



August 2026



Welcome to the Pulse of Professional Policy & Practice

We will keep this short, as we know you are focused on what you should be focused on—prepping for your students to start school!!!

If you a local leader, [please share this information with your members](#), or ask them to [subscribe to the MNEA Professional Practice Newsletter listserv](#).

The most significant parts of this life are immeasurable. Remember that every action that you take to support students and strengthen your community is the true measure of school quality. And it's okay (and preferable) that the core part of your role is incalculable; it makes your impact boundless.

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year. We can't wait to witness and elevate all of the greatness you will accomplish with students and as a community this year!



The top takeaways are structured as follows:

- **On the Radar:** What is actively happening right now in Jefferson City. This section captures current DESE data presentations, proposed rule changes, State Board discussions, or legislative traction.
- **In the Forecast:** The policy trajectory and long-range outlook. This is how state-level decisions could eventually ripple down to local school boards, building administrators, and daily classroom practice.
- **Our Resolution:** If applicable, this section anchors the external policy shift directly to our association's democratic platform, explicitly citing the MNEA Resolution that guides our advocacy and defense of the profession.

State Board Meeting Top Takeaways

[August 2026 Agenda](#)

The August 2026 meeting of the Missouri State Board of Education took place at the Jefferson Building in Jefferson City, Missouri on August 18, 2026.

The Board is (Finally) Full

• **On the Radar:** On July 30th, Governor Kehoe appointed the two remaining vacant seats on the State Board of Education:

- Michael McDonald, a math teacher from the Park Hill School District, is running to fill the teacher representative seat on the state board of education. This role is established in statute ([161.026, RSMo](#)) as a non-voting member of the board to help provide context and how policies impact practice.
- Vincent Schoemehl Jr., of St. Louis City, is a former St. Louis Mayor and the retired President and CEO of Grand Center, Inc. Mr. Schoemehl has previously served on many boards, including public and charter school boards, in service to his community.

These two newly appointed members, along with board members Robbie Meyers and Jordan Bradberry, will all go before the Missouri Senate for confirmation once the legislature is back in session.

 **The Forecast:** This is the first time in at least two years that the board has been fully appointed *and* the first time ever, since the position was statutorily created in 2018, that there has been a Teacher representative appointed. Further, the longest-serving member has only one year left in her term, and the second-longest-serving member has been on the board for 15 months. This new board, with a majority of new members, is still establishing its working dynamics and priorities, as the department's current Strategic Plan expires at the end of this year. More of their priorities will solidify as they work together in the coming months.

 **Our Resolution:** "The Missouri NEA believes that the State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education have an obligation to propose an education budget that will meet the educational needs of Missouri's students...The Association further believes that the State Board must maintain two-way communication with all professional educators" ([A-14](#)).

[Fiscal Year 2028 Budget Preview](#)

 **On the Radar:** As it establishes its overall priorities, the new state board wants greater oversight of the department's budget before September's approval vote. Currently, the FY28 Budget will be (estimated) \$400 million, which includes the \$190 million shortfall from last fiscal year. Additionally, special payments (e.g., 169 Day Calendar Incentive, MO Scholars Payment, etc.) totaled \$205,467,947. The FY28 budget will be revised based on feedback from this board meeting, and the board will vote to submit the budget by October 1, 2026.

 **The Forecast:** While budget presentations typically occur in August and September, the board's desire for earlier involvement will likely shift them to late spring or early summer starting in 2027 (FY29). The board is increasingly concerned about funding low-priority programs or those lacking proven returns. Consequently, their expanded oversight will scrutinize not only New Decision and Supplemental Items, but also core baseline items DESE traditionally rolled over based on DESE staff's input into core items.

 **Our Resolution:** "The Missouri NEA believes that the State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education have an obligation to propose an education budget that will meet the educational needs of Missouri's students. The State Board and the Commissioner must request sufficient appropriations so as not to jeopardize the future of public education in Missouri. " ([A-14](#)).

[State Board Stalls Setting Legislative Priorities](#)

 **On the Radar:** With a new strategic plan forming, the State Board has chosen to *not* move forth with the current legislative priorities that the board holds. They will set their priorities once the strategic plan committee has finalized its work and the board has voted to approve it. The members of the state board have shown that they want every part of the board's work—specifically, legislative priorities and the department budget—to align with the strategic plan they have approved.

 **The Forecast:** This new state board has put emphasis on their legislative priorities as a lever to utilize *more* with the legislature as they seek to repair and rebuild a relationship with the Missouri General Assembly, which has been frayed for years now. This pause on priorities until they are aligned with the strategic plan indicates this board's desire to maintain greater control over the department's intentional direction, both politically and operationally.

