



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2933		DATE: 3/25/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DAWN HREBEC		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:37 PM	
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Having two different entities that do not communicate well is a hindrance and neglectful. The district has no oversight or way to make sure SSD is doing what they are supposed to be doing. Just look at the lawsuits and money SSD and many districts have had to payout on because of this.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DIANE DRAGAN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JENNIFER MILLER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MARY FITZGERALD		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 11:02 PM	

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My name is Mary Fitzgerald, I am a disability advocate. I am a resident of Kirkwood in St.Louis County. In 1957, SSD began as the only option for students with disabilities like my brother to attend school. My brother had high support needs, he was as student at Litzinger in the seventies. My mom said they didn't change his IEP goals year to year and he didn't learn much. He wasn't given the support he needed for employment skills and had few options in life. He was sexually assaulted while he was a student at Litzinger. This impacted him and his five siblings for life. They did nothing to help him afterwards.

SSD staff incompetence: My experience as a parent of a student receiving SSD services at a partner district has been awful and left our family with school based trauma. I have a Masters degree in Education and am certified in all areas of special education. I'm a former special educator (not SSD). For seven years, I had to fight for appropriate IEP goals and services for my youngest son. SSD administrative staff did not help him when he was bullied and harassed within a week of starting 4th grade in Kirkwood. In fact they said he wanted attention and denied he was getting bullied, he had a mental health crisis. He responded to the bullying with threats, they refused to teach him safer responses to bullying for 18 months. They refused to use a FBA or BIP for months until he had more suspensions and then developed them incorrectly. The incompetence of SSD staff was astounding. The denial and gaslighting was horrible. Despite having an IEP and math goals he only advanced one grade level in math in seven years. During COVID-19 zoom classes, I watched a SSD teacher help him during a math test, this inflated math grade meant they just passed him on. He was denied ESY. I defied the SSD area coordinator and contacted the SSD math specialist myself. The SSD math specialist was unable to offer any resources for the required specialized instruction, she had no knowledge of dyscalculia.

SSD staff noncompliance: My mother died a few days before my son began 9th grade. My son's IEP had daily check in for assignments and support for classwork. His SSD high school Math and english co-teachers did not follow the IEP, they left him alone during the first month of school. He was behind a month of assignments. Students in english class called him retarded for months and the SSD co-teacher refused to make them stop. If he had responded to these students with a threat and was suspended he would have jeopardized his future college goals. There were many excuses and never an apology. He left H.S. after that one semester and was a virtual student for two years. SSD staff failures have had a lifelong impact on his ability to pass H.S. algebra, learn writing skills and get into college.

After years of fighting SSD, we finally had no choice and filed due process. We spent thousands in legal fees for due process so our son could get the education he needed at a private school. He is

finally safe and getting all the accommodations SSD failed to provide. It would have been less expensive for SSD to just provide the IEP supports and protect him from harassment.

Accountability: I complained to every SSD and partner district administrator possible, but nothing changed. There is no evidence SSD staff were ever disciplined for their failure to follow district policy or comply with the IEP. It took two years for the harassment complaint to be "formally investigated", yet SSD never interviewed the one student upstander witness. SSD has no formal complaint process, this means administrators can bury problems. I e-mailed Dr. Maclin in 2023 asking for help about bullying, he finally met with me last week to hear our story. He was genuinely upset. I asked for an anti-bullying committee, he did not respond. SSD has no incentive to change or improve.

Deny problems. The DOJ investigation shows a pattern of abuse by SSD staff. In our experience SSD staff use unhealthy behaviorist techniques that blame and punish the student rather than support their needs and teach coping skills. Despite our instructions in the IEP, SSD staff didn't honor our son's learning needs and insisted on harmful behaviorist techniques. I was at the Feb 24th SSD BOE meeting listening to Susan Henry (SSD administrator) talk to the Post Dispatch reporter. Apparently SSD is even denying the basis for the DOJ investigation report. This investigation is based on SSD's own incident reports.

