avery Elementary School**, Webster Groves School District Dr Don Furjes, Principal
- **Conway Elementary School**, Ladue School District Dr Lane Narvaez, Principal
- **Bessie Ellison Accelerated Elementary School**, St. Joseph School District Ms. Kimberly Siela, Principal
- **Fairview Elementary School**, Columbia Public Schools Mr. Ben Tilley, Principal
- **Glenwood Elementary School**, Glenwood School District Mrs. Patricia Orchard, Principal
- **Hartville Elementary School**, Hartville School District Mr. Mark Piper, Principal
- **Jefferson Elementary School**, Farmington School District Ms. Sheryl Robinson, Principal
- **Nike Elementary School**, Meramec Valley School District Mrs. Ketina Armstrong, Principal
- **Christian Ott Elementary School** Independence Public Schools Mrs. Ronnee Laughlin, Principal
- **Portland Elementary School**, Springfield Public Schools Mrs. Lora Hopper, Principal
- **Stoutland Elementary School**, Stoutland School District Mr. James Roberts, Principal
- **Thornfield Elementary School**, Thornfield School District Mr. Michael Wallace, Principal
- **Westchester Elementary School**, Kirkwood School District Ms. Chrisel

- Allison, Principal
- **Brennan Woods Elementary School** Northwest R-I School District Mrs. Kimberly Quentin, Principal
 - **Wright City Elementary School**, Wright City School District Mrs. Juanita Deeker, Principal

State Board of Education Designates 7 High Schools as New "A+ Schools"

Seven public high schools have qualified for designation as new "A+ Schools," state education officials announced today. As a result, eligible seniors in these schools may receive state-paid tuition assistance to attend a Missouri community college or public technical school.

The new A+ high schools are:

- Belton High School
- Bunker High School
- Hazelwood Central High School
- Hazelwood East High School
- Plato High School
- Steelville High School
- Windsor High School

A total of 231 public high schools in Missouri have now been designated as A+ schools, as authorized by state law.

Since 1997, nearly 30,000 Missouri students have taken advantage of the A+ tuition assistance to attend a community college. This year (2006-07), the state is providing \$18 million to underwrite financial aid for eligible A+ students.

To qualify for tuition assistance, high school graduates must attend an A+ high school for at least three years, have a grade-point average of at least 2.5 on a 4-

point scale, maintain a 95 percent attendance record, and perform 50 hours of unpaid tutoring in the school district.

"The A+ Schools program is helping schools raise the expectations of students and parents and making higher education accessible to more Missouri families. The program continues to grow in popularity every year," said Stan Johnson, assistant commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The A+ Schools program encourages participating schools to reduce dropout rates; eliminate general-track courses and raise academic expectations for all students; and work closely with higher-education and private-sector leaders to better prepare students for life after high school.

Free Copies of Spike Lee HBO Documentary "When the Levees Broke" and Curriculum Available to Educators

Curriculum Designed to Help Students Understand Aftermath and Social Impact of Hurricane Katrina

Spike Lee and HBO's epic documentary, "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts," is the centerpiece of a new curriculum package that will be available this fall for high school, college and community educators. The documentary, for which Lee and Sam Pollard recently won the 2006 George Polk Award for Documentary Television, will be accompanied by a multi-disciplinary curriculum guide, "Teaching The Levees: A Curriculum for Democratic Dialogue and Civic Engagement to Accompany the HBO Documentary Film Event," published and distributed by Teachers College Press.

Available free to educators, thanks to a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the curriculum package, which includes a complete version of the documentary in a two-disk DVD set and a complementary curriculum guide, can be requested at www.teachingthelevees.com while supplies last.

Lee's documentary, which debuted on HBO in August 2006, chronicles the

experiences of people from diverse backgrounds and socio-economic conditions who endured the harrowing ordeal of living in New Orleans during and after the levees were breached. Through eyewitness accounts and expert commentary, the four-part documentary tells the saga of one of the greatest natural disasters experienced by any region of the country and the failure at all levels of government to respond adequately to the tragedy.

The curriculum was developed by faculty at Teachers College, Columbia University.

“Our schools, colleges and communities often avoid discussions of the complex societal issues of race and class that are raised in Spike Lee’s landmark documentary,” said Margaret Smith Crocco, “Teaching The Levees” project leader and professor of social studies and education at Teachers College. “Now, through this groundbreaking documentary and the supporting curriculum guide, educators can stimulate dialogue about these tough issues and help students answer such questions as: ‘What kind of a country are we? What kind of a country do we want to be?’”

