



DECEMBER 23, 2025

MARE Focus

FROM THE DESK OF MR. KEVIN SANDLIN, MARE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ENDORSEMENTS

American Fidelity
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Claim Care, Inc.

Forrest T. Jones
& Co.

Hamlin Energy

IMS Technology

L.J. Hart &
Company

MASA MTS

MEUHP

Mike Keith
Insurance

MO. Consult. For
Ed.

MOCAAT

M.U.S.I.C.

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MARE PARTNERSHIPS

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HOTLINE:
EDCOUNSEL,
GUIN
MUNDORF,
MICKES
O'TOOLE,
TUETH
KEENEY
- EDPLUS
- AMERICAN
LEGION BOYS
STATE
- GIRLS STATE

MISSOURI
ADMIN. JOB
POSTING

Superintendent Search Program – One of the many services that MARE provides is a quality, yet affordable Superintendent Search Program. If you are retiring this year or making plans to move, we would welcome the opportunity to work with your district to find the next leader. Contact Kevin Sandlin, MARE Executive Director, at (660) 747-8050 or by email at ksandlin@moare.com for more information.

Prairie Home R-V Superintendent Search – Dr. Jamie Burkhart is the search consultant. She can be reached at (660) 525-0952 or jamiebeth.burkhart@gmail.com. (01/06/2026)

Madison C-3 Superintendent Search – Dr. Jerry Cochran is the search consultant. He can be reached at (660) 596-3184 or cochranj115@gmail.com. (01/05/2026)

North Harrison R-III Superintendent Search – Mrs. Mary Beth Scherer is the search consultant. She can be reached at (660) 281-7678 or mbscherer@ucmo.edu. (01/02/2026)

La Monte R-IV Superintendent Search – Dr. Jamie Burkhart is the lead search consultant. She can be reached at (660) 525-0952 or jamiebeth.burkhart@gmail.com. (01/09/2026)

Closed Searches - Altenburg #48, Kirbyville R-VI, Maryville R-II, Chaffee R-II, Santa Fe R-X, Morgan Co. R-I, NE Randolph Co. R-IV, Pettis Co. R-V, Archie R-V & Linn Co. R-I

Coming Soon - Breckenridge R-I & Newburg R-II

MARE Joins Recognition for Jack Lenz – MARE joined the Marshall School District & MSBA to recognize Jack Lenz who is thought to be the oldest currently serving Board member in Missouri. Congratulations Jack!



Foundation Formula Modernization Task Force — The group will reconvene with scheduled Task Force meetings in January. For more information on this work, please check out the website at this link: [Missouri School Funding Modernization Task Force](#).

Quote of the Week

“The magic of Christmas never ends and its greatest of gifts are family and friends.” –Unknown

2025-2026 MARE Scholarship Program Information

The Missouri Association of Rural Education offers two scholarship programs for students interested in becoming teachers and returning to rural school districts to teach. The first program is the MARE Rural Missouri Scholarship Fund. This program is open to only junior and senior level students attending Missouri colleges or universities that offer degrees in education. Applicants must have completed 60 or more credit hours and have declared a major in education. Last year, MARE provided twenty-two (22) \$1,000.00 scholarships. We plan to present 20-25 \$1,000.00 scholarships this year alone! Information for this program is available below. This information is in the mail to all Missouri colleges and universities that offer teacher education programs and certifications. The deadline to apply for this scholarship is Friday, March 13, 2026.

Materials must be received by this date!

[2025-2026 College Scholarship Guidelines & Application](#)

[2025-2026 College Scholarship Guidelines in Word](#)

The second scholarship program offered by MARE is open to graduating high school seniors of MARE member school districts. Applicants must have indicated plans to pursue a degree in education. Only senior students from MARE member school districts are eligible to apply. This includes HS students from tuition paying MO K-8 MARE member school districts. Last year, MARE, with support from EdCounsel, LLC provided forty-three (43) \$750.00 scholarships to graduating high school seniors from all over the state. The deadline to apply for this scholarship is Friday, March 13, 2026.

Materials must be received by this date!

