



"Serving Missouri Home Educators Since 1983"

***FHE INFORMATION FOR HOME  
EDUCATORS ON THE  
MISSOURI VIRTUAL  
INSTRUCTION PROGRAM  
(MoVIP)***

Dear FHE Families,

June 2007

A home school friendly legislator recently sent out an appeal over the Internet for home educators to participate in the still developing "Missouri Virtual Instruction Program" (MoVIP). While well intentioned, the presentation was off on several "facts" and completely off with regard to home education.

The appeal stated in part:

- "There will be only a three week window of opportunity this coming May (2007) to sign up for FREE internet elementary and high school courses that will be recognized for credit toward graduation requirements . . .
- "One of the major providers is William Bennett's (author of the Children's Book of Virtues) 'K12' company.
- "The number of students will be limited, and public schools are knowledgeable and ready to grab the slots since they are paid for by the state. You can sign up for one course or an entire curriculum leading to a **diploma**. [Emphasis added]
- "Private schools can sign up an entire class in a subject in which they are having a hard time hiring a teacher. The cost is NOTHING...
- "This can be part of a home school curriculum plan. If 2 courses (I think....still in negotiations with the MO State High School Activities Assn.) are taken, the families have the option to 'dual enroll' at the local public school without having to take courses there. Dual enrollment would allow the students to be eligible for all activities, band, and sports practices and competitions."

First and foremost, THERE IS NO FREE LUNCH! While MoVIP may not create an additional cost to the family, it costs taxpayers. It remains to be seen how much the actual on-line service will cost, but the state is paying well at the "per student" rate to obtain services.

Although the statute (161.670 RSMo, passed as SB 912 in 2006), clearly states that a minimum of two service providers must be available, MoVIP has only one curriculum provider per grade level (a different one for elementary than for high school, no middle school planned for 2007-8). Since the legislator's letter went out, the contracts have been awarded and "Bennett's K12" (actually owned by junk bond convict Michael Milken, who hired Bennett to lend credibility to the program) has not been awarded a contract. Note that Bennett's earlier contention was that "there is no good evidence that most uses of computers significantly improve learning." (From "The Educated Child"). It should also be noted that you can currently pay for K12, Inc. directly at \$20-29 per course (depending on the payment plan & contract). K12, Inc. offers six courses for less than \$1200 per year. The director of MoVIP estimates tuition will be \$3600-4000 per year (for those not winning the lottery). Where does the extra \$2400 go?

The number of student IS limited (by funding, not by statue), but since MoVIP is running a lottery to fill the seats, no one school, class or family will have an opportunity to "grab" slots. In fact, according to MoVIP Director Curt Fuchs, one student from a family may get in, while the others are left out. Full time students will be "guaranteed a seat" next year, but part time student go back into the lottery and hope for the best (so much for continuity). And again, according to Mr. Fuchs, private schools cannot enroll an



entire class (each student enters the lottery), and the cost is NOT "nothing", it is approximately \$300 per seat per class. If the student's family gives permission, the local school will be notified and can count the student on the "IDEA Screen 15" rolls, to receive more taxpayer funds for students that may someday, or may never attend the local public school. The "seats" are assigned by area, with about 50 percent of the slots going to the St. Louis and Kansas City metro areas. And, should "seats" be left over from these areas, they are NOT available to other areas in the state, but are retained for the government schools to use for home-bound students (home-bound due to illness and/or injury.)

In 161.670 RSMo, at EVERY occurrence of the term "virtual school", it is prefaced with the word "public"! MoVIP is completely, 100 percent a public school. Enrollees in MoVIP are no longer home schoolers, but become, by law, public school students.

- As public school students, families are no longer covered by their HSLDA membership, as HSLDA does not represent public school families in legal matter with the public schools.
- Likewise, FHE will not represent families in any conflict arising from your involvement with MoVIP as a public school enrollee.
- Clarification that MoVIP is a PUBLIC school alternative (not an alternative to public school) is glossed over and obscured during MoVIP presentations to public school personnel and the public.

MoVIP offers NO DIPLOMA! The website suggests soliciting the public school to recognize MoVIP credits, or getting a GED, something true home educators eschew. They "may" offer a diploma if and when they are able to gain accreditation, but that in the unforeseeable future. (MoVIP courses will qualify towards a diploma in a public school program, subject to the local district's regulations.)

