

Missouri NEA State Board Report

*Notes from September 15-16, 2014 meeting of the State Board of Education
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

The Missouri State Board of Education accepted the resignation of Commissioner Chris L. Nicastro effective December 31, 2014. Commissioner Nicastro thanked the board for their service. Commissioner Nicastro explained that Missouri is blessed with outstanding educators and thanked parents for their support of public education.

Activity report given by State Board members

Joe Driskill organized a meeting of Rolla area superintendents. The meeting was held at Fort Leonard Wood. The topic discussed was “why we need to work together to increase student achievement.” Victor Lentz in July attended the Normandy school board meeting. In September he met with Normandy school board members, Normandy school board president and Normandy Superintendent Ty McNichols. John Martin met with the Greater Kansas City Superintendents Association on “Accreditation with Distinction”.

Status report presented to the board on Normandy Schools Collaborative

Currently sixteen school districts are receiving 321 students on transfer from Normandy School Collaborative. Eighty-three other students met the deadline and are eligible for the transfer program. Due to one district not accepting transfers this year, there are 357 other students who have not transferred. Some of those students have enrolled in Normandy; others are waiting on the court to decide if the students can transfer to other districts before enrolling in school.

Only two school districts have agreed to accept the state set tuition amount of \$7,296. Normandy School Collaborative will have an added expense of \$2 million due to the other districts not accepting the lower tuition amount set by DESE for school transfers. Dr. Ron Lankford explained if the total number of students transferring to other school districts exceeds 500 students Normandy will face a financial crisis. Normandy School Collaborative has a budget of \$42 million, \$7 million less than last year.

Dr. Margie Vandeven informed the board that seven employees had resigned and will be replaced. Class sizes are well within the MSIP guidelines according to Vandeven. Commissioner Nicastro explained that there is a vast difference between the number of students on the attendance sheets and the numbers of students that have actually shown up to class. Until Normandy goes through the process of the official attendance count in September there are a number of “ghost” students on the district attendance sheets.

The state has been working on discipline issues the last two weeks. A number of discipline issues have occurred within the sixth grade. The Commissioner explained that sixth grade students have a huge adjustment going from elementary to middle school. Several discipline problems are from students who transferred out of Normandy last year and are adjusting back to Normandy. This adjustment period will continue until the issue of transfers is settled. Another issue that is being addressed is the substitute teacher shortage. DESE is looking at ways to have

an adequate number of substitutes available so that students do not have to go to other classrooms when a teacher is absent.

There has been one additional assistant principal added to the district. One-half of the teachers were hired one month before school started. In one building there are thirty teachers and twenty-two are new to Normandy and/or first year teachers. The professional development focus for that building is classroom management. DESE is focusing on effective leaders in every building. There are seven buildings in the district with twenty-two total administrators. One-half of the administrators are new to Normandy and/or new to the position. The three goals for effective principal leadership are: improving classroom observation, developing a leadership team within the school and building the instructional leadership capacity of the principals. Leaders are being trained on classroom observations and properly filling out observation forms. The goals are to receive consistent data to measure progress on a monthly basis. Leaders are looking at the level of rigor, student engagement and elevated student expectations.

Normandy Schools Collaborative is developing a collaborative culture. Schools will participate in data driven decision making by development of collaborative teams at each school. The teams collect, analyze, and act on student performance data. They then modify classroom instruction based on the data analysis.

Dr. Sharon Helwig explained that there are more new teachers than she has ever seen that are working with new materials and new curriculum. Ten new part-time Literacy Coaches were hired. These are retired educators that provide support at all grade levels. The Literacy coaches are helping with classroom students, student pre-tests and instructional practices.

Dr. Helwig explained two weeks ago that classroom management was an issue due to the new curriculum and the technology issues that had occurred. Professional development in school buildings will focus on behavior and discipline training this next week. It will include how to document, process and establish protocol for discipline issues. Dr. Helwig explained that when students are engaged and good lesson plans are developed, discipline will be under control. MNEA believes that proper support of teachers in the classroom is the key to discipline. Examples of such support include paraprofessionals to aide students with IEPs and support from building principals on discipline matters.

