

May 2026



Welcome to the Pulse of Professional Policy & Practice!

I often remind people that educators manage 12 months of work in 10, all while navigating a constant obstacle course. Whether you have officially crossed the finish line yet or not, your students, your school, your community, you made it! Each person in your community has grown in so many unique and distinct ways and I hope that each of you, no matter what position you hold or place in the state you live, takes a moment to appreciate what you learned in this last year. Take that reflection, write it down, and set it aside for next school year.

Then, take a beat; read for fun; watch a movie in the middle of the day; go to the restroom whenever you want; don't think about work for a while. You, your students, and your communities have earned a rest so that you can come back next year restored and, with your end-of-year reflections close by, another year wiser.

Reflect. Rest. Refresh. Repeat. You deserve it.

Samantha Hayes
MNEA Director of Professional Policy & Practice
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DESE and State Board Top Takeaways

Your Expertise. Our Platform. Statewide Impact.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and State Board Top Takeaways

Before the state board and DESE top takeaways, an insight that caught my attention recently:

"While we may not have been able to predict what would happen in April 2026 back in 2024, for example, continuing to point to the place where all of this [education policy] is headed is important and valuable. Otherwise, what happens is that we get trapped in this cycle where you're essentially just doing commentary of what is happening. You're the announcer of a baseball game, which is useful but it doesn't tell me what I should be concerned about in the future...it's play-by-play rather than analysis.

We should expect those that are tracking this stuff every day...to step back, to interpret the bigger picture, to point to where this all could be headed."

- Jack Schneider, [Have You Heard Podcast, Episode "Silicon Valley's Dystopian Vision for Schools"](#), April 24, 2026.

I heard this quote and took it personally. I am tracking this activity so that each of you can do the important work of educating students, building your local power, and leading communities. It is truly the work that you are doing every day in classrooms that is the most integral; I am merely here at the state level to interpret the macro policy decisions to point to how this could transpire for you and your students in your districts, buildings, and classrooms. While I give you the top

takeaways from the state board meeting and DESE activity, I want to ensure that you are given the interpretation of where it could be headed, as Jack Schneider has suggested. These are tumultuous times for public education; a lot of the attacks and hits that public education is facing today is the result of a 70+ year attempt at privatization, for various intents, of the education system in this country. We are facing fundamental shifts in the foundation and I am here to help explain what that means for practice, students, schools, and communities. The new structure of each top takeaway is 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:** This section anchors the external policy shift directly to the democratic platform of our association, explicitly naming the MNEA Resolution that guides our advocacy and defense of the profession.

Top Takeaways for the [May 2026](#) state board meeting.

The May 2026 meeting of the Missouri State Board of Education took place at St. Louis Community College - Forest Park Campus on May 12, 2026. The meeting focused on more charter school authorizations

Seismic Shifts in DESE Leadership

📊 **On the Radar:** In closed session during the May state board meeting, Commissioner Eslinger announced her retirement to the state board of education, effective June 1, after two years of serving as commissioner. Deputy Commissioner of Learning Services, Kelli Jones, also announced her retirement for June 1. Two of the top three positions at DESE have now turned over, with a rapid timeline; this is not a typical.

Transition plans and interim appointments have not been named as of this release of The Pulse. More information, and potentially a newly named commissioner, is pending in the coming months.

🌟 **The Forecast:** The state board of education hires the commissioner of education. State board members are appointed by the governor, confirmed by the senate, and no one political party can dominate. It is important to note that there is currently one vacant seat, one expired seat, and one expiring seat this summer on the state board of education. The state board could quickly see a complete turnover to a board that is made up of a majority appointed by Governor Kehoe.

