



October 2026



Forward

Welcome to the Pulse of Professional Policy & Practice

Amid the shifting ethos around education at so many levels, I am grateful for the educators who provide stability for students every single day.

Samantha Hayes
MNEA Dir. of Professional Policy & Practice

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

Same format, new modality. The Pulse welcomes new audio updates for policy action at the state level. You will still get text updates linked to source materials, but most updates will come via audio so you can fit them in during your busy days.

[Listen Now](#)



State Board Meeting Top Takeaways

[October 2026 Agenda](#)

The October 2026 meeting of the Missouri State Board of Education took place in Jefferson City, Missouri, on Oct. 20, 2026.

DESE Leadership Shakeup (again)

- **DESE Leadership Transition:** Dr. Stacey Preis resigned as Interim Commissioner before closed session on Tuesday. Her resignation comes amid ongoing furor surrounding the proposed A–F school grading system and the department’s FY28 budget request that contributes to a [\\$270 million funding shortfall](#) for education if the legislature acts upon the request. Deputy Commissioner Lisa Sireno has been named Interim Commissioner despite strong rumors that Cindy O’Laughlin would be named as interim this week.
- **National Commissioner Search Vendor Selected:** The Board’s search committee recommended hiring [K-12 Search Group](#) to manage the national search for the next permanent commissioner; this is a firm that has not led a state commissioner-level search, but they were selected due to their experience working in states where reform initiatives align with Missouri’s goals. The board initially hoped to have the commissioner selected before Missouri’s 2027 legislative session, but that seems unlikely with the delay in selecting a vendor. The [National Association for State Boards of Education](#) (NASBE) will also be a third party supporting the board with the search.
- **A–F "School and District Grade Cards" Update**
 - DESE modeled 2024–25 baseline grade distributions under the original framework, which initially highlighted a regressive relationship between high-poverty districts and low letter grades.
 - To address fairness, DESE and technical advisors proposed shifting to a "growth-to-proficiency" (GTP) ladder approach and increasing growth weights (potentially up to 40%) so high-need schools are not unjustly penalized.
 - No formal action was taken at the October meeting. DESE has posted a [draft technical guide](#) for how the grade cards are calculated. Further, DESE will share embargoed data with districts ahead of proposed revisions and an anticipated final vote in December.
 - During this [presentation](#), DESE claimed much stakeholder engagement; however, teachers and parents have not been explicitly consulted or

surveyed.

- **New Strategic Plan Topline Goals for 2035:** Working with [Bellwether](#) , the Board reviewed proposed 10-year targets to reach 60% proficiency in 3rd-grade ELA and 70% proficiency in 4th-grade math by 2035. Board members stressed that the General Assembly must provide adequate funding so schools are not set up to fail; they did not mention how they did not request the amount that would be needed to reach these two targets.
- **Key Licensure Rule Changes (via the Consent Agenda):** The Board approved orders of rulemaking to [rescind 5 CSR 20-400.210](#) (eliminating the ABCTE license-to-teach rule) and [amend 5 CSR 20-400.380](#) (mentoring standards toolkit), while [standardizing certification requirements](#) to 30 content hours and 24 pedagogy hours across middle, secondary, and K-12 areas.
- **Funding Modernization Task Force:** The next meeting of the [Missouri School Funding Modernization Task Force](#) has been postponed until after the November election. At the Board meeting on Tuesday, the rationale for the cancellation was that there were scheduling conflicts, but there is other buzz that the task force was cancelled because the modeling from the proposed formula options showed how much Missouri has been underfunding education.

The next meeting of the State Board of Education will occur in Jefferson City on December 15, 2026. Missouri NEA will be present for that meeting.

Please see MNEA's recent press release [here](#).

Member Action Highlights



Check out the numbers on our recent action on A-F Petition, Letters, and Social Media!

[FB](#) | [IG](#)

You all were champions for getting your voices out there when there were few avenues for educators and parents to be heard. While the State Board ultimately fulfilled Kehoe's A-F School Grading Scheme and did not vote in a way that benefits students and communities, they are fully aware of the force of Missouri NEA. We will continue to raise our voices as more consequential decisions come — trust me, there are more on the way. Stay tuned for actions to be taken at critical junctions in the policy process.

More than a Letter by the Numbers:

- **More than a Letter Petition:** 1,441 (This is more signatures than the number of people the [PRiME Center](#) said supported A-F systems.)
- **More than a Letter, Letter Campaign:** 96 Letters sent to the State Board

Your Action does make a difference, and this is not the end of advocacy for this and additional (i.e. budget) policies. We have various engagement opportunities to drive change on these policies.

- Keep updated with the following resources:
 - MNEA [Action Webpage](#)
 - [MNEA Legislative Update Listserv](#) (Otto Fajen)
 - [Professional Practice Newsletter](#) (Samantha Hayes)
- Mark your calendars for your [Capitol Action Day](#) this year

Professional Practice Partnership Highlights



Elections, Now What?