[2025-2026 HS Senior Scholarship Guidelines & Application](#)

[2025-2026 HS Senior Scholarship Guidelines & Application in Word](#)

If you have any questions regarding these Scholarship Programs, please contact Kevin Sandlin, Executive Director, at (660) 747-8050 or ksandlin@moare.com. Since 2017, MARE has provided a total of **\$316,250.00** in scholarships through these two programs.

iCEV Seeking Input - We're gathering insights on how districts are navigating the new IRC list so we can share best practices and provide better support. Could you take a moment to answer these four quick questions?

1. Which IRCs is your district prioritizing this year?
2. How are you approaching the new IRC list?
3. What has been your biggest challenge so far?
4. What support or resources would help most?

You can reply your answers to either Calee McElwain calee.mcelwain@icevonline.com or Marilyn Allen, marilyn.allen@icevonline.com.

Thank you for your time and partnership!

Dr. Calee McElwain
Territory Manager

Company | 800.922.9965
Direct | 660.200.5041
[Schedule a Meeting »](#)

MOCAAT – What Can You Do for Me?



The MOCAAT® Advantage:
Missouri's Trusted Financial Management Resource for School Districts.

Our experienced team, with broad expertise in Missouri school budgeting, finance, and investments, has managed a high-water mark of nearly \$4 billion in assets, with over 280 Participants.

Since inception in 2020, MOCAAT has provided a new level of service and performance to Missouri communities.

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John Jungmann Vice-President Investment Services	Jason Hoffman Vice-President Investment Services	Paul Ziegler Coordinator, Sales & Relationship Manager
(417) 228-4148 john.jungmann@ptma.com	(573) 212-6258 jason.hoffman@ptma.com	(417) 387-6005 paul.ziegler@ptma.com

Save the Date — 16th Annual MARE Scholarship Golf Tournament – Monday, July 20th, 2026 at Osage National Golf Course. \$90.00 per person or \$360 per team!

Your Efforts are Making a Difference! Stay the Course!

Board Training Schedule for 2026 – See dates/locations below!

Southeast Missouri - Poplar Bluff, MO – Holiday Inn – (573) 712-9021

- Friday, May 29, 2026 (12:00 noon - 6:00 p.m.)
- Saturday, May 30, 2026 (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

Northeast Missouri - Kirksville, MO - Holiday Inn Express (660) 956-4682

- Friday, June 12, 2026 (12:00 noon - 6:00 p.m.)
- Saturday, June 13, 2026 (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

Southwest Missouri - Bolivar, MO - Comfort Inn - (417) 326-6169

- Friday, June 19, 2026 (12:00 noon - 6:00 p.m.)
- Saturday, June 20, 2026 (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

West Central Missouri - Warrensburg, MO – Quality Inn - (660) 747-3000

- Friday, June 26, 2026 (12:00 noon - 6:00 p.m.)
- Saturday, June 27, 2026 (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

Northwest Missouri - Maryville, MO - Holiday Inn Express (660) 562-9949

- Friday, July 10, 2026 (12:00 noon - 6:00 p.m.)
- Saturday, July 11, 2026 (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

Lake Ozark, MO – The Lodge of the Four Seasons (Conference)

- Wednesday, October 21, 2026 (11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)
- Thursday, October 22, 2026 (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

Lake Ozark, MO - The Lodge of the Four Seasons

- Friday, December 4, 2026 (12:00 noon - 6:00 p.m.)
- Saturday, December 5, 2026 (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

*** Please share this information with any new Board member who has not completed the 18.5 hours of required training! MARE is an approved Board Training provider!

To register, please complete the form found on our website, scan and email to

ksandlin@moare.com

Missouri Educator Job Board

I'm writing to share some very exciting news with you. DESE has been awarded a three-year grant to continue to offer the Missouri Educator Job Board as we did this past year. This grant will also allow us to expand our supports for current and emerging teachers seeking jobs in MO through our partnership with [Nimble](#). We are very excited to continue to offer this resource to MO teachers and school districts. We are asking for your assistance in helping to promote these resources to educators across the state. This might include you helping to spread the word among your members or posting links on your organization's webpage.

