

Missouri NEA Missouri State Board of Education Report

*Notes from April 12, 13 and 29, 2021 meetings of the Missouri State Board of Education
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

Board appoints new members to Normandy Joint Executive Governing Board

On April 13, the board reviewed the [history and current status](#) of the Normandy Schools Collaborative, including the growing community and staff concerns regarding the appointed Joint Executive Governing Board. During a conference call meeting on April 29, the board voted to:

1. Appoint Mike Jones, former member of the Missouri State Board of Education, and William Humphrey, former member of the elected Normandy school board and district director at the Greater St. Louis Area Council Boy Scouts of America, to the Joint Executive Governing Board. Both live in the Normandy School District.
2. Require the now 7-member JEGB to meet within 14 days and elect a president and vice president, offices required of seven-member school boards in Missouri. The JEGB must also hold annual officer elections going forward.
3. Require the Normandy JEGB to make quarterly reports to the state board.
4. Extend the Normandy JEGB authority to June 30, 2023, unless the state board transitions Normandy to an elected school board before that time.

In discussion, several state board members encouraged the board to begin the transition to an elected board soon. The current seven-member structure of the JEGB makes the transition easier, likely to occur over a three-year period. Year one, elect two school board members to replace two JEGB members, year two the same, and year three, elect the final three school board members to complete the transfer. This decision would need to be made in time for school board elections. No time was set to begin this process.

COVID-19 pilot study results

Commissioner Vandeven and DESE staff emphasized mitigating factors implemented in schools must remain in place for safe in-person learning to continue. Data from a pilot study on school virus transmission conducted in December 2020 in Rockwood, Pattonville, University City, Springfield, Republic, and Logan-Rogersville found:

- Only 27% of schools were implementing six-foot distancing.
- No student to teacher transmission.
- No transmission among students in modified quarantine (exposed while masked, they remained in school with mask).
- Transmission through hard surfaces is rare and good sanitation should continue. Extraordinary cleaning measures show no additional protection from transmission.

Some districts are organizing vaccination events for students age 16 and older. Guidance will continue to stress that mitigation measures should remain in place through the end of the school year.

Board approves rules for Missouri Courseware Access and Virtual School Program (MOCAP)

Updates to the MOCAP program rules increase communication between virtual course providers and school districts to better serve students.

- Student-teacher ratios shall not exceed the recommended MSIP classroom guidelines.
- Student progress monitoring will be available to school districts weekly through a secure portal.
- Virtual program provides the school district monthly billing and report that includes student progress and current course grade.
- Special education students will benefit from increased involvement of the virtual teachers in IEP and 504 processes and increased monitoring of accommodations and modifications.
- Providers must provide students with a direct form of verbal communication with the virtual teacher.
- School districts can interact with virtual provider's educators who provide instruction to school district student(s).

Board approves multiple rule changes to:

- Establish procedures to transfer charter sponsorship prior to the expiration of a charter contract. New procedures require the charter school to continue to meet the performance requirements of their contract with the previous sponsor.
- Rescind the Attendance Hour Reporting established to address attendance reporting during the pandemic.
- Update requirements for Career Continuous Administrator Certificate and Transition Administrator Certificate to allow Missouri Leadership Development System Micro-Credentials to advance beyond initial administrator certification.

Board authorizes publication of proposed rule changes for public comment this summer to:

- Provide two pathways to a substitute certificate: 60 college credit hours OR a high school diploma or equivalent and successful completion of 20 clock-hours of department-approved training that includes professionalism, honoring diversity, engaging students, foundational classroom management techniques, basic instructional strategies, supporting students with special needs, and working with at-risk youth.
- Clarify that DESE will reimburse for facility lease agreements for early learning programs and will not reimburse for the purchase, construction, renovation, or lease-purchase of such facilities.
- Establish procedures for school food authority appeals when all or part of reimbursement claim is denied.
- Establish protocol to identify Performance Districts in any year when DESE does not generate an Annual Performance Report. DESE would use the most recent data available for each performance standard to establish an equivalent percentage of points earned. Expenditures of Performance Districts are used to recalculate the state adequacy target for the foundation formula that determines school district funding.

Statewide broadband plan aims to close the digital divide

Directors from Missouri's Data System Management, Economic Development, and Broadband Development offices reported Missouri ranks 32nd nationwide for broadband access. 23% of Missouri students do not have reliable internet access due to lack of infrastructure and/or affordability. The program was compared to rural electrification projects. The state is deploying a variety of public/private partnerships, state and federal grant programs, COVID-19 funding, and American Rescue Act funding to address multiple broadband challenges. The [report](#) outlines a multi-year plan to expand access.

In other business the board:

- Approved the calendar start date exemption for Special School District of St. Louis County Juvenile Courts School. This allows the school to continue year-round schooling.
- Approved charter renewals for several charter schools: Ewing Marion Kauffman, Citizens of the World, Hogan Preparatory. Board members discussed their frustration with the charter school statute and lack of student progress at Hogan Preparatory Academy and Citizens of the World.
- Commissioner Vandeven shared recommendations from the Commissioner's Education Policy Committee that will support and further direct DESE's strategic plan. The committee prioritized learning attainment (early childhood intervention, rigorous reading instruction, CTE availability), school redesign (equity, SEL, business partnerships), and educator workforce (increase educator salaries, create leadership opportunities for teachers, recruit and retain diverse educators).

The next meeting of the Missouri State Board of Education will be on May 11, 2021. Missouri NEA will be in attendance. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Rebecka McIntosh or Ann Jarrett at 800-392-0236. Details of state board agenda items can be found at [here](#).

Respectfully submitted,
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