

## A parent's guide to this year's state legislature

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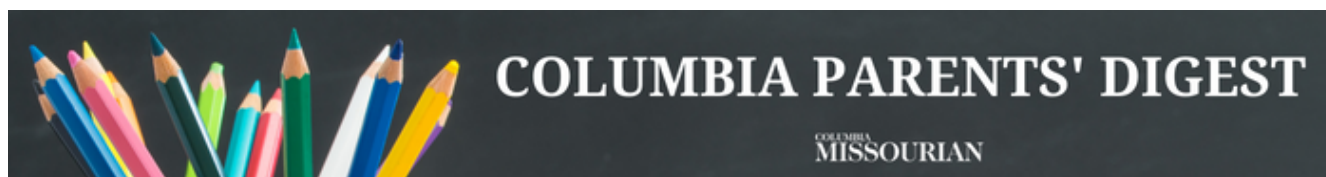
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## A parent's guide to this year's state legislature

By Emily Hood 1 hr ago

Welcome back to May's edition of Columbia Parents' Digest! We're so excited to have you back this month after an exciting municipal election. To all of our new subscribers on this list — we can't wait to bring you everything you need to know about raising your child in Columbia.

While last month's edition dove into this year's school board elections, this edition is digging deeper into the state legislature. With two weeks left in the 2023 session, the Missouri legislature has many bills in the works that could impact students and education.

### Education funding and teacher pay

[House Bill 497](#), which has passed the House, includes [many provisions to increase funding for education and teacher pay](#). A few provisions in the bill include raising the minimum teacher pay to \$38,000 and allowing the funding formula that calculates aid to school districts' growth over nine years.

### Open enrollment

State lawmakers have heard multiple bills about implementing voluntary open enrollment in Missouri. One bill, [HB 253](#), has passed the House and would allow students to attend any public school district of their choice that opted into the program. Federal and state funding would move with the student when they transfer.

### Parents' Bill of Rights

[Senate Bill 4](#), or the Parents' Bill of Rights, states that teachers cannot promote a viewpoint stating that any racial group is superior or inferior, that any group should be advantaged or disadvantaged, or that any member of a group bears responsibility for that group's past actions.

The bill, which passed the Senate, would also create a statewide transparency portal where teachers would upload their curriculum for the school year.

### Transgender athletes

The "Save Women's Sports Act" would prohibit [people from competing on athletic teams that do not coincide with the sex assigned to them at birth](#).

The Senate version of the bill restricts transgender athletes from kindergarten through college and expires in 2027. The House version of the bill applies to students in Grades 6 and older and does not have an expiration.

## Gender-affirming care

The legislature is considering many bills that would restrict gender-affirming care in the state. These bills would [prevent doctors from prescribing](#) sex hormones and puberty blockers or performing gender transition surgery on minors. [A version of the bill passed in the Senate](#) sunsets the ban after four years and includes a grandfather clause allowing those on hormone therapy to continue treatment.

Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey's policy [to restrict gender-affirming care for both children and adults was blocked by a judge](#) until 5 p.m. Monday. [Gov. Mike Parson has said that he will call a special session](#) if the legislature fails to pass bills related to limiting gender-affirming care.

## 'Don't Say Gay' bill

[Senate](#) and [House](#) committees considered versions of a 'Don't Say Gay' bill that would prohibit public school teachers and staff from discussing gender identity and sexual orientation. The House and Senate have not voted on either version of the bill.

Rep. Ann Kelley, R-Lamar, sponsored House Bill 634. During a house committee hearing in March, she said [she was unsure if this ban would apply to LGBTQ+ teachers when speaking about their own families](#).

## And don't miss our other education coverage from this month:



### Reading Judy Blume in Columbia

A new movie and Netflix series are likely to attract a fresh fan base for the "Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret" author.

[Read more](#)



### Battle seniors celebrate the future at annual College Signing Day

They have plans to attend colleges, universities and technical schools, join the workforce and enlist in the U.S. military.

[Read more](#)



## Miss Kuebler returns to Rock Bridge Elementary, now as Miss Missouri

Clare Marie Kuebler, once a student teacher there, participated in an assembly and worked with the Girls in STEM club.

[Read more](#)

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