As a reminder, the MO Educator Job Board was launched in January 2025 as a part of a pilot project to provide a one-stop-shop for current and rising educators seeking jobs they'll love in Missouri. Teachers can use the platform to see an up-to-date directory of all teaching job openings statewide in one place, with the ability to filter for jobs that meet their preferences. They can see critical information like commute time, salary scales, and where to apply. The platform also allows qualified teachers to connect with principals, to see if they might be a fit for their openings. Principals looking for support in filling vacancies can use the free resources to connect with teachers who express interest in their schools. The evaluation data from the pilot was extremely positive

In addition to the job board, Principals will have access to a Talent Matching Service, which will provide a weekly shortlist of qualified teacher candidates who matched their school's needs. Districts will also have access to a free Applicant Tracking System (ATS) that integrates the state job board and posts their jobs to major platforms like Indeed and ZipRecruiter.

We very much appreciate our partnership with you and look forward to working with you on this over the next several years.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions!

Sincerely,



Paul Katnik, Assistant Commissioner
Office of Educator Quality

Learning Blade Corner

NEW in Learning Blade! Step into the world of maritime engineering and advanced manufacturing with our new Learning Blade mission, **Assemble the Fleet**, launching in **January 2026**. You'll design and build a next-generation U.S. Navy destroyer while exploring how supplies from all 50 states come together to strengthen America's maritime industrial base. This mission introduces learners to in-demand careers working alongside CNC machinists, electricians, marine engineers, and robotics technicians.

Build the fleet. Shape the future. Available to all Learning Blade users in January 2026!

FREE account today: LearningBlade.com/States



The graphic features a blue background with a photograph of several U.S. Navy destroyers at sea. In the top left corner is the Learning Blade logo, which includes a magnifying glass icon and the text "Learning Blade Powered by eDynamic Learning". The main text is centered and reads: "New Mission" in large white font, "Assemble the Fleet" in white font inside a dark blue rounded rectangle, and "Available January 2026" in white font below it.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from MARE!

McDonald County R-I Letter to SBOE – Dr. Eric Findley, Superintendent at McDonald Co. R-I, shares the following letter sent to the Missouri State Board of Education stating the district's strong opposition to Open Enrollment.

December 12, 2025

Subject: Formal Opposition to Voluntary Open Enrollment Initiatives and Concerns Regarding District Consolidation

Dear Missouri State Board of Education,

This letter serves as a formal communication from the McDonald County R-1 Board of Education to express our serious concerns and firm opposition to the current legislative and policy discussions that appear to be pushing Missouri districts toward supporting voluntary open enrollment.

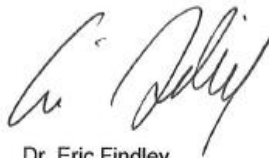
Our district is unequivocally and vehemently opposed to the implementation of any form of open enrollment. Our primary concern is that, while potentially framed as a choice-based measure, the systemic effect of such a policy, particularly on smaller and rural school districts like ours, is designed to—or will inevitably lead to—the forced consolidation or financial destabilization of local educational bodies. We do not support any agenda that appears to prioritize structural consolidation over the preservation of community-focused, locally governed school systems.

Our district believes strongly in the educational model we currently provide, which is tailored to the specific needs, values, and community structure of our students and families. Introducing open enrollment threatens the stability of our enrollment base, which directly impacts our ability to plan long-term budgets, maintain staffing levels, and provide specialized programs. We feel strongly that maintaining local autonomy and stability is fundamentally in the best interest of our students.

We respectfully request that the State Board of Education refrain from advocating for or pressuring local districts to support policies that are viewed by our community as detrimental to local control and the unique needs of our student population. We urge you to consider the diverse landscape of Missouri education and avoid supporting agendas that are not necessarily the best fit for all children across the state.

Thank you for considering our perspective on this critical matter. We look forward to ongoing engagement with the Board to ensure the highest quality education for all Missouri students, achieved through policies that respect local decision-making.

Sincerely,



Dr. Eric Findley
Superintendent of Schools
McDonald County R-1 School District

MARE Organization Staff

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Fax: (660) 747-8160

Website: www.moare.com

If you are the intended recipient but do not wish to receive communication through this medium, please notify the sender immediately.