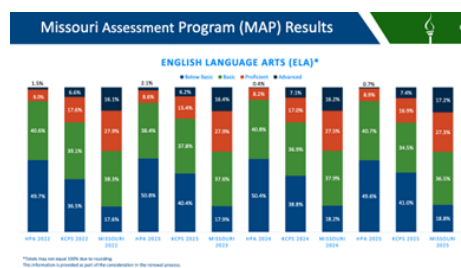
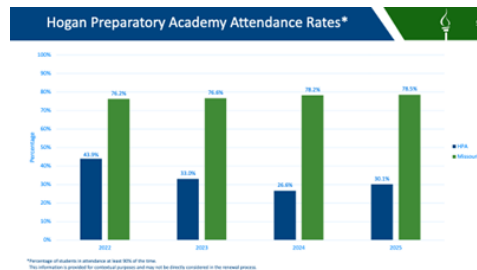
If Kehoe's other appointees are any indication of the direction of upcoming appointments, it will be a board that favors Charter Schools and "innovative" approaches that lean toward privatization, promote narrow and harsh public school accountability measures, and endorse the reduction in the requirements for educator preparation. If a board that supports these approaches names a new commissioner with a similar perspective, these directions could translate into practice that sees less funding for traditional public schools, a tightening of curriculum and testing required to hit student outcome targets, and more under-prepared educators from alternative certification routes.

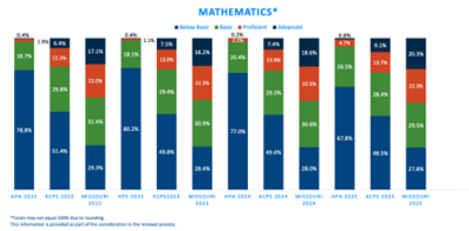
🗳️ **Our Resolution:** "The Missouri NEA believes that the State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education have an obligation to propose an education budget that will meet the educational needs of Missouri's students...The Association further believes that the State Board must maintain two-way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

Charter Renewals and Application Approvals

📊 **On the Radar:** The State Board approved Hogan Preparatory Academy for another 5-year renewal, despite Hogan's abysmal track record for student success.

Further, there was a charter school application for Julia Lee Performing Arts Academy (JLPAA) in the Kansas City area, where even state board members questioned the need of this school in the Kansas City region, despite this board being friendly to Charter Schools. Even with the doubt and questions that the State Board posed to JLPAA and sponsor (Missouri Charter Public School Commission) leadership, the state board approved the schools application to go forth and begin operations in the 2027-2028 school year due to the charter application technically meeting the required standards of an application.





The Forecast: The state board indicated a desire to have more influence and control over charter school applications and renewals going forward. While they generally accept Charters as a viable option for education in Missouri, they do not appreciate the lack of influence they have over what is presented to them. They have referred this issue to their legislative committee to address the fact that their hands are tied in regards to approvals and renewals if they "technically" meet standards set forth in statute. This is a state board that wants charters as an option where they can legally exist but they want to exert more control and influence over these entities and sponsors. Taking the legislative path here would take much longer but in the interim, St. Louis, Kansas City, and Boone County are all subject to this similar situation with JLPAA where a charter school could propose opening without rigorous goals or oversight.

Our Resolution: "Charter schools serve students and the public interest when they are authorized and held accountable by the locally elected school board. Charter schools should be authorized or expanded only after a district has assessed the impact of the proposed charter school on local public school resources, programs and services...Funding for charter schools should not diminish funding for the school district in which a charter school operates. State law should hold charter schools and sponsors accountable, make the operations of schools transparent and protect the rights of schools, parents, teachers and other school employees. For-profit management companies should not operate charter schools" (A-6).

Report on Proposed Rulemaking: Teacher Mentoring Standards

On the Radar: In a report to the state board, the Office of Educator Quality presented a report about the need to amend 5 CSR 20-400.380, Mentoring Program Standards. The purpose of the amendment was to clarify standards and program support of this requirement of educators.

The Forecast: This was just a discussion item to give the state board time to think about the current problems surrounding mentoring program standards. There is no action on this item that can be taken at this time, but if the state board does approve the proposed amendments for public comment, educators can submit thoughts about the new rule. We anticipate that the State Board will approve the amendment to the rule for public comment in coming months, which we will flag for action if needed.