SSD PAC and PRC: You heard testimony today from the NEA lobbyist that improving the PAC or public review committee (PRC) would help. I was a SSD PAC representative for seven years and spoke up about all of our issues and shared those of other SSD parents and nothing changed. IEP compliance and student safety issues within SSD are systemic. Parents tell me that SSD administrators (Area Coordinators) without direct experience of the student routinely gate keep services and students suffer. SSD moves their area coordinator administrators often, we had a different one each year. I spoke to the PRC four years ago and again this year, nothing changed. SSD apparently does not follow PRC recommendations. These groups do not have the power to change SSD systems of entrenched bureaucracy. SSD administrators routinely ignore parents and have no incentive to change.

Inequity: SSD may have been founded to provide equity among St. Louis County districts. Instead of providing equity, SSD administrators can systemically gate keep services for 23,000 students. In 2023, I watched a heartbreaking due process case where SSD failed a student with dyslexia that was several grade levels behind in reading. That mom was a SSD employee and couldn't afford the lawyer retainer. She still is pursuing a court case years later because she needs payment for the expensive tutoring that finally helped her child learn to read. Parents that can afford to, pay thousands of dollars for outside therapy and tutoring that should have happened at school. We spent thousands of dollars on outside math tutoring, OT and SLP support for our son. Parents without the knowledge, time, and money to demand SSD follow the law and provide FAPE (free and appropriate education) are the most vulnerable. Their children are getting the least. SSD perpetuates inequity and denies partner districts the flexibility to solve problems to meet student needs.

Local control/partner districts cannot control staffing: I'm hearing that SSD is understaffed in many partner district schools this year and aides have become subs managing self-contained classrooms. SSD has even hired teachers from the Philippines, unfortunately their accents make it challenging for students with disabilities to understand them. I'm hearing that SSD will not fill these staff vacancies in west and south county partner districts until north county vacancies are filled first. This means that partner districts cannot control staffing in their own schools, yet they are liable when IEP are not followed. SSD budget issues are concerning, In 2023 they had a 54.23% surplus and now approximately a \$58 million deficit, they need a forensic audit.

Liability for SSD staffing and abuse: You heard testimony from lawyer Diane Dragan that Partner districts are liable for SSD staff IEP noncompliance, that was true in our due process case. Consider that when the partner district knowingly sends students to schools where students abuse is happening they are liable. SSD staff said in the SSD BOE meeting last fall that they are deeply concerned for student safety. The recent DOJ investigation letter of SSD describes years of illegal use of seclusion and restraint of students. As a special educator I have had to use seclusion and restraint for the safety of students and staff, I know how to follow safe procedure. The DOJ investigation letter describes seclusion used as punishment for drawing on a desk or spilling coffee. The DOJ investigation found that SSD's documents indicate every student at Litzinger experienced seclusion. This is a school with students with the highest level of support needs, wheelchair users and medically fragile students. I read the report crying, these are students like my brother.

Local control is best: What if we didn't need these highly paid SSD administrators that deny services? This eliminate several 100k and above salaries per district that can go to special educator salaries.. What if partner districts could hire their own special ed. staff? There would be the continuity special educators, students, and parents need. Partner district staff would bear greater responsibility, attend and participate in IEP meetings as the law requires. These schools would operate like almost every other district in Missouri, like the districts where I worked.

Pay for services as needed: SSD can keep its current 7 schools and contracted programs. For example, partner districts can continue to send students to specialized SSD deaf and hard of hearing programs. SSD could offer specialized services on an as needed basis like a cooperative.

Just across the river in Illinois, the Belleville Area Special Services Cooperative (BASSC) runs a cooperative program with local districts. Districts have special educators in house but also contract for certain extra specialized services, only paying for what their students need.

I hear concerns from parents who fear that without SSD their children would lose their specialized services and supports. Large cities like Kansas City manage their own special ed programs and provide services for students with disabilities. St.Charles doesn't have SSD, they manage their own special ed. programs. These St.Louis County parents have only experienced SSD, they are afraid of the unknown. They also admit it hasn't been easy to navigate the dual district system.

