

## **Missouri NEA State Board Report**

*Notes from February 21, 2017 meeting of the State Board of Education  
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

### **Board members push back at sponsors of poorly performing charter schools**

Despite knowing that state law does not allow the state board of education to deny a properly filled out charter school application or renewal as long as they have a sponsor, the board did not approve the renewal of Academy for Integrated Arts on its first vote. After an extended break, the board came back and reconsidered the motion and then approved the renewal for five years.

University of Missouri-Kansas City sponsors The Academy for Integrated Arts, which serves 176 students in pK-6<sup>th</sup> grades. The school performs significantly below the Kansas City public schools in every measure except 4<sup>th</sup> grade English. The sponsor tried to defend the school by saying they got off to a rocky start, with high turnover in teachers, students, and leadership. In fact, their application states, "building leadership for the first two years of operation fell into the category of chaotic." The application for renewal also said, "The original home of AFIA was a challenging environment for learning, due to acoustical challenges (i.e., open warehouse without walls to stop noise from traveling), lack of natural light, and other impediments." State board members pushed back that children do not get these school years back, and sponsors have a responsibility to ensure charter schools are prepared to serve children well when they open. The UMKC's contract with the Academy states that if sufficient improvement is not evident by fall of 2018, the university will end their sponsorship. If that happens, the charter school could still stay open if it found another sponsor under current Missouri law.

Next up for charter school renewal was Confluence Academy in St. Louis, serving 2,800 students pK-12. Confluence Academy significantly underperforms the St. Louis Public Schools. SLPS earned 69.6% of MSIP points in 2016, while Confluence earned only 48.2%, the highest score it has had over at least the last four years. Board members expressed frustration that state law prevents them from taking any action on a school system that would have been unaccredited for years under MSIP if it were a school district and not a charter school. Despite this poor performance, some students have spent all of their K-12 years at Confluence. After intense grilling by board members, the board reluctantly voted to approve the renewal, since they had no other options. Confluence was sponsored by the University of Missouri-Rolla until 2014, when the University of Missouri-Columbia took over as sponsor. The board asked UMC to come back in one year with an update. The sponsor told the board that if the school is not improving in two years, the university will end its sponsorship. If that happens, Confluence can stay open if it finds another sponsor. Board president Charlie Shields stated that the state board of education does have oversight over colleges of education, who have a moral obligation to ensure students in a charter school sponsored by the college are well-served. Shields said the performance of charter schools sponsored by a college of education could be considered as part of the accreditation process of that college in the future.

### **Report on MSIP 6 and ESSA state plan**

While the draft of the Missouri Every Student Succeeds Act plan is not yet ready, DESE staff presented some outlines. The draft plan is expected to open for public comments any day now. ESSA requires states to accept public comments for 30 days and to show how the state addresses concerns submitted. The plan will also be reviewed by DESE's Committee of Practitioners, which Ann Jarrett serves on. Please email her a copy of any comments you submit, and watch for

notifications of suggested areas on which to submit comments. ESSA also requires DESE to consult with elected officials, so consider sharing your comments with your state representatives and local school board members. It appears that the deadline to submit state plans has been pushed back by the U.S. Department of Education.

DESE staff supports the broad outlines of the MASA plan for MSIP 6, and state board members appeared supportive as well. This plan separates state accreditation from federal accountability. It maintains the use of student test scores and measures of success-ready graduates. In addition, school districts would choose one of three areas to develop and implement an improvement plan. The three areas are effective and stable leadership and governance; effective educators and instructional practices; and climate and culture. Accreditation would include on-site visits to evaluate progress on the improvement plan. The suggested timeline is to pilot effective educators and instructional practices this spring, and convene workgroups on culture and climate, success-ready graduates, leadership and governance and process and reporting this spring, finishing work in fall of 2017. This is an ambitious timeline. Stay tuned.

### **Mentoring and beginning teacher assistance program standards approved**

Mentoring program standards received minor updates. The beginning teacher assistance program standards expand on state statute requirements for the first time. Ann Jarrett and Diane Livingston served on the MACCE subcommittee working on these standards over the last 18 months. The BTA standards now require ongoing support in the year of attendance. Missouri NEA provides that support through the NEA edCommunities Classroom Management group. All teachers are invited to join that group to contribute to discussions, share resources, and provide suggestions when new teachers post a question.

### **Establishment of HB 1490 fine arts workgroups approved**

House Bill 1490 requires the State Board of Education to convene work groups of education professionals and parents to review and recommend learning standards whenever changes are needed. Two separate work groups will be assembled to evaluate and make recommendations to modify or revise our current Fine Arts Standards. One work group for kindergarten through fifth grade standards will have sixteen members and the other work group for sixth through twelfth grade standards will have seventeen members.

MNEA encourages any interested members to contact their state senator, their state representative, and the lieutenant governor, provide your qualifications and request to be added to one of these workgroups. The majority of work group members are appointed by politicians, including several parent members. So if MNEA members know a parent with an interest in the arts who would be a good committee member, please encourage them to also contact their legislators. Missouri NEA believes all students deserve instruction in the fine arts, and student learning standards should be developed by educators.

### **Report on poverty measures for student achievement**

In 2014, the U.S. Department of Agriculture changed the National School Lunch Program requirements for free or reduced-price lunch allowing districts and schools with 40% of students eligible for the program to qualify for a 100% subsidy. Free or reduced-price lunch eligibility is the current proxy for identifying low socioeconomic status. Low socioeconomic status is an identified subgroup for academic achievement under both federal and state

requirements. Accurate subgroup identification is essential for providing appropriate support, as well as monitoring achievement gaps. This presentation introduced possible alternative metrics for socioeconomic status for academic achievement and accountability. The three options under consideration are direct certification for assistance programs, census poverty data, and length of time eligible for assistance programs. DESE recommends using two measures: multiple years on direct certification and census poverty estimate for the district. This item was discussion only.

### **Report on Teacher Workforce in Missouri**

- Since 2009, enrollment in teacher preparation programs has declined by 22% in Missouri and by 36% nationally.
- While most states have teacher shortages, Massachusetts, where teachers are paid well, have a current surplus of teachers according to supply and demand projections.
- In 2016, 66% of teacher demand was due to pre-retirement attrition, and 31% due to retirement attrition.
- 2013 Missouri average starting teacher salary was 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation at \$30,064.
- In a 2013 survey of teachers who left the profession, participants were able to select as many reasons as applied for why they left the profession. The results: 55% dissatisfaction; 43% family/personal reasons; 31% retirement; 31% to pursue another job; and 18% financial reasons.
- In 2015, fifteen certificate areas had at least one Missouri district where that position went unfilled. Fifteen certificate areas had positions filled by less than fully qualified educators.

DESE believes the data shows if we can fix attrition we can end shortages. To this end, DESE is pursuing the following:

- School leadership development
- High quality teacher education
- Encouraging districts to start Grow Your Own programs, in which Educators Rising can play a role

### **In other business the board:**

- Adopted the Missouri State Plan for Part B Regulations for Implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Adopted revised minimum requirements for school bus chassis and body.
- Heard reports on the 2018 budget and education bills being considered in the state legislature.

The next meeting of the State Board of Education will be March 14, 2017. 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/state-board-education/agendas-minutes>.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brent Fullington, vice president, MNEA  
Ann Jarrett, teaching and learning director, MNEA

[Brent.Fullington@mnea.org](mailto:Brent.Fullington@mnea.org)  
[Ann.Jarrett@mnea.org](mailto:Ann.Jarrett@mnea.org)