[A-F Framework Preview](#)

 **On the Radar:** DESE presented the framework for the new school and district letter grades that were requested by Governor Kehoe in [Executive Order 26-01](#). This presentation showcased the layout of the calculation and a preview of the grade card that would be publicly presented for each school and district in the state. The calculation of these letter grades will be based solely on student achievement and value-added scores on MAP/EOC tests (K-12), literacy metrics (K-8), and student graduation measures (9-12). The impacts on students, schools, and communities will be immediate if the state board approves this framework at its September meeting. These impacts include: Shortened School Calendars & Rushed Testing, No Public Input, Shutting Out Parents & Teachers before a vote, and an unclear calculation based on flawed metrics.

 **The Forecast:** The state board heard the presentation from DESE about this grade card plan, and they had both many questions for clarification and hesitation moving forward without hearing from stakeholders, mainly parents, as that is the primary audience of this reporting. They were also concerned about DESE's lack of mock-up data on where schools and districts would fall before they felt comfortable voting.

In September, the state board is scheduled to hear a final presentation on A-F and vote on whether to accept it as it stands. Because there is no official rulemaking process for this, the state board is not receiving public comment on this framework, which would have significant implications and repercussions for schools in Missouri. **Missouri NEA will soon release ways for educators, parents, and communities to communicate with the state board on the A-F policy before it goes to a vote. Stay tuned!**

 **Our Resolution:** "The Association further believes effective and fair school accountability systems must: align assessment policy with goals for high-quality curricula and instruction, provide for reciprocal accountability, ensure that representative community members play a meaningful role in the system, include a broad array of school quality indicators, produce interpretable and actionable results, and evolve and improve" ([A-4](#)).

The next meeting of the State Board of Education will occur in Jefferson City on September 15, 2026. The location of this meeting has yet to be announced as of the publication date of this Pulse. Missouri NEA will be present for that meeting.

Professional Practice Program Highlights



Evaluating Conditions for High-Impact Organizing

Introducing ECHO: Evaluating Conditions for High-Impact Organizing (Formerly WCLT)

MNEA is proud to announce the evolution of our former Working Conditions Listening Tours (WCLT) into ECHO (Evaluating Conditions for High-Impact Organizing). ECHO has the same goals and high-quality survey tools as WCLT—the analysis of working conditions in your district; it just has a different look and structure.

While WCLT originated as a joint, multi-step process involving in-person focus groups and district partnerships, we have redesigned ECHO into an agile, survey-driven organizing tool. Locals can now lead this effort independently to organize around working conditions and build collective power—though districts are still welcome to collaborate if they choose.

What Is New in ECHO?

- Streamlined, All-in-One Format: Focus groups have been replaced by an efficient digital survey that captures both rigorous quantitative metrics and rich, open-ended, qualitative responses.
- This is a survey inclusive of all educators; the instrument is intentionally designed for:
 - Active Professional/Certified: Individuals employed in certified public school roles
 - Active Education Support Professionals (ESP)/Classified: Support staff across public school settings
 - Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP): Non-classroom professionals providing targeted student academic and social-emotional supports
- Actionable, Truncated Reporting: Instead of long wait times for exhaustive external reviews, the MNEA Professional Policy & Practice Department will deliver a focused, easy-to-read report. Results break down data across 13 working conditions constructs, categorized by building level—Elementary (including Pre-K), Middle School, and High School—paired directly with representative quotes that reflect qualitative themes.

How the Timeline Works

1. Survey Window (2 Weeks): Your local opens the digital survey to your local membership, bargaining unit, or full district staff (if partnering with district leadership).
2. Analysis & Report (2–4 Weeks): MNEA analyzes the responses and returns a customized diagnostic report directly to your leadership team.

Equip your local with clear, defensible data to drive bargaining, advocacy, and worksite action. **Fill out [this form](#) if your local would like to participate in the 2026–2027 school year. Final approval for participation will be made by MNEA Leadership.***

* For those locals who have spoken to Samantha Hayes, please still fill out the form so that we have a running list of all locals who want to participate this school year.

Learning Opportunities



ELEVATE YOUR **PROFESSION**. FIND YOUR **PURPOSE**. HARNESS YOUR **POWER**.

MNEA Learns: By Members, For Members

Your Expertise. Our Platform. Statewide Impact.

The New MNEA Learns platform is available and ready for you! Go to mnea.org/mnealearns to log in and view the courses available.

Create Courses for MNEA Learns!

Do you have a skill, a book recommendation, or a course idea that could help your fellow Missouri educators excel to the next level as educators?

MNEA Learns wants you!

We are looking for instructional designers and instructors to lead book studies and build digital courses for MNEA Learns. Whether you're an expert in your field or a wizard at digital course design, your voice and expertise is needed. Please [let us know](#) if you are interested in creating MNEA Learns course content.

[Instructor Interest Form >>](#)



\$50 per hour: Graduate Credit from Augustana University

In a new partnership with [Augustana University](#), Missouri NEA can now offer Graduate Credit for learning that occurs in our workshops, courses, and Microcredentials—whether that be in-person or on MNEA Learns—for \$50 per credit hour.

