

Missouri NEA State Board Report

*Notes from the April 27, 2020 virtual meeting of the Missouri State Board of Education
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

The state board of education met virtually on Monday, April 27, to hear a COVID-19 response update from Commissioner Vandeven. The commissioner shared information about the DESE workforce and the immediate, current, and future response to the COVID-19 impact on Missouri's public schools.

All DESE facilities are currently closed to the public but accessible to employees. 97% of DESE employees are working, 178 are working onsite and 1,467 are working remotely. Dr. Vandeven shared steps taken since the beginning of the pandemic:

- DESE provided districts with support and flexibility around student attendance, funding, nutrition services, and remote learning options.
- All schools were closed by March 19, and statewide assessments cancelled.
- On April 9, the governor closed schools through the academic year.

The federal CARES Act Education Stabilization Fund provides \$208 million to K-12 schools in Missouri. 90% will flow to districts through the Title I formula. The bill gives districts flexibility in use of funds with priority to be given to addressing broadband access and equity issues. DESE will distribute 10% to areas with the greatest need. Missouri higher education emergency fund provides \$206 million. An additional \$55 million is distributed at the governor's discretion. For each of these funds, money can be used to pay for expenditures made after March 13, 2020.

DESE is currently conducting a second survey of districts to gather data about student digital access and resources. **21% of Missouri students do not have access to the resources (broadband/devices) they need for online learning.**

DESE continues to develop guidance for districts around calendars, forgiveness days, ADA and funding. Staff is anticipating additional withholdings by the Governor.

A summer school task force issued information about summer learning available at <https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/COVID-19-Summer-School-QA-4-23-20.pdf>. If offering summer school, the program must provide 120 hours of program between the last day of this school year and the first day of next school year. Summer school can be online or face-to-face.

Board members held an extended conversation around allowing schools to begin earlier the currently mandated fall school start date. At their March 11 meeting, the board denied St. Louis Public School's request for a waiver to start earlier, but the situation has changed. Board President Charlie Shields stated health care professionals predict a resurgence of the virus in the fall. The board will seek additional advice, and decide whether to offer waivers of school start dates at their May 12 meeting. Board members expressed a commitment to limit learning loss due to school closures and to ensure local control over school calendars.

The next meeting of the Missouri State Board of Education will be on May 12, 2020.

If you have questions or suggestions, contact Rebeka.McIntosh@mnea.org or Ann.Jarrett@mnea.org. Details of state board agenda items can be found at <http://dese.mo.gov/state-board-education/agendas-minutes>.