The curriculum includes individual chapters on history, media literacy, civics, economics and geography. In addition, the guide provides resources, such as a detailed timeline of the unfolding of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath, as well as a map of the New Orleans levee system. Each lesson includes thought-provoking discussion questions connected to the stories in the documentary that will help students explore “why” and “how” this tragedy happened, and examine their reactions to the devastating chain of events.

The lessons are aimed at three audiences: high school social studies students, college students in history-related courses, and adult learners in civic, religious and community groups. The documentary, “When the Levees Broke,” was rated TV-14 when it was aired by HBO; the curriculum is intended for 11th and 12th grade high school students, college students and adults.

The content of the curriculum can be used in ways that are consistent with national high school social studies standards and can be easily integrated into existing curricula. In addition, resources to support the use of the curriculum – including media content, supplementary educational materials, venues for community sharing and online professional development materials – are available to educators, students and community leaders from the “Teaching The Levees” Web site (www.teachingthelevees.com). The “Teaching The Levees” package will be available for use during the 2007-2008 school year.

“Teaching The Levees” is a collaboration of Teachers College, Columbia University, the Rockefeller Foundation and HBO Documentary Films.

Software Grants for ‘Stem’ Teachers

3D CAD Software Goes to Instructors Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math

SolidWorks Corporation will grant as many as 1,000 new licenses of SolidWorks® Student Edition 3D CAD software to individual U.S. educators dedicated to improving students’ science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills.

The SolidWorks-STEM Educators II grant is the second consecutive year of the initiative and includes training and lesson plans to help teachers and faculty from elementary school through college integrate the four separate disciplines for more effective education.

“3D CAD software is a perfect storm of science, technology, engineering, and math, and it brings these disciplines home in a vivid, interactive way that nails the question, how is this relevant?” said Herbert Crosby, professor of mechanical engineering technology at the University of Maine. Crosby was among the first educators to secure a SolidWorks STEM grant and create a course using SolidWorks software to strengthen STEM instruction.

CAD software is adept at conveying 2D and 3D geometry concepts to younger students and illustrating algebra and physics principles in later years. Teachers can apply these topics in a wide range of engineering projects – for example, designing small-scale cars or simulating the effects of design changes on air flow.

With backing by the National Science Foundation (NSF), STEM is an emerging movement in American education aimed at improving technological literacy and global competitiveness. STEM addresses warning signs found in numerous studies

showing the United States falling behind in engineering graduation rates and math/science proficiency.

“3D CAD brings science, technology, engineering, and math together in a dramatic and effective way that foreshadows how students can apply their skills in high-paying careers,” said Marie Planchard, director of education at SolidWorks Corporation. “STEM education with SolidWorks gives students the ability to compete in a global engineering design world.”

The SolidWorks-STEM Educators II grant includes:

- One copy of SolidWorks Student Edition software;
- SolidWorks Education Edition curriculum and courseware CD for instructors;
- A self-paced online course that demonstrates ways educators can incorporate 3D geometry with STEM concepts;
- 20 hours of step-by-step tutorials;
- Access to the SolidWorks Teacher Community Web site at <http://blogs.solidworks.com/teacher>;
- Monthly online SolidWorks-STEM symposia focusing on new approaches to math (including algebra and geometry), biology, chemistry, physics, art, and economics;
- Opportunity to become certified as a Certified SolidWorks Associate; and
- Opportunity to accredit one’s institution as a Certified SolidWorks Associate Exam Provider.

After completing the online course, teachers must demonstrate their competency by producing a short STEM lesson for the classroom that will be shared on the SolidWorks Teacher Community Web site. SolidWorks will then provide an electronic certificate to the teacher documenting 30 hours of professional development work.

Teachers that receive a certificate are eligible for additional advanced online training classes preparing them for the Certified SolidWorks Associate (CSWA) Exam. Primarily for students, the CSWA Exam is a comprehensive assessment that measures competencies in 3D CAD modeling technology, engineering principles, standards, and industry practices. It helps educators gauge individual student progress as well as curricula effectiveness. The CSWA certification gives

manufacturing companies and design firms tangible proof of competency as students enter the job market. When a grant recipient passes the exam, the institution becomes eligible to become a CSWA Provider. The CSWA Exam is available in the following languages: English, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Spanish, and Brazilian Portuguese.