Keep an eye out for these opportunities on mnea.org/pd or our social media accounts!

NEA Micro-Credentials

Professional learning
by educators,
for educators

[HOW IT WORKS](#)



Personalized

More than 80
micro-credentials
to choose from
based on your needs



Flexible

Work at your own
pace alone or with
peers



Job-Embedded

Earn by
demonstrating
competency

MNEA Microcredentials for Certification and Graduate Credit

Micro-credentials are self-directed, project-based professional development designed to directly support your professional practice and allow you to demonstrate mastery in a particular area.

[MNEA's Microcredential Portal >](#)

Time commitment: A micro-credential generally takes up to 15 hours of work to complete. If there are enough members interested, we can form a virtual PLC through the entire microcredential process. Email Samantha.Hayes@mnea.org if you would like to start a PLC.

Cost: Free for MNEA members. Non-members pay \$75 per submission.

Microcredentials for Certification: Initial Certificate (30 contact hours) and Career Continuous Certificate holders (15 contact hours*) need to complete Professional Development hours to uphold their certification. As long as your district approves NEA microcredentials for Professional Development, you can achieve these Professional Development contact hours via our Microcredentials!

"...(4) For the purpose of this rule, contact hours are defined as follows...

(C) One (1) professional micro-credential is equal to fifteen (15) contact hours of professional development."

*Educators with a career continuous certification are exempt from the 15 contact hours of Professional Development if 2 of the following are met:
1. Ten (10) years of state-approved teaching experience;
2. A master's degree from an accredited college or university; and/or
3. Certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, or for school psychologists, the certificate of nationally certified school psychologist issued by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)." ([DESE Rule 5 CSR 20-400.260](#))

Graduate Credit: Members have the option of **one hour of graduate credit per micro-credential achieved for \$50 through Augustana University**. Please check with your school district to be sure they accept these graduate credits towards advancement on your district's salary schedule. After you receive your digital badge from NEA for successful completion of your microcredential; then, enroll in Augustana University to receive credit using the link provided by NEA.

[Learn More](#)

VESI Partnership



CALLING ALL District Representatives

Help spread the word about an amazing offer for MNEA members

Receive FREE post cards to distribute to your teachers!



As you may know, members can complete up to **nine semester graduate credits** (which appear on an Avila transcript) for an annual fee of just \$250. To help spread the word, we are asking district representatives if they would care to distribute postcards to their local members about the benefit program.

We want all MNEA members to be aware of this amazing opportunity. Benefit includes:

- Three graduate credit courses per year (up to nine credits) for \$250
- Learn online at your own pace from the convenience of your home
- Over 30 online courses for graduate credit and salary advancement

To order 50-1,000 cards:

Email Mick Jackson at mick@virtualeduc.com with your name, district, and shipping address.

SAMPLE:

Hello Mick, please send 250 MNEA cards to Jane Smith (District) @ 123 Main ST, City MO 12345

Please call 1-800-313-6744 with any questions.

It's only \$250 for nine graduate credits.

Online graduate-level courses through VESI are backed by Avila University.



For one low annual fee of \$250 (valued at \$750), Missouri NEA members may take one course each term (fall, spring, and summer) to complete up to three graduate courses in 12 months. Or you may take two courses in the summer and skip either the fall or spring semester. Each course is two or three graduate credit hours, so educators can earn from six to nine graduate credits.

We want all MNEA members to be aware of this amazing opportunity. Benefit includes:

- Three graduate credit courses per year (up to nine credits) for \$250
- Learn online at your own pace from the convenience of your home
- Over 30 online courses for graduate credit and salary advancement

TO ORDER:

Email Mick Jackson at mick@virtualeduc.com with your name, district, and shipping address.

OR

CALL 1-800-313-6744

[Download a Flyer >>](#)



Professional Policy & Practice always wants your feedback, thoughts, questions, or suggestions, so this form will be available for you to enter your input at any time!

PROFESSIONAL POLICY & PRACTICE

Missouri NEA Professional Policy & Practice Department Comment Box

Whether you have a suggestion for upcoming resources, questions about policy and practice, or general feedback on our Professional Policy & Practice initiatives, let us know through this form or contacting Samantha.Hayes@mnea.org. Submissions take under two minutes and are completely anonymous.

mneawebbie@gmail.com [Switch account](#)



Not shared

Your comments, ideas, or questions

Your answer

Would you like someone from our team to follow up?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If you would like a follow-up, please enter your name and contact information below.

Your answer

[Submit Your Feedback](#)

Deep Dive: Recent Reads and Resources

Resources from our Partners Politics and Education

- [Hook Center Policy Briefs](#)
- [MNEA Essential Insight: A-F Framework \(updated August 2026\)](#)

Contact Professional Practice

Please never hesitate to reach out to Samantha Hayes with any questions surrounding Professional Practice programs or activity at the federal, state, or local level.

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Missouri NEA Professional Practice

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