Failing to win the "lottery," former homeschool families will be "allowed" to pay TUITION! Despite saving Missouri taxpayers approximately \$8200 per year per student by not attending the "brick & mortar" public school, former home school families get to pay for the government education the Missouri Constitution guarantees! And, as noted above, the anticipated tuition rate far exceeds the cost of on-line programs currently available if you to contract privately.

Nothing in MoVIP's presentation suggested that enrolling would lead to acceptance by MSHSAA for participation in EXTRACurricular activities. Dual-enrollment has been around for well over ten years, and MSHSAA has never allowed a part-time dual-enrolled student to participate in extracurricular competitions to our knowledge.

The very heart and soul of home education is to avoid and reject government intervention, regulation and control of our children's education. Participating in MoVIP runs counter to everything for which the home school community stands. For public school students, MoVIP may be a way "out." For the home educator, MoVIP is a trap of government dependency and control.

Finally, any MoVIP curriculum will have NO faith based or religious component, except perhaps Humanism and Darwinism. While participation in MoVIP will not preclude your including your own religious beliefs, the content in many MoVIP subjects will likely run counter to your preferences.

Keep home schooling at home.

In Christ's Service to Home Educators,

Brad Haines  
FHE Executive Director

P.S. On page three of this document you will find a summation of the FHE talking points on the Missouri Virtual Instruction Program (MoVIP).





# The Missouri Virtual Instruction Program (MoVIP) Boondoggle



**SB912** states that ANY student who resides in Missouri REGARDLESS of location **SHALL** be eligible to enroll in MoVIP. The fiscal note notwithstanding:

- Using a “lottery” to determine eligibility violates the spirit of the law.
- Restricting the number of enrollees violates the spirit of the law.

In **SB 912**, at EVERY occurrence of the term “virtual school”, it is prefaced with the word “PUBLIC”! MoVIP is completely, 100 percent a PUBLIC SCHOOL. Enrollees in MoVIP are no longer home schoolers, but become PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS.

- As PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS, families are no longer covered by their HSLDA membership, as HSLDA does not represent public school families in legal matter with the public schools.
- Likewise, FHE will not represent families in any conflict arising from your involvement with MoVIP as a public school enrollee.
- Clarification that MoVIP is a PUBLIC school alternative is glossed over and obscured during MoVIP presentations to public school personnel and the public.

**MoVIP offers NO DIPLOMA!** The website suggests soliciting the public school to recognize MoVIP credits, or getting a GED, something true home educators eschew. They “may” offer a diploma if and when they are able to gain accreditation.

**The curriculum vendors have been selected, one for elementary and one for high school.** While there must be two vendors minimum per the statute, MOVIP believes they have satisfied this mandate by having one vendor each (though different suppliers) for elementary and secondary offerings. (The only thing we can assume at this time is that they will be secular and humanist in presentation.)

**MoVIP estimates 150 students per teacher**, communicating by phone, email and interactively on the web. At just three minutes with each student, that will fill 450 minutes = 7.5 hours (per day?) for the teacher. Three minutes is not much “one-on-one” time, nor will students benefit from hearing the questions asked by other students (one of the few benefits of large group educational settings).

**MoVIP** indicates that each student from any family will be considered *separately* in the “lottery.” Having one child in and one or more out will be extremely inconvenient for *former* home school families.

**Failing to win the “lottery”**, former homeschool families will be “*allowed*” to pay TUITION! Despite saving Missouri taxpayers approx \$8200 per year per student, former home school families get to **pay** for the government education the Missouri Constitution guarantees!

**Only FULL TIME MoVIP students will be guaranteed a seat the next session.** Part-time students (such as dual-enrolled private or “home school” students) will not be guaranteed a returning seat. This will destroy any chance for continuity in a single subject taken thru MoVIP.

**Of the 12 MoVIP reps**, nine are *guaranteed* to be government school advocates, two more may be (the legislative rep and the “at large”) and the home school “advocate” is actually a VIRTUAL SCHOOL ADVOCATE. (Of course, since MoVIP **IS** a PUBLIC SCHOOL, why have a “home school advocate at all?)

**Why would “quota” seats remain available to the “designated area only”** when one of the **SELLING** points used by MOVIP is the insignificance of the location of the student with regard to the virtual school?

**Note: 50 percent of all MoVIP slots are currently reserved for Kansas City and St Louis area students.**