How to apply

Teachers must apply for SolidWorks-STEM Educators II grants by May 30, 2007 at www.solidworks.com/stemgrant. Grants will be awarded in May and June 2007, and assignments must be completed during the summer of 2007. For more information, listen to a podcast on the SolidWorks-STEM Educators grant at <http://www.solidworks.com/mediapodcast>.

Breakthrough Collaborative Receives Excellence in Summer Learning Award from Johns Hopkins University's Center for Summer Learning

Breakthrough Collaborative, a Bay Area-based national non-profit that increases educational opportunity for high-potential, low-income middle school students, together with its local Pittsburgh site, will receive the 2007 Excellence in Summer Learning Award from the Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University's School of Education. Breakthrough will be recognized during the Center's national conference April 18-20, at the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel.

"This award validates what Breakthrough has been doing for almost 30 years - furthering educational opportunities with our intensive summer program," said Laura Pochop, Executive Director of Breakthrough. "Johns Hopkins is one of the most respected educational institutions in the country and to be recognized both nationally and locally by them is a privilege and honor."

John Hopkins' Center for Summer Learning Excellence in Summer Learning Award

recognizes summer programs that demonstrate excellence in accelerating academic achievement and promoting positive development for young people. The award is given annually, based on an application and interview process that elicits information on a program's history, mission, goals, operations, management, staff development, partnerships, results and sustainability. The Excellence in Summer Learning Award seeks to find and draw national attention to exemplary programs providing high-quality summer learning experiences for youth.

"Our 2007 award winners exemplify the type of high-quality summer learning experiences that should be accessible to all young people," said Ron Fairchild, Executive Director of the Center.

Breakthrough's mission is to launch low-income middle school students on the road to college and to inspire their high school and college-aged teachers to pursue careers in education. By increasing educational opportunities for high-potential middle school students from low-income households and inspiring student teachers to pursue careers in education, Breakthrough has positively impacted the lives of more than 10,000 young people.

The key to Breakthrough's success is the students teaching students model. The college and high school students who teach Breakthrough's middle school students are more than teachers; they are role models and mentors. Often drawn from the same communities as the students, Breakthrough teachers are examples that the skills they teach lead to success.

"Two of our Breakthrough teachers, Brian Johnsrud from Norfolk and Joshua Billings from Cambridge, were recently named 2007 Rhodes scholars," said Pochop. "An extraordinary accomplishment, both students credit their drive for educational excellence to the summers they spent teaching at Breakthrough. It's so gratifying to see the way that our program changes young peoples' lives."

Breakthrough's site in Pittsburgh will also receive the Excellence in Summer Learning Award for serving low-income middle school students from the Greater Pittsburgh region for the last 13 summers. Like all Breakthrough sites, Pittsburgh provides a tuition-free, intensive summer program and participants are admitted based on academic ability and limited opportunity. Students take classes in mathematics, language arts, wellness and public speaking. Students and their families are supported through financial aid and career development workshops. Ninety-two percent of the students in Breakthrough's Pittsburgh site graduate from high school and 80 percent have enrolled in college, which is double the rate of their comparable peers.

“We’re extremely proud of the determination and performance of our students, who dream of graduating from high school and continuing their education in college,” said Pochop. “75% of our students nationwide will be the first in their families to graduate from college, which, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, is instrumental in ending the poverty in their family lines forever.”

Through intensive summer sessions, after-school tutoring, weekend enrichment opportunities, and individual counseling, Breakthrough ensures that high-potential students begin the road to college successfully in middle school. Founded in San Francisco in 1978, Breakthrough serves more than 2,200 middle school students annually and employs 700 college and high school students as middle school teachers in 28 locations across the U.S. More than 80% of Breakthrough’s students nationwide are accepted to college-preparatory high schools. Visit www.breakthroughcollaborative.org

***School Library Journal* Launches Poetry Podcast Series**

***The Largest Reviewer of Books for Children and Young Adults
Offers Audio Series at www.slj.com/podcasts During National Poetry Month***

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--A unique series of audio recordings featuring award-winning authors reading their poetry for children and young adults is now available online, courtesy of *School Library Journal* (SLJ).

Individual episodes, as well as the entire series, can be played or downloaded for free at www.slj.com/podcasts, where users can also subscribe via RSS feed.

SLJ, a national monthly magazine for K–12 media specialists and librarians who work with children and teens, has produced the podcasts, which coincide with National Poetry Month and *SLJ*’s April feature “What Rhymes with Math?” The article, by Barbara Wysocki, discusses poetry for elementary and middle school students, with recommended titles for using poetry to spark exploration of science, social studies, and math.