Board receives report on charter school performance

There are thirty-eight charter LEA's. Performance points are calculated appropriate to the grade level. Data is only reported if a school has three years of test scores. Some charter schools are only held accountable on attendance because they do not have a grade level that is tested or do not have three years of data. DESE is in the process of evaluating charter schools the same way they do a district run school in the state. DESE will then have the ability to increase the amount of support and intervention of charter schools in the state to meet MSIP standards. In the last two weeks DESE has met with all low performing charter schools and their sponsors. They are contacting the sponsor and expecting school improvement plans for their charters to bring the charter up to standard.

There are 10,211 students in twenty-one charter schools in Kansas City and 9,228 students in seventeen charter schools in St. Louis.

University of Missouri - St. Louis is granted sponsorship of Vernare Charter School

Vernare School is scheduled to open Fall 2016. Vernare will have twenty-two months of planning before opening as a K-2 school with approximately 200 students. Their goal over the next five years is to become a K-5 with over 500 students and eventually a K-12 with approximately 800 students.

Vernare will use the SABIS® education system. SABIS® is a for-profit K-12 system, which focuses on the core subject areas, along with arts, world language and character education. SABIS® will provide monthly support and audit their professional learning centers. Professional development for teachers will include access to a train the trainer Model. SABIS® will also provide experts that will work with Vernare to align the curriculum to the Missouri Learning Standards.

DESE to establish work group to examine existing charter school law

Existing state laws regulating charter schools were created in 1998 and were last amended in 2012. The signing of SB576 in 2012 lifted the previous geographical limits. With the anticipated increase in the number of new charter schools applications around the state, DESE has identified a need to convene a work group to provide recommendations.

The workgroup would consist of representatives of the charter school community, educational organizations, legislators, businessmen and DESE staff. State board members asked that the work group determine appropriate oversight by the State Board of Education/DESE of a charter school and how to terminate a dysfunctional charter school. Charter schools follow the same criteria as district run schools for accredited, provisionally accredited and unaccredited status. The work group will also look at the role of the Charter School Commission, early childhood education in charters schools and charters operated by not- for- profits. Meetings are scheduled for September 24, October 14, November 4, and November 18. Recommendations will be presented to the state board December 2014.

Board approves names submitted to DESE for the review of the Missouri Learning Standards.

The Governor's office, Missouri School Boards Association, statewide coalition of school administrators and professional teacher organizations submitted names to DESE to review the Missouri Learning Standards. House Bill 1490 required the State Board of Education to convene work groups of educational professionals and parents to review and recommend learning standards in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies by October 1, 2014. The bill defines persons and organizations that will nominate work group participants to be approved by the state board. DESE is waiting on names to be submitted by the legislature groups from the Speaker of the House, President Pro-Tempore and Lt. Governor.

Board adopts preliminary fiscal year 2016 budget request

Joe Driskill expressed concern that there is not sufficient funding in the fiscal year 2016 budget request to perform the tasks needed for the upcoming year. He gave four examples of the need

for increased funding: the need for continued community engagement, attention and expertise given to provisionally accredited districts around the state on a regular basis, funding needed for new initiatives; and the need to be pro-active with educators around the state. Mike Jones explained that there has been minimal funding and minimal staff to perform the tasks assigned to DESE staff. Mr. Driskill asked DESE to go back through the budget and request amounts actually needed to fund programs and the full time equivalent staff needed for those programs.

Fiscal Year 2016 budget requests must be sent to the governor by October 1. The board approved the \$6.2 billion request. DESE will provide the budget figures requested by Mr. Driskill, and the board will have a conference call meeting to discuss revising the FY16 budget before October 1.

In other business, the board:

- Discussed the criteria for “Accreditation with Distinction”. The board thought further discussion was necessary and no action was taken.
- Received an update on the veto session of the legislature.
- Received a report on the calculation of charter school payment.
- Approved reclassifying Swedeborg School District from Provisionally Accredited to Accredited.
- Denied reclassifying of Caruthersville School District and Jennings School District from provisionally accredited to accredited. The districts did not have three years of test scores in the accredited category.
- Approved Personnel Policy 000-009 Employee Background Checks.

The next meeting of the state board of education will be October 27-28, 2014. Missouri NEA will be there! If you have any questions, contact Brent Fullington or Ann Jarrett at 800-392-0236. Details of state board agenda items can be found at <http://dese.mo.gov/stateboard/meetings/agendas.htm>.

Respectfully submitted,

Brent Fullington, Vice President, MNEA

Brent.Fullington@mnea.org

Ann Jarrett, Teaching and Learning Director, MNEA

Ann.Jarrett@mnea.org