ACC is protected: I saw a mom testify in the hearing today. She is worried that her child would not get an Augmentative communication (ACC) device if they left SSD. By law her district would have to provide that support, its in her child's IEP. Students in Mo school districts like St.Charles can get ACC devices. MO AT is the statewide agency for aassistive technology training and support. Schools purchasing devices for students ranging from \$350 and \$5,000 are reimbursed by MO AT.

SSD currently controlling the access to Assistive technology for 23,000 students is problematic. SSD denied our son Assistive technology support in an evaluation that wasn't run according to their own guidelines. We discovered that Assistive technology is only available through school districts or for students with low incomes. Due to SSD's denial our son was denied AT altogether. We couldn't even find private pay Assistive technology support. This is another example of how SSD's gate keeping harms students.

Fearmongering: I heard at today's hearing how worried these parents are that their child wouldn't be able to continue attending a SSD school. I am deeply disappointed to hear from one parent that Dr.Maclin is telling parents that if their district left SSD that their children would not be allowed to go to one of the 7 SSD level 3 support schools. These students are the most vulnerable and the parents have the highest level of fears for their safety. Honestly, it seems like SSD is using this fear to get parents to testify against the bill. We need districts to get the facts so parents aren't living in fear.

The seven SSD schools Southview, Northview, Litzinger etc...and the two technical schools South tech and /north tech can remain. SSD could continue to manage their SSD schools and allow districts that leave SSD to pay tuition for their students to attend those schools. In fact I imagine SSD would gladly benefit from the tuition and likely would not continue to run these 9 schools if they lost so many students.

The school districts surrounding Belleville ll contract to send students to the BASSC Belleville Area Special Services Cooperative self-contained level 3 schools. I saw this program firsthand when in taught in rural Illinois.

Please listen to parents, and ask districts to discuss solutions and have well researched plans with parent input. Many parents are afraid of losing the safe programs they rely on. Other parents need change to local control so their children are safe. I believe with good planning and better communication there can be solutions that meet everyone's needs. We need district assurances and comprehensive plans for IEP compliance. What we don't need is parents fighting each other over this. We don't need SSD using fear to pit parents against each other. Unless you have a sibling or a child with a disability people really don't understand what we've gone through. We don't need this to divide us, we really need each other. We need a safe solution that meets everyone's needs. This is a cause that affects me deeply, I have been a disability advocate my whole life.

I appreciate your time and attention,

Mary Fitzgerald

Cooperative specialized schools for students with complex high support needs.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MARY SKILJAN		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 3:01 PM
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I support HB 2933 because it gives partner school districts the option to vote on whether or not to separate from the Special School District. In our experience, having two districts working with our children caused confusion, teachers blaming each other for lack of instruction, and inconsistency of between classroom instruction and special education instruction. Following the DOJ investigation of students being abused by employees of the Special School District, why would anybody want to partner with them? Schools should be able to decide for themselves who provides the instruction for the kids in their district.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MICHELLE YEPEZ		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: TARA SPARKS		PHONE NUMBER: 314-729-2400	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: LINDBERGH SCHOOLS		TITLE: CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER	
ADDRESS: 9350 SAPPINGTON RD.			
CITY: ST. LOUIS		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63126
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ANASTASIA FEIT		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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As a life long public school teacher in St. Louis County I know that the passing of this bill will eliminate students' access to the same specialized tools and resources to support academic and communication needs simply based on where they live. The bill will create an uneven fragmented system. I want my tax dollars to continue to support and promote a fair and equal education for all.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ANGELA CURTIS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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I am a Missouri resident and I oppose the withdrawal from Special School District.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ANGELA SMITH		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 8:53 AM
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SSD ensures all students across St. Louis County have equitable access to a full range of special education services and career and technical education programs, regardless of where they live.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: AREEB HASAN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: CRYSTAL LAY		PHONE NUMBER: 214-585-2474	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL, SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT (SSD)		TITLE: PRESIDENT OF THE PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL, SPECIAL	
ADDRESS: 2201 FENWAY FARMS TRL			
CITY: FENTON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63026
EMAIL: cml@meetgbs.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:46 PM	
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Testimony on Missouri Bill 2933

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Bill 2933.