Our Resolution: "The Missouri NEA believes that peer assistance and review programs can be an effective mechanism to achieve high standards and continuous improvement in the teaching profession. The goal of any such program is to provide assistance, improve professional knowledge and practice, and retain quality teachers" (D-20).

The next meeting of the State Board of Education will occur in St. Louis on June 23, 2026. Location of this meeting has yet to be announced as of the publication date this Pulse. Missouri NEA will be present for that meeting.

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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.

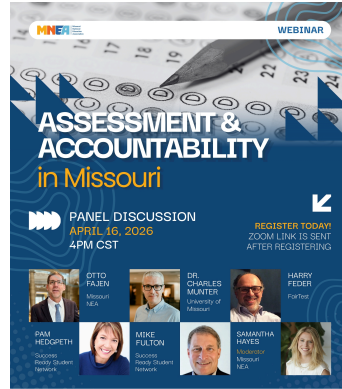
[Instructor Interest Form >>](#)



Coming Soon: 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!



Recorded Webinar: Missouri Assessment and Accountability: Past, Present, and Future

Didn't make it to the webinar discussion about assessment and accountability in Missouri hosted by MNEA on April 16, not to worry. You can watch the full recorded webinar on MNEA Learns.

Log in or create an account for free.

[Log In MNEA Learns](#)

Educators: A perpetual THANK YOU for your input!

I cannot stress enough how much the "Elevate Teaching" DESE workgroup needed practitioner input! We received 292 responses from [this survey](#). (It will remain open for the remainder of the school year. Thank you for taking the time to complete it. We would love more responses. Please share it with your colleagues.

The Elevate Teaching DESE workgroup believes that:

- Teachers shape the lives of many beyond the classroom.
- Teachers build a lasting legacy.
- Teachers lead, inspire, & grow others.

[Share the Survey](#)

Learning Opportunities

National Board Certification Assistance

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MNEA JUMP START

to National Board Certification
July 13-15, 2026
Jefferson City, MO

NEW!

Graduate credit!



Register Today

Deadline to Register: June 21, 2026

MNEA JUMP START to National Board Certification

“ I never would have been able to navigate this on my own. It's not just about learning about process and requirements, it's about building relationships to support you throughout the certification process.

Jenna Kowalek
MNEA Jump Start participant

REGISTER TODAY!

MNEA JUMP START to National Board Certification

“ Jump Start put me on the path towards success. The facilitators were very knowledgeable about the content. They made the process seem approachable and attainable. I'm confident in my ability to complete this process.

Kaitlyn Jensen
MNEA Jump Start participant

REGISTER TODAY!

MNEA JUMP START to National Board Certification

“ The National Board Certification process is immersive, and going to Jump Start is a great way to be introduced to this “world” without feeling overwhelmed.

Danny Pace
MNEA Jump Start participant

REGISTER TODAY!

Teachers report that obtaining National Board Certification is one of the most rewarding experiences in their careers. It is a journey filled with self-exploration and examining practices that leads to more success as an educator. Many Missouri school districts recognize National Board Certification with stipends or movement on the salary schedule.

- [NBC Stipends by Missouri School Districts](#)
- [NBC Certification Roadmap at a Glance](#)
- [National Board Areas of Certification](#)
- [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards](#)

Jump Start to National Board Spread the word.

MNEA National Board Jump Start is a comprehensive seminar designed to provide National Board candidates with important information about the certification process, time to examine component and Assessment Center requirements, the opportunity to plan how to meet requirements, and time to collaborate, gather resources and information needed to pursue certification — all in a supportive, constructive, and collegial environment.

This workshop is for first-time, returning, and advanced candidates who plan to submit any components of National Board Certification in the 2026-2027 school year.



MNEA JUMP START
to National Board Certification

Jump Start Session

July 13-15, 2026
Missouri NEA Headquarters
1810 E Elm Street
Jefferson City, MO 65101

REGISTER TODAY!

Member Fee: \$65 per day or \$195 for all sessions

Non-Member Fee: \$165 per day or \$495 for all sessions

Fees include lunch and morning coffee.

