

Missouri NEA Missouri State Board of Education Report

*Notes from August 18, 2020 meeting of the Missouri State Board of Education
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

Board approves emergency rule lowering standard for substitute certificates

The board approved granting a substitute license to teach with 20 hours of approved training and a high school diploma or equivalent, with Charlie Shields and Vic Lenz voting no. This emergency rule removes the requirement of 20 college credits. While the emergency rule ends in February 2021, the same change was approved to be published for public comment, likely in September 2020. If approved, this change may become permanent. Missouri NEA opposed this change, which lowers the standards for educators while not addressing the two core reasons for a shortage of substitutes: low pay and fear of Covid-19. It matters who is in front of a classroom, even for one day. This rule makes no distinction between short-term and long-term substitutes. DESE is depending on school districts to use discretion. Missouri NEA encourages educators to oppose this permanent rule change when public comments open. Please watch for an Action Alert to submit comments.

Board postpones consideration of changes to GPA required for initial educator certification

Currently, candidates for teacher certification in Missouri must hold a 3.0 grade point average in their content-area and professional knowledge course work plus an overall GPA of 2.75 on a 4-point scale. DESE staff propose reducing the required overall GPA to 2.5, while keeping the 3.0 GPA requirement in the content-area and professional knowledge course work. Their reasoning is research shows a correlation between content GPA and teacher effectiveness, but there is no research that shows a relationship between overall GPA and teacher effectiveness. Educator preparation programs tell DESE staff the overall GPA is often a barrier to male candidates and minority candidates. Increasing the number of teachers in these two categories is one of DESE's goals. Board members are concerned that lowering the overall GPA standard will negatively impact the professional standing of teachers. Missouri NEA shares this concern. Board members asked DESE staff to bring examples of the required grade point averages for other professions next month, when the board will revisit this proposal.

Board hears recommendations of the Task Force for Learning Acceleration

In May, DESE formed the Task Force for Learning Acceleration to address the impact of extended school closures. MNEA was one of thirty-four groups with participating members. The Task Force developed recommendations and tools to address assessment and acceleration of learning when students return to instruction. These assessments and curriculum tools are voluntary and are not designed to be used as accountability measures. They are available to support evaluation of learning, identify essential learning standards, offer professional development, and emphasize students' physical and social-emotional needs. Educators are encouraged to focus on social-emotional relationships during the first two weeks of instruction and then use the MO LEAP (Missouri Learning, Engagement and Preparation) tools to assess and create lessons that are not only remedial but enhanced. Find MO LEAP tools at <https://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/moleap>. Find the complete listing of the Task Force recommendations at <https://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/curriculum/task-force-learning-acceleration>.

Board hears proposed changes in new school counselor certification

The board approved publication for public comment the merging of new school counselor certification to a single, K-12 certification. Currently, school counselors are certified for K-8 or 7-12. The change would not affect school counselors who are already certified. The new K-12 certification aligns with the school administrator rule and gives districts more flexibility.

The proposed rule also changes requirements for the counselor clinical experience. Three hundred hours of clinical experience are still required, but now two hundred (200) clock hours will be required in a major area (elementary or secondary); fifty (50) clock hours required in a minor area (elementary or secondary); and the remaining fifty (50) clock hours will be at the discretion of the program and candidate.

Commissioner Vandeven presents an overview of DESE's response to COVID-19.

Marjorie Vandeven, Commissioner of Education, briefed the board on the department's immediate, current, and future response to the COVID-19 pandemic. DESE's Phase I response in the spring focused on providing districts with flexibility and regulatory relief to allow for local decision making. DESE implemented state statute waiver authority to continue school payments, flexibility for calendar start dates, and summer school guidelines. Food service waivers were processed and DESE issued over 200 pages of guidance for districts and communities. Phase II responses included statutory and regulatory changes for school attendance, food service, finance, and substitute certification. CARES Act Funds continue to be distributed: \$96 million to districts through the Title I formula, \$10 million through the Missouri Connectivity Grant to address digital and technology needs, and funds to support social-emotional learning assistance, professional development, transportation, and services to non-public schools. Two million masks have been distributed to schools. Vandeven praised educators and DESE staff for their work during the pandemic and outlined her goals for Phase III of the COVID-19 response: supporting safe re-entry, focusing on equity, and re-imagining education in the new normal.

Vandeven praised DESE staff, but she does not think staff can keep working at this pace for the next 9 to 12 months. She says if this is our new normal, it is time to consider, "What can we put off? What should we focus on for each area?"

In other business, the board:

- Heard DESE staff discuss the need for several process changes to the Missouri Online Course Access Program to better comply with state statute: lengthening the appeals window, correcting pricing and payment discrepancies, and streamlining monitoring access by districts. Some of these changes were proposed by Missouri NEA. MOCAP is open to any student who applies through their local school district.
- Approved the transfer of sponsorship of Hogan Preparatory Academy from the University of Central Missouri to the Missouri Charter Public School Commission.
- Approved both an emergency rule and a rule with the same wording to publish for comment that could become permanent. These rules allow charter schools the same option as school districts, allowing charters to be funded based on the highest of two prior school year's attendance. The rule also allows both districts and charters to use the highest of two prior year's attendance for other funding streams, not just for the foundation formula.
- Heard report the Governor limited FY 2022 budget requests to mandatory items: required federal increases, federal programs, state/federal match programs, foundation formula, and special education program increases required by statute.
- Heard report that the National Association of State Boards of Education is having financial issues. Some states are not paying dues and several foundations ended funding. The October annual conference will be held virtually.

The next meeting of the Missouri State Board of Education will be September 15, 2020. 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,

Rebeka McIntosh, vice president, MNEA

Ann Jarrett, teaching and learning director, MNEA

Rebeka.Mcintosh@mnea.org

Ann.Jarrett@mnea.org