

Missouri NEA Missouri State Board of Education Report

*Notes from October 6 and November 10, 2020 meetings of the Missouri State Board of Education
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

October 6, 2020 meeting of Missouri State Board of Education

State board members approved final rule updates on daily attendance reporting. School districts that have received department approval for AMI-X plans prior to their implementation may claim attendance hours for distanced instruction as part of fixed blended instruction during quarantine, and intermittent blended instruction. Attendance for students who receive blended instruction will be calculated using the individual student actual in-person rate for the year, for both in-person and distance learning days. Students enrolled in a public school and completing all-virtual coursework receive an assumed 94% attendance rate for the course.

Hours associated with distanced instruction learning as part of fixed blended instruction and intermittent blended instruction are considered hours in session for the purposes of establishing minimum calendar requirements per sections 163.021 and 171.031, RSMo.

Added definitions:

Blended instruction: A pattern of onsite and distanced instruction that includes a minimum of two full days of onsite instruction.

Instruction During Quarantine: An individual student or a group of students, such as a classroom or bus roster, receive distanced instruction for an identified period of time to protect public health.

Intermittent Blended Instruction: Students in an entire school building or LEA receive distanced instruction during a period of interruption to the planned pattern. The planned pattern of onsite or fixed blended instruction is interrupted by local conditions that prevent any onsite instruction.

November 10, 2020 meeting of Missouri State Board of Education

Board members approved rule applying attendance rules described above to charter schools.

Board approves withdrawal of proposed rule to permanently reduce substitute certification requirements

State board members granted the request of DESE staff to withdraw the permanent rule changes which would lower substitute certification requirements. Missouri NEA members submitted 169 of the 284 comments received. Of these, 41 comments were in favor of the changes and 243 were against. The proposed permanent rule would grant anyone who passes a background check and completes a 20-clock hour online training to obtain a four-year substitute certificate which is renewable. Missouri NEA believes lowering qualifications in lieu of raising salaries and improving working conditions undervalues the importance of quality educators and sets a bad precedence.

This lowered standard is already in place due to the emergency rule adopted by the board in August 2020. DESE staff writes “The emergency amendment garnered significant interest in this alternate path to acquiring a substitute certificate and remains in effect until February 28, 2021. This

increased participation will allow for a thorough review of the impact of this change. Due to the brief amount of time available to collect and analyze data on the effectiveness of substitute teachers who have taken the online training, the Department has determined that it is prudent to withdraw this proposed amendment to allow additional time for study and consideration of an online training option.”

Governor Parson provided CARES Act funding to pay for Missouri residents to enroll in the online training to become a substitute. The number of new substitute certifications was down from March 2020, but up for October 2020 which is approximately 39% more than the number of certifications in October 2019. So far, it appears to be up in November 2020, although it is still 16% lower than the year-to-date from 2019.

Twenty-seven hundred people have registered for online substitute training, but as of November 9, only seven hundred registrants completed training and applied for certification. Based on the zip codes, these new substitutes are now working or involved in training in every region of the state.

MNEA advocated against the permanent rule change, asking DESE staff to first gather data on effectiveness of substitutes who do not meet previous standards. Missouri NEA had requested DESE collect data around substitutes to include pay (short-term versus long-term), district recruitment efforts and district benefits for substitutes. MNEA suggested other ways to increase the pool of qualified substitutes.

Many districts use a third-party provider to hire substitutes, giving school principals no control over who leads their classrooms when the regular teacher cannot be present. Lowering standards undermines the profession and can bring in people who may not value education.

DESE staff agrees they need data for rule changes. They plan to bring back a plan for changes in substitute certification requirements after gathering and examining data on the effectiveness of substitutes with these new certifications. PenMac and Kelly are helping gather data, but as of November 10, they can only report on 4% of these new substitutes.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Rebeka McIntosh 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,
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