Deadline to Register: **June 21, 2026**

Deadline to register: **June 21**

Registration may close earlier if we reach the maximum capacity of 40 participants.

Member Fee: \$65 per day or \$195 for all sessions

Non-Member Fee: \$165 per day or \$495 for all sessions

Fees include lunch and morning coffee.

Read More & Sign Up >>

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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

Professional Practice Program Highlights



The NEA is proud to continue its partnership with *Making Gay History* (MGH), a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing the history of the LGBTQ+ civil rights movement to life through first-person storytelling. Through its acclaimed podcast—now with more than 150 episodes and over 7.5 million downloads worldwide—MGH preserves and amplifies the voices of activists whose stories are often absent from traditional curricula.

Building on the success of our inaugural 2023–2024 MGH/NEA Teaching Fellowship, we are pleased to announce the launch of our **second Fellowship cohort**. The first cohort brought together 18 classroom teachers who developed 14 high-quality [lesson plans](#) using archival audio from the MGH podcast. These lessons are now publicly available and are helping educators nationwide meaningfully integrate LGBTQ+ history into their classrooms. Fellowship participants consistently described the experience as transformative and have shared their work at the CRSJ Conference for two consecutive years.

About the 2026–2027 Fellowship

This second cohort will continue the creation of classroom-ready lessons while also contributing to the development of an NEA online course. This course will allow educators beyond the Fellowship to build their knowledge and skills asynchronously. For educators seeking additional advocacy tools to support this work in their schools or districts, the Fellowship will also offer clear connections to Campaign Lab. Importantly, educators from both cohorts will come together to strengthen a growing community of practice—an element of the Fellowship that participants identified as especially impactful.

Who Should Apply

We encourage applications from experienced educators who:

- Have **5–10 years of classroom experience**
- Are passionate about teaching LGBTQ+ history
- Have experience creating effective lesson plans
- Are currently able to implement the lesson they develop, to the extent possible given local policies and administrative support
- Are reflective, intentional educators committed to student impact
- Are able to navigate challenges and potential pushback with care and professionalism

Applicants do not need prior familiarity with the MGH podcast but should be prepared to engage deeply with multiple episodes in order to select one that aligns with their curriculum and students' needs. In selecting Fellows, we will prioritize diversity in geography, identity, and subject-area focus to best serve NEA's broad and diverse membership.

Time Commitment

Fellows must be able to attend **all sessions of the Virtual Academy**, which will **not be recorded**:

Academy dates (10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. PT / 1:00–5:00 p.m. ET):

- July 28, 2026
- July 29, 2026
- July 30, 2026

Plus, ONE of the following:

- August 12, 2026, 1:00–5:00 p.m. PT / 4:00–8:00 p.m. ET
- August 15, 2026, 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. PT / 1:00–5:00 p.m. ET

Participants will receive a **\$1,200 stipend** upon completion and acceptance of their lesson plan.

Application and Resources

Applications are due **June 14, 2026**:

👉 <https://bit.ly/mgh-nea>

Additional resources are attached and linked to help educators learn more:

- Fellowship infographic (attached)
- *Meet Making Gay History*: https://youtu.be/UhXqb_275jM
- Hear from past participants: https://youtu.be/DEgwhsit_Y
- Lesson plans created by NEA members: <https://makinggayhistory.org/resources-for-educators/>

Please share this opportunity with your members as appropriate. Should you have any questions, Anthony Brisson, Senior Policy/Program Analyst in the Human and Civil Rights Department, can be reached at abrisson@nea.org.

As always, thank you for your leadership and partnership.

Mil gracias,
Rocío Inclán
Senior Director
NEA Center for Racial and Social Justice

Professional Practice Program Highlights



CALLING ALL District Representatives

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Receive FREE post cards to distribute to your teachers!