- Authors of selected titles who have contributed to *SLJ*’s Poetry Podcast Series include:

- Douglas Florian, author and illustrator of *Zoo's Who*. Harcourt. 2005.
- David Harrison, author of *Sounds of Rain: Poems of the Amazon*. Illus. by Doug Duncan Wordsong. 2006.
- Rob Jackson, author of *Animal Mischief*. Illus. by Laura Jacobsen. Boyds Mills. 2006.
- Julie Larios, author of *Yellow Elephant: A Bright Bestiary*. Illus. by Julie Paschkis. Harcourt. 2006.
- J. Patrick Lewis, author of *Arithme-Tickle: An Even Number of Odd Riddle-Rhymes*. Illus. by Frank Remkiewicz. Harcourt. 2002.
- Walter Dean Myers, author of *Jazz*. Illus by Christopher Myers. Holiday House. 2006.
- Jon Scieska, author of *Science Verse*. Illus. by Lane Smith. Viking. 2004.
- Jack Prelutsky, author of *Read a Rhyme, Write a Rhyme*. Illus. by Meilo So. Knopf. 2005.
- Joyce Sidman, author of *Song of the Waterboatman and Other Pond Poems*. Illus. By Beckie Prange. Houghton Mifflin. 2005.
- Charles R. Smith Jr., author of *Hoop Kings*. Photos by the author. Candlewick. 2004.
- Kay Winters, author of *Voices of Ancient Egypt*. Illus. by Barry Moser. National Geographic. 2003.

“Walter Dean Myers was here to record our first podcast in what was fast turning out to be a series,” says Brian Kenney, *SLJ*'s editor-in-chief. “All week there has been a steady stream of poets stopping by, headed to the office of Trev Jones [*SLJ*'s book review editor and host of the podcast series] in what has become the podcast soundstage.”

The author of *Hoops*, *Fallen Angels*, and numerous other books for children and young adults, Myers has received the Margaret Edwards Award for lifetime achievement in young adult literature, two Newbery Honor Medals, five Coretta Scott King Awards, and the first Michael L. Printz Award (for his novel *Monster*).

“Poetry, after all, you most definitely want to hear. And podcasting makes these recording easily accessible to nearly anyone, anywhere,” says Kenney. “There are

so many ways you can use these readings to introduce children to poetry in general or the specific poets in particular.”

About School Library Journal

School Library Journal (SLJ) serves librarians who work with students in school and public libraries, reaching an audience of more than 100,000. The world’s largest and most authoritative reviewer of children’s and young adult content—principally books, but also including audio, video, and the Web—the magazine and its Web site (www.slj.com) also provides news, features, columns, and departments that deliver the perspective, resources, and leadership tools necessary for its readers to become indispensable players in their schools and libraries.

Motorola Foundation is Offering Innovation Generation Grants Worth \$3.5 Million for 2007

The Motorola Foundation has introduced Innovation Generation grants, a \$3.5 million initiative for 2007 to inspire U.S. youth, particularly girls and underserved minorities, to embrace science and math at an early age.

"We recognize that young people in the U.S. have an appetite for new technology, yet they may not be aware of the science and math that goes into creating the innovative products they love," said Eileen Sweeney, director, The Motorola Foundation. "Through the Innovation Generation grants, Motorola supports educational programs that spark interest in these subjects and foster the spirit of discovery today that will drive innovation tomorrow."

As future technical professionals who will compete in the global economy, today's students must have a strong foundation in science and math. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that jobs requiring science, engineering or technical training will increase by nearly 25 percent to 6.3 million, from 2004 to 2014.

Any U.S. non-profit organization may apply for an Innovation Generation grant; however, priority will be awarded to creative initiatives that draw students in grades K-12 closer to science and math. Additional guidelines and funding priorities:

- Grant requests may range from \$5,000 to \$250,000.

- Deadline to apply is June 15, 2007.
- To apply for a grant and for additional information, please visit www.motorola.com/giving/innovationgeneration
- Grant recipients will be announced on September 1, 2007.
- Priority funding will be given for programs that operate in communities where Motorola employees are located.

Since 2000, the Motorola Foundation has contributed more than \$32 million in grants to a variety of programs that draw students closer to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Motorola grant recipients have ranged from Chicago Public School's After School Matters to Girl Scouts of the USA to FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology).

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