I serve as the President of the Parent Advisory Council to the Special School District, and I am also a parent who has experienced firsthand the complexity of navigating special education systems. My perspective today is grounded in both advocacy and lived experience.

Let me start by saying this clearly:

There are areas within SSD—and across all systems—that require improvement. Families, including those I represent, have voiced concerns around access, communication, and consistency of services. These concerns are real, and they deserve continued attention and accountability.

However, this bill raises a significant and urgent concern that cannot be overlooked.

The risk is not whether services change. The risk is whether services disappear.

SSD exists, in part, because specialized services for students with disabilities require a level of expertise, infrastructure, and funding that individual districts often cannot sustain on their own. This includes highly trained staff, therapeutic supports, and specialized programming that go beyond what many districts are equipped to provide independently.

If responsibility for these services is shifted without a fully funded and clearly defined transition plan, the likely outcome is fragmentation—not improvement.

Research consistently shows that students with disabilities experience better outcomes when services are coordinated, consistent, and delivered by trained specialists within structured systems (U.S. Department of Education, 2023; Council for Exceptional Children, 2022). Disrupting that system without ensuring equal or greater capacity at the district level introduces risk to:

- Continuity of care

- Compliance with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- Access to specialized services such as speech, occupational therapy, and behavioral supports
- Retention of qualified special education professionals

From a practical standpoint, many local districts do not currently have the financial or operational capacity to replicate what SSD provides at scale. Without that capacity, we are not decentralizing services—we are diluting them.

And when services are diluted, students with the highest needs are the first to feel the impact.

This is not a theoretical concern. It is a predictable outcome when systems are restructured without proportional investment and planning.

I urge this committee to consider the following:

1. A comprehensive fiscal impact analysis that reflects the true cost of replicating SSD-level services at the district level
2. A phased and fully funded transition plan, if changes are pursued
3. Clear accountability measures to ensure that student outcomes—not structural changes—remain the priority
4. Direct input from families, educators, and specialists who are navigating these systems daily

Improvement is necessary. But disruption without infrastructure is not reform—it is risk.

Our shared responsibility is to ensure that any policy change strengthens—not weakens—the support systems our most vulnerable students rely on.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: DIANNA SAPIENZA-CARUSO		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 9:51 AM
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Stability & continuity matter greatly. There is specialized staff within SSD who have extensive training and experience. Student needs should come first. This is why I oppose the withdrawal from special school district.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: DR. TIM DILG		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: EMILY SAPIENZA		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 11:52 AM
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Hello,

I am a parent of a child with a speech delay who receives special education services in Missouri. Special education NEEDS to be prioritized, if not expanded, to serve the children who require these services in school.

If there are cuts within these programs in Missouri-it will become a vicious cycle of children not getting their basic needs met in an educational setting, understaffing and burnout of the staff. This will ultimately cost more in the end-with training costs of people who most likely won't stay, possibly children being retained in the same grade level (because inadequate staffing/cuts would not support children growing and meeting goals) and probable dangerous situations (for staff and other classmates) of children not being in appropriate settings.

Please do not cut any funding to Special School district-it would be fundamentally and consciously wrong.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ERIN CRAMER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
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This plan is not well thought out. The "unintended" consequences would be far reaching and painful. As with any other poorly-written education initiative, it might sound good in the elevator pitch, but once real questions are asked, the holes become insurmountable.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ERIN TAYLOR-STONE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: GABRIELLE HANKS		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
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CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 2:05 PM
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Special School District provides students with resources that individual school districts can not provide. As a parent I want my children to be able to have teachers, para educators, programs such as ABA , and use of assistive technology. If an individual district had to provide these services, they could not do it unless they dramatically increased their taxes. So who might suffer? The children. If districts withdraw from special school district our most vulnerable children will suffer. Vote no for withdrawing.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JENNIFER M SWANSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:43 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

My name is Jennifer Swanson, and I am a paraprofessional working in special education in St. Louis County. I am writing in opposition to House Bill 2933.