Join the Hook Center for Educational Leadership & District Renewal for a post-election webinar featuring experts who will review the election outcomes and implications for Missouri's PK-12 education landscape, discuss key issues to watch in 2027, and how educational leaders can stay informed and prepared in the months ahead. Don't miss this opportunity to hear informed analysis and ask your questions in real time.

- Date: Thursday, November 12th
- Time: 12:00 - 1:00 pm
- Location: Zoom
- Register Now: https://umsystem.zoom.us/meeting/register/IxxZ_XAqS-W-yX4Ycej7ng

Questions? Email hookcenter@missouri.edu. For more information, visit the [Hook Center website](#).

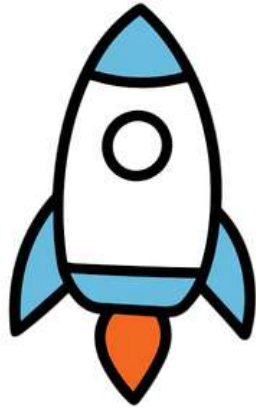
Learning Opportunities

National Board Assistance - Boost Day November 7!

These workdays are for all National Board Certification first-time candidates, advanced candidates, and renewal candidates submitting one or more components during the 2026-2027 school year. The MNEA NBCT Network provides this free opportunity for candidates. Current NBCTs are invited to register to mentor candidates and assist with logistics.

Bring your component work and questions for this workday.

REGISTER TODAY: IT'S FREE >>



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

Questions? Contact Program Services
Administrative Assistant Olivia Compton
(olivia.compton@mnea.org, (417) 569-1401).

MNEA Foundation Fall Conference & Gala Registration Open



Upcoming Events

Nov. 13-15	Nov. 14	Nov. 15
MNEA Foundation Fall Conference Keynote Speaker: Cornelius Minor	MNEA Foundation Gala Keynote Speaker: Wade Rouse	MNEA-PAC Sustainer Legislative Brunch Must be an MNEA-PAC sustainer to attend

mnea.org/fallconf

Nov. 13-15, 2026

Stephens College
Columbia, MO

The member-led MNEA Foundation Fall Conference will be November 13–15, 2026, at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri—and you won't want to miss it. Join union members from across the state for an inspiring weekend of solidarity, professional learning, and celebration!

Keynote Speakers:

- **Friday Evening: Cornelius Minor!** Cornelius Minor is a Brooklyn-based educator who works with teachers, school leaders, and leaders of community-based organizations to support equitable literacy reform in cities (and sometimes villages) worldwide. His latest book, *We Got This*, explores how creating more equitable school spaces is embedded in our everyday choices—specifically, the choice to really listen to kids. [Blog](#) | [Website](#)
- **Saturday Gala: Wade Rouse (Pen Name: Viola Shipman)** Wade Rouse is a USA TODAY, Publishers Weekly, and #1 internationally bestselling author of 21 books, including memoirs, novels, and holiday novellas. His work has been translated into nearly 30 languages, and several novels have been optioned for film and television. His books have been featured by NBC's Today Show, selected as Indie Next Picks, and recognized as Michigan Notable Books. A former journalist and People magazine reporter, Rouse has also written for publications including Time, Good Housekeeping, Forbes, and Writer's Digest.

REGISTER TODAY: IT'S FREE >>

Friday, Nov. 13: Opening Session & Keynote

- Registration: 4–8 p.m.
- General Session: 6–8 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 14: Member-Led Professional Learning Workshops

- Registration: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
 - Sessions: 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
- [Tentative Agenda with Session Descriptions](#) (PDF)

Saturday Evening: 2nd Annual MNEA Foundation Gala ([must purchase tickets](#))

- VIP Pre-party: 6–7 p.m.
- GALA Dinner Presentation: 7–9 p.m.
- GALA After-Party: 9–11 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 15: MNEA-PAC Sustainer Legislative Brunch (for PAC Sustainers only, [Sign Up to Give](#))

- Exclusive, in-depth conversation with key Missouri legislators regarding the issues that matter most to educators: 9–11 a.m.

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.*



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 >>](#)

Course Highlight

This month, we are highlighting the MNEA Treasurer's Training. This training is not just for treasurers. If you are a leader in your local, you may want to take this course, too. Learn more by logging in MNEA Learns.



with CFO Karen Struempfl



\$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

We have POSTCARDS! If you would like postcards to hand out to your membership, please let Samantha Hayes or Olivia Compton know!

Samantha.Hayes@mnea.org
Olivia.Compton@mnea.org

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 POSTCARDS:

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!

Submit Your Feedback

Deep Dive: Recent Reads and Resources

- [MNEA Essential Insight for A-F Framework](#)
- [Missouri Schools Face \\$270 Million Gap in Funding](#)
- [*On The Clock: The Centrality of Time in Teacher Work*](#)
- [Hook Center Policy Briefs](#)

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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