

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

Commissioner Vandeven summarizes DESE’s COVID-19 response on the one-year anniversary of state-wide school closures

On March 14, 2020, the first local announcement of COVID-19 school closure occurred and by March 19th all schools in the state had closed. As a local control state, DESE’s ‘north star’ was “To provide support and flexibility necessary to allow districts to make decisions focused on the health and safety of students, staff, and community members without attendance negatively impacting accountability or payment...it was buildings that were closed, not school.” By April 9, following the Governor’s stay-at-home order, all Missouri schools were closed through the end of the academic year.

Vandeven praised educators for their work over the spring and summer to prepare for the current year. She stressed the consistent focus on in-school instruction and the reopening of buildings. Currently over 98% of Missouri schools offer some form of in-school instruction. Missouri ranks 6th in the lowest proportion of remote learners in the country and 5th in the highest proportion of in-person student learning. She noted that this is an incredible time to be involved in education as Missouri enters strategic planning for the post-pandemic reimagining of education. “It is time to reevaluate everything that we are doing.”

Further adjustments have been made to the state assessment planning. The testing window has been extended to June 15 and the testing participation rate target is now 85%. A fall testing window (September 7 - 30) is available to districts who do not reach the required student participation rate.

Board members had a deep discussion about how additional emergency relief funding could be used most effectively to support teacher recruitment and retention efforts. Vandeven and DESE staff shared how other state government entities would need to be involved to make any meaningful impact on raising teacher salaries. There is no clear guidance that ESSER (elementary & secondary school emergency relief) funds can/cannot be used to support educator salaries or bonuses, depending on state regulations.

Preview of developing metrics for the Missouri School Improvement Program 6

Dr. Chris Neale reported on developing metrics to produce Annual Performance Reports under MSIP 6. Key policy goals of MSIP 6 include: to distinguish performance of schools and districts, provide actionable information, focus on preparation and welfare of each student, promote equity for students, and promote continuous improvement and innovation.

DESE staff is working to finalize metrics. In the fall, DESE will run a pilot to establish baseline data for all students and student groups, and develop improvement targets. Staff knows that an APR too heavy on academics is not good, so they are aiming for success-ready metrics to balance academic metrics.

Performance standards to be measured include:

- Success-ready students: What percent of students are on track for success at the next level?
 - Foundational skills
 - Academic proficiency in reading and numeracy
 - Career planning, preparation, and development
 - Work experiences
 - Personal development, to include research-based characteristics aligned to success in school and valued by employers
 - Equity measure: the degree to which students are on track across all student groups
- Academic achievement in math, English language arts, science, and social studies
 - Status measures for math, English language arts, science, and social studies.
 - Growth for individual students in 4th – 8th grades in math and ELA.
 - Credit for progress in math, ELA, science, and social studies.

- Compare subgroup scores to whole-group scores to measure equity. DESE will use both individual subgroups and the composite of all subgroups, called a super-subgroup.
- Graduation rate: This metric will not change, but targets may be adjusted
- 180 day follow-up after graduation

Continuous improvement standards are designed to help districts identify what they need to do to improve. Proposed standards are a comprehensive assessment system, high-quality early learning, high-quality career education, collaborative climate and culture, and collaborative partnerships. DESE hopes to develop a measure of reading for the end of second grade, and a numeracy score for no later than fourth grade.

A school climate and culture survey for school districts is under development. The survey hopes to measure the degree of academic focus, presence of high academic and behavioral expectations, presence of a culture of collaboration, sense of safety and purpose, and presence of social-emotional education and supports.

High quality early learning measures will include the presence of a parent education program, measures of the effectiveness of their early learning experiences, and district communication of developmentally appropriate preschool opportunities.

Status update on the department’s strategic plan

Deputy Commissioner Tracy Hinds outlined the prioritized areas of the state’s strategic plan: early learning and literacy, success-ready students & workforce development, safe & healthy schools, and educator recruitment & retention. Board members, the commissioner, and DESE staff had a spirited debate about data gathering, standards, and outcomes. Commissioner Vandeven: “What we continue to hear from our schools is that students are more than a test score – and we agree. But we also agree that reading matters, so you must have some measure of that reading. Getting that balance right is critical.” President Shields spoke of moving to a ‘balanced scorecard’ style of measurement. The Commissioner’s advisory panel will reconvene to continue the development of goals for the department.

In other business the state board:

- Adopted the 2021 [Salary Schedule](#) for DESE professional, support, and teaching staff. Salaries for teachers in state-board operated schools do not reach \$40,000 until the 8th year with a bachelor’s degree or the 5th year with a master’s degree.
- Granted A+ designation to three high schools - one charter in Kansas City, and private schools in Wentzville and Poplar Bluff.
- Adopted the 2021-22 school year calendar for state board-operated schools. All begin on August 23.
- Renewed the charters for Allen Village Charter School, Hope Leadership Academy and Lee A. Tolbert Community Academy. There was lengthy, candid debate about the sponsors’ accountability for student success and improvement plans. Several board members expressed frustration with the lack of progress and oversight provided by some charter sponsors.
- Approved accepting public comments on requiring certified educators who wish to add Library Media Specialist certification to pass the content test and take four specific courses.
- Approved [changes](#) following public comments regarding the implementation of part B of IDEA.

The next meeting of the Missouri State Board of Education will be on April 12-13, 2021. Missouri NEA will be in attendance. 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 [here](#).

Respectfully submitted,
 Rebeka McIntosh, MNEA vice president
 Ann Jarrett, MNEA teaching and learning director

Rebeka.Mcintosh@mnea.org
Ann.Jarrett@mnea.org