This bill may read like a structural change, but for the students I serve, it has real and immediate consequences.

In my classroom, students rely on consistency, routine, and a full team of support to access their education. I work with students who are nonverbal and use AAC devices to communicate. These devices require training, coordination, and ongoing support from teachers and specialists through the Special School District. Without that system in place, those students risk losing their ability to communicate effectively in the classroom.

I also support students who receive occupational therapy to develop basic skills like holding a pencil or regulating their bodies enough to participate in learning. Others depend on behavior specialists to remain safely in the classroom. These services are not optional. They are essential.

The Special School District model works because it brings these supports together. It allows for collaboration across professionals and ensures that students receive services based on their needs, not on the limitations of a single district.

Allowing districts to withdraw would fragment this system. It would create inconsistencies in services and disrupt the stability that students rely on. I have seen students make meaningful progress only after having consistent, coordinated support. When that consistency is disrupted, progress is often lost.

This bill also raises concerns about equity. The Special School District helps ensure that students receive services regardless of where they live. If districts begin to withdraw, access to services will vary, and students in some areas may not receive the level of support they need.

While districts would still be required to meet federal obligations under IDEA, meeting minimum legal requirements is not the same as providing high-quality, consistent services. Our students deserve more than the minimum.

House Bill 2933 would not just change a system. It would change the daily reality for students who already face significant challenges.

I urge you to oppose this bill and protect the stability, support, and opportunities that these students depend on. These students cannot afford for us to get this wrong.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2933		DATE: 3/25/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JOHN HENDERSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:00 AM	
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2933		DATE: 3/25/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JULIE KAUFFMAN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:00 AM
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2933		DATE: 3/25/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: KEVIN ANDERT		PHONE NUMBER: 314-989-8256	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY		TITLE: CHIEF OF CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND OPERATIO	
ADDRESS: 12110 CLAYTON RD			
CITY: TOWN & COUNTRY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63131
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:00 AM	
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2933		DATE: 3/25/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KEVIN CARL		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/24/2026 2:57 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

I am writing to express my opposition to this proposed legislation allowing individual school districts to withdraw from a special school district, particularly as it relates to the Special School District of St. Louis County (SSD).

In my 15 years serving as a superintendent in a SSD partner district in St. Louis County, I have seen firsthand the value SSD brings to our students and our schools. It has been a steady, reliable partner for districts across the region. SSD provides critical services—especially for students with disabilities—in a coordinated and consistent way that would be very difficult for individual districts to replicate on their own.

This bill creates real concern for the long-term stability of that system. SSD is built on a shared model, and when that structure is disrupted, the impact extends beyond a single district. Breaking apart a regional system like this would likely lead to duplicated services, higher costs, and challenges in recruiting and retaining specialized staff in already hard-to-fill areas.

There are also practical financial concerns. While the bill outlines how taxes and assets would be handled, the reality is far more complex and it could weaken the financial stability of SSD.

Most importantly, this is about students. Those served by SSD depend on consistent, high-quality support. Any disruption creates risk—both for student outcomes and for meeting federal requirements. Families rely on these services, and districts rely on SSD to help meet those needs every day.

At a time when our focus should remain on student learning and support, this bill introduces unnecessary uncertainty into a system that has worked well for decades.

SSD is a model of collaboration that benefits students, families, and school districts across St. Louis County. Weakening that model would not serve our students well.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you oppose this legislation.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2933		DATE: 3/25/2026	
COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KRISSY WEGMANN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:00 AM
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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2933		DATE: 3/25/2026
COMMITTEE: General Laws		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: LINDSEY MILLER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 1:00 PM
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Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Bill 2933.

I am a parent of a child who currently relies on services provided through the Special School District. My perspective is not theoretical. It is based on what my child needs every single day to access education and make progress.

I want to start by acknowledging something important:
 The current system is not perfect. Families, including mine, have experienced challenges with communication, coordination, and access at times. There is always room for improvement, and accountability matters.

But this bill raises a much bigger concern.

My concern is not whether services change.
 My concern is whether they remain available at all.

