

Missouri NEA Missouri State Board of Education Report
Notes from February 9, 2021 meeting of the Missouri State Board of Education
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Cumulative GPA eliminated in all areas of certification

After a public comment period, multiple certification rules were amended to remove the required 2.75 cumulative grade point average for teacher certification. The required 3.00 GPA in content-area and professional knowledge course work remains in place. DESE staff presented research that indicates no correlation between cumulative GPA and quality teaching, negative impacts on male candidates and candidates of color, and increases to student debt as candidates try to bring up their cumulative GPA. None of Missouri's border states or other professional programs require a cumulative GPA.

Office of Childhood created to increase efficiency of programming

Early childhood care and development is a critical part of Governor Parson's workforce development priorities. In a 2018 report, the Bipartisan Policy Center ranked Missouri 45th in early childhood governance structures. One hundred and twenty-one employees will transfer to the new Office of Childhood at DESE as of August 28, 2021. The new Office of Childhood FY 2022 budget is \$660 million. This is not new money, but the combined budgets of affected programs.

The new office will include current DESE programs such as Parents as Teachers, First Steps, preschool Quality Rating System, Title I preschool, and professional development for early childhood staff. Social worker home visits, childcare subsidies, and related professional development will come over from the Department of Social Services. Nurse home visits, childcare licensing, safe sleep and safe cribs, Parent Advisory Council and related professional development will come over from the Department of Health and Senior Services. These moves create one team to incorporate several childcare and early childhood education programs, community and public health programs, after school programming, and professional development of the workforce.

DESE's ongoing COVID-19 response

Health: DESE continues to work with the Department of Health and Senior Services to coordinate statewide vaccinations for all education staff as part of Phase 1B, Tier 3. Commissioner Vandeven reaffirmed DESE's commitment to in-person instruction with multiple safety measures in place: masking, distancing, PPE, ventilation, vaccination, with mid-April as a possible target date for wide-spread educator vaccinations. Individuals are encouraged to register with their local health departments. Updated information is posted at www.MOStopsCOVID.com.

Learning: Most Missouri students are participating in on-site or blended models of instruction. Commissioner Vandeven is reconvening the Missouri Commissioner's Education Policy Committee (formed in 2019) to begin the work of "reimagining education" post-COVID-19. They will focus on three areas:

- **Attainment of Learning:** Some students are thriving while others are not, so how do we address this? We know retention does not work, but how do we help students catch up? What is the purpose of assessment, and can MAP be redesigned to make it more useful?
- **School Redesign:** Creating instructional environments that promote student engagement, equity, and innovation; address seat-time issues; consider flexible structures including competency-based learning, personalized learning, and blended learning.

- **Teacher Recruitment and Retention:** Retention strategies for this year, innovative pathway programs, diverse teacher candidates, and systems to support educator growth. DESE staff hopes to bring a recommendation to the state board in April.

The group will make recommendations regarding assessment, priority standards, instruction, and teacher recruitment and retention. Board member Kim Bailey is leading an effort to prioritize social-emotional learning. DESE partners with several outside organizations to make recommendations on including SEL in teacher training and providing supports for students and education staff. School staff can access free critical incident debriefs, recorded webinars on personal well-being, grief guidance, and more. Find information at <https://dese.mo.gov/traumainformed> .

Funding: The second Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund (passed December 2020) will provide more than \$871 million through 2022 to districts after the initial ESSER relief funds have been distributed. Districts continue to submit reimbursement requests. Board members discussed the availability of using ESSER funds to support teacher retention efforts but DESE staff indicated that the funds are not recurring and will be under local school district control. DESE developed a grant program to distribute targeted funds to non-public schools. Find more details at www.dese.mo.gov/covid19.

School Funding formula remains ‘fully funded’ in governor’s proposed budget

The Governor’s Fiscal Year 2022 budget includes a 2% pay raise for state employees and an incentive for the top 10% of state workers demonstrating high performance. The proposed budget recommends fully funding the state formula at \$8,525,909 and includes a recommended \$1 million dollars for School Innovation Waivers for districts that request exceptions to certain state laws to improve student readiness and teacher recruitment and development. Federal funding for the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program (\$4.3 million) was included, as well as \$1.5 million to support adult learning and rehabilitation services. The proposed budget includes over \$10 million dollars to fund Early Childhood Special Education and Early Childhood programs. Governor Parson did not recommend DESE’s request for vocational rehabilitation matching funds to draw down all available federal funds. He also did not request funding for the Grow Your Own teacher candidate grant program.

In other business, the board:

- Heard charter school sponsor evaluations of the University of Central Missouri and Southeast Missouri State University. UCM met four of six required standards and a remediation plan has been implemented. SEMO met all required standards. The board approved continuation of both programs.
- Received a report from DESE staff on Missouri legislative activity. Multiple bills have been filed in both the House and Senate focused on education savings accounts, so-called school “choice,” open enrollment, and charter school expansion and funding.

The next meeting of the Missouri State Board of Education will be March 9, 2021. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Rebeka McIntosh or Ann Jarrett. Details of state board agenda items can be found at <http://dese.mo.gov/state-board-education/agendas-minutes>.

Respectfully submitted,

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