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
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- Over 30 online courses for graduate credit and salary advancement



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Working Conditions Listening Tours

Perspective from a Columbia MNEA leader

Noelle Gilzow, Columbia MNEA President, sat down with MNEA Director of Professional Policy & Practice Samantha Hayes to describe her experience in partnering with district administration to perform a Working Condition Listening Tour in Columbia Public Schools. Listen to her perspective and experience with implementing WCLT.

[Listen Now >](#)

Please explore the reports that we have completed during the 2024-2025 School Year.

- [Pattonville Working Conditions Report](#) (Fall 2024)
- [Columbia Public Schools Working Conditions Report](#) (Spring 2025)
- Parkway School District (Spring 2026)

In addition to the reports that your district receives from external evaluators, your local also gets a personalized, curated Action Report that includes contract language examples; MNEA and NEA resources, toolkits, and opportunities; and references to endorsed organizations.

This program is looking for four schools to partner with for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 school years. We have updated our requirements to implement WCLT in your district; if you would like to see new avenues forward for WCLT in your district, please contact Samantha Hayes, your UniServ Director, or any MNEA Leadership if your local is interested in participating in the next round of pilot schools!

Professional Policy & Practice Communication and Feedback

MNEA Professional Policy & Practice is always open to your feedback. Submit your input at any time!



PROFESSIONAL POLICY & PRACTICE

Missouri NEA Professional Policy & Practice Department Communication Preference Survey

Help the Professional Policy and Practice Department understand how you prefer to receive information regarding their updates and resources.

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

Not shared

Which of the following communication methods do you prefer for receiving information from the Professional Policy and Practice Department? (Select all that apply)

- Email Newsletter (Monthly Newsletter - The Professional Policy & Practice Pulse)
- Dedicated MNEA Website Page/Section
- Short Video Updates (e.g., on YouTube or social media)
- Podcast/Audio Segments
- Social Media Posts (e.g., Facebook, X)
- Webinars or Virtual Information Sessions
- In-person Presentations/Workshops
- Other: _____

Do you have any comments or suggestions regarding the Professional Policy and Practice Department's communication?

Your answer _____

Submit

Clear form

[Submit Feedback >>](#)

Partnerships

Missouri Job Board by Nimble

Free job search tools for Missouri teachers

Nimble is excited to announce the continuation of its partnership with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to provide [free, innovative job search tools](#) designed to make finding a great teaching job easier than ever.

Nimble offers the only job search tools built around what teachers truly need, making it faster and easier to find a job you'll love. Teachers create a profile and can apply to multiple jobs in seconds. With job listings from every school in Missouri housed in one up-to-date hub, teachers can see the full picture of opportunities available to them. Smart filters—like commute times, salary schedules, and more—save valuable time when searching for the right-fit job.

You can also receive personalized job matches tailored to your preferences. Take the research-based preferences quiz to highlight schools where you're most likely to thrive. Nimble also gives you early access to principals for real conversations, so you can get to know schools beyond their job postings.

All of these tools are accessible through the built-in personal workspace that keeps your entire search organized from start to finish. The result: an easier path to finding the right school, quick access to every job in your area, and the confidence to choose the role that fits you best.

[Get started by completing your profile](#): Be discovered by schools hiring today. Find roles that fit your life and goals – and connect directly with principals who are ready to hire.

Share [this flyer](#) with teachers you know looking for a teaching job they'll love.

Great teachers change lives

Nimble's technology helps schools find amazing educators for every classroom



Deep Dive: Recent Reads and Resources

Professional Practice

- [How a District Stopped Relying on 'One-and-Done' Professional Development](#)
- [Gut Level Teacher Reflection](#) (for End of Year reflective moments)

Resources from our Partners

- [Hook Center Policy Briefs](#)

Politics and Education

- [The Destruction of Our Rural Schools](#) by MNEA Vice President, Andy Slaughter!
- [What Does a "Learning Recession" Mean?](#)
- As a response to articles like [these](#)
- [Eliminating the income tax would create a \\$5 billion hole in Missouri's budget, leading to cuts for local public schools](#)
- [Legislative Overload in Missouri Public Education](#)

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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800-392-0236



Missouri NEA Professional Practice

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