The supports my child receives are not basic accommodations. They involve specialized staff, therapies, and resources that require training, infrastructure, and consistency. These are not things that can be easily recreated at the individual district level without significant planning and funding.

If these responsibilities are shifted without a clear, fully funded plan, the result will not be improvement. It will be gaps in service.

And when gaps happen, kids like mine are the ones who fall through them.

Disruptions could directly impact:

- Consistency of services my child depends on daily
- Implementation of their Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Access to specialized supports like therapy services, transportation, and assistive technology
- Availability of trained professionals who understand complex needs

From a parent's perspective, this isn't about structure. It's about stability.

Right now, there is a system in place that, while imperfect, provides a level of coordination and expertise that my child relies on. If that system is changed without ensuring equal or greater capacity at the local level, we are taking a real risk with real children's outcomes.

I ask this committee to consider:

- 1. Whether local districts currently have the resources and staffing to provide the same level of services**
- 2. What a fully funded and carefully phased transition would actually look like**
- 3. How continuity for students will be protected during any change**
- 4. Input from families like mine who are directly impacted**

We all want improvement. But change without infrastructure is not progress. It is uncertainty.

My child does not have the luxury of waiting for systems to figure it out.

Please ensure that any decision made strengthens support for students, rather than putting it at risk.

Thank you for your time and consideration



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MARGARET HORN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:23 PM	

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I'm not in favor HB 2933 from a cost benefit and shared resource perspective. I'm the proud parent of 3 students in the Ladue School District. Two of my children have IEPs. If Special School District (SSD) is divided up, or many districts given the opportunity to leave, each individual school district would need to hire or pay for specialists. I'm thinking specifically of occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech language pathologists and in particular child psychologists. For evaluations to determine whether your child qualifies for services, SSD specialists come to our schools and observe children in their class setting. Without SSD and pooled funding and resources that it provides, our schools and home districts might not have funds to hire a full-time school psychologist for example. A school psychologist is usually one of the main team members to determine eligibility for the school during the determination process. So while not needed every day at a school perhaps they are integral to the IEP evaluation process. We as parents then may have to drive across the county to have our child evaluated at a school district that has retained a child psychologist. Child Observations would be done in an unfamiliar and restrictive environment. The data wouldn't be real because the child wasn't observed in the child's classroom setting. Some families and school districts may have a hard time getting a child to proper services. The wait time for supports and services would increase. I live within the Ladue School District and believe partnering with SSD has been a cost effective and beneficial system for my children who receive IEP support. Once again I am not in favor of HB2933 as it creates chaos. Our children are better served when we pool our resources.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MOLLY BOESCH		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 2:17 PM
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I would like to voice my opposition to HB 2933 as it is not in the best interest of students. SSD provides a variety of necessary supports and services to ensure students across St. Louis County continue to meet their goals, in education and in life. These resources will not be as available if school districts withdrawal from SSD. It will be children who will feel the negative impact the most.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: OTTO FAJEN		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-3202	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI NEA		TITLE: DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE POLICY	
ADDRESS: 1810 EAST ELM ST.			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL: otto.fajen@mnea.org	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 5:57 PM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: PAUL WEGMANN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: RACHEL VANAUSDOLL		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 7:22 AM
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Good afternoon, and thank you for your time.

I strongly oppose Missouri House Bill 2933.

The Special School District of St. Louis County is a specialized, resource rich system designed to provide high quality special education services. Individual districts cannot replicate that level of expertise and support on their own without significant cost. Taking this on independently would be financially crippling for many districts.

Rather than fragmenting this system, districts would benefit far more from deeper collaboration with SSD to strengthen services, advance equity, and support meaningful change within their own schools.

Students with disabilities deserve consistency, expertise, and stability. SSD already provides that.

Please vote no on Missouri House Bill 2933.

Thank you.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: RAGHU PENUGONDA		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/24/2026 6:29 PM	

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To the Members of the House General Laws Committee, my name is Raghu Penugonda, and I am writing on behalf of Saint Louis University’s Healthcare Policy Pod, a public health research and advocacy organization based at SLU to express our firm opposition to HB 2933. Our organization has been closely monitoring the movement of this bill, as we believe it threatens the stability of special education for the more than 23,000 students across 275 schools currently served by Special School Districts (SSDs). Families within our community frequently describe how SSDs provide essential support for children who are intellectually and developmentally challenged, offering not only academic instruction but also vital everyday life skills and specialized physical, occupational, and speech therapies. As volunteers with Kids Enjoy Exercise Now (KEEN), a national organization with a major hub of over 100 children in St. Louis, we have heard firsthand the deep concerns of families who fear this bill opens a path for school districts to withdraw and leave special education in a state of ambiguity. While we acknowledge that there have been serious allegations and lawsuits against certain SSDs, many parents at KEEN and throughout the St. Louis region believe that total withdrawal would harm their children by leaving special education in limbo without a standardized form of care. One parent shared to us a harrowing account of her son being pinned to a wall by a teacher and an SRO because his behavior was misunderstood as "aggressive," highlighting the desperate need for the specific professional training that SSDs are designed to provide. HB 2933 facilitates a withdrawal process that requires districts to return essential property, facilities, and , yet it fails to provide a guaranteed framework for the transition of care. By allowing districts to exit these established systems, this bill places vulnerable students in a position where they have no standardized protections or clear educational future until the withdrawing schools determine their own independent path, neglecting the immediate needs of children who require specialized care. Thus, we strongly urge the committee to oppose advancement of HB 2933.



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SARAH BOYER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:03 PM	
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To the House General Laws Committee,

My name is Sarah Boyer and I am writing to you today to express my opposition to HB 2933. I believe that when we talk about our schools, our primary goal should always be to keep kids first.

Instead of looking for ways to dismantle the systems we already have, we should be focused on improving them to better serve our students. My biggest concern with this bill is that it will create more gaps in access to services for students with IEPs. We know that special education staff shortages are already a major problem across the state, and I worry that allowing districts to splinter off will only make it harder to find and keep the specialized staff needed to meet student requirements.

We should be working together to solve these staffing issues and strengthen our existing support networks, not making them more complicated by breaking up the resource pool that a Special School District provides. Currently we are able to collaborate across districts to better meet student needs and I worry that we will lose that collaboration and knowledge. Moving toward a more fragmented system puts the stability of our students' education at even more of a risk.

I hope that we can find new ways to prioritize the needs of our kids. Thank you for your time and for considering my perspective on this important issue.

Sincerely,
 Sarah Boyer



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: SERGEI MARCHENKO		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: STEPHANIE HADFIELD		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:15 PM

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Testimonial Opposing Missouri House Bill 2933

By Stephanie Hadfield, Parent and Advocate

My name is Stephanie Hadfield, and I am the mother of three children—one of whom has relied on the Special School District (SSD) of St. Louis County since she was three years old. Today, she is an 8th grader who has faced profound challenges: severe ADHD, a sound system disorder that left her unable to speak until almost age six, anxiety related to school, and additional neurodivergent traits we continue to evaluate. She works with a psychiatrist, therapist, occupational therapist, and the Parkway Mental Health Team. Supporting her needs is a full-time job, and SSD is a critical partner in that work. I am not an educator. I cannot replace the teams of trained, specialized professionals who have lifted my daughter up over the past decade. SSD’s expertise, consistency, and deep understanding of special education are the reason my daughter has made extraordinary progress—progress that would not have been possible within a district operating alone.

From ages 3–5, she received 720 minutes of weekly early-intervention support through SSD, including speech, language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and social-emotional services. Those supports followed her into elementary school through her IEP. In Kindergarten, she was placed in SSD’s Speech Praxis Program—the only classroom of its kind in St. Louis County. She received 900 minutes of speech services that year, and 300 the next, in addition to what she was getting for social and emotional behavior, language, and reading interventions. This level of intervention simply would not have been possible without SSD’s dedicated programs and staffing.

When she struggled to read during the pandemic, her SSD case manager pursued extra training in the Wilson Reading System so my daughter could access a method tailored to her needs. She entered 3rd grade barely reading. She left 5th grade reading on grade level. Today, as an 8th grader, she reads passages alongside her peers—something I once feared she might never do.

In middle school, she receives accommodations, modifications, and specialized instruction across all classes. She learns math in a small, focused classroom, attends co-taught ELA, and receives individualized support in every subject. SSD doesn’t just fill gaps—it ensures she is never left behind. I cannot overstate this: the Parkway School District (and many other partner districts) does not have the resources, staffing, or specialized programs required to meet the full scope of her needs without SSD. If they did, they would already be doing it.

Missouri House Bill 2933 risks disrupting or dismantling the system that has made my daughter’s education possible. It proposes allowing districts to withdraw from SSD—yet SSD is the backbone of special education services in our county. If even a single district withdraws, the ripple effects will be felt by every child who depends on specialized expertise, coordinated services, and programs that individual districts simply cannot replicate on their own.

Teachers are already stretched thin. General education districts cannot suddenly absorb SSD’s

workload, staffing, training, and specialized programs. And not all parents have the time, knowledge, or resources to navigate this system as intensively as I have. Without SSD, thousands of children—children like my daughter—would be left behind.

My daughter's future depends on the stability, expertise, and comprehensive services that only SSD can provide. Her story is one of resilience, but it is also a story of what is possible when a system is built to support children with complex needs. SSD is not bureaucracy—it is the reason my child can succeed in school and in life.

Now is not the time to weaken special education services. It is the time to invest more deeply in them. In every IEP meeting, I always ask two questions - what is best for my daughter, and is there anything we aren't doing or utilizing that will continue to help my daughter? I always keep her top of mind, and I am a committed parent which will do ANYTHING to ensure that my daughter has the same opportunities for success as her twin brother and older brother. For the sake of my daughter and all children with disabilities across St. Louis County, I urge you to oppose HB 2933. SSD is changing my daughter's life. Please don't take that away.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: TAMICO JONES		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: THERESE SHAIN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 8:02 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Therese Shain, and more importantly, I am the parent of a student who relies on the Special School District (SSD) every single day. I am writing to you today because I am deeply concerned about the future of my child’s education and the risks posed by this bill.

When we talk about special education, the conversation often gets bogged down in "local control" and administrative logistics. But for parents like me, this isn’t about administration—it’s about my child’s life. My child needs stability. They need to know that the therapist, the specialized teacher, and the equipment they rely on will be there tomorrow. This bill creates a level of uncertainty that our families simply cannot afford.

The reason the SSD model works is that it ensures every student in St. Louis County has the same access to high-quality services, no matter which neighborhood they live in. Whether a student needs a specific type of speech therapy or a specialized career and technical program, SSD makes it happen by pooling our resources together.

I worry that if we allow districts to withdraw and redirect this funding, we are choosing "local control" over "student outcomes." The reality is that individual districts—even the well-funded ones—often lack the capacity to replicate what SSD provides. It is incredibly difficult to find and keep specialized staff or to sustain programs for students with rare or high-needs disabilities on an individual basis.

When we fragment our system, we increase the risk for every single family. Special education is most effective when we collaborate and share expertise. By pulling the system apart, we aren’t just changing a budget line; we are putting service continuity and the quality of our children’s programming at risk.

I am asking you to please put our students first. Our children deserve a system that is stable, equitable, and proven to work. Please vote No on [Bill Number] and keep the supports our kids rely on intact.

Sincerely,
 Therese Shain



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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COMMITTEE: General Laws			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. AC "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCACY		TITLE: STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE	
ADDRESS: P.O. BOX #1535			
CITY: O'FALLON		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63366
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 12:00 AM	
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BILL NUMBER: HB 2933		DATE: 3/25/2026
COMMITTEE: General Laws		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MARILEE SAUER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 3/25/2026 1:39 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

Something along these same lines should be written and passed by our elected officials to allow a group of residents to form their own public school within an established school district and pull the public funds from the main district to support the education of those students. Public schools are not serving all students properly either and residents should be allowed to form a separate public school that can properly serve the students of the public school district. .