



JUNE 4, 2025

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

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MARE Focus

Superintendent Search Program – MARE has been engaged by the Fairfax R-III Board of Education to facilitate an immediate search for a Superintendent of Schools for the 2025-2026 school year. Please note the short turnaround on this search.

Fairfax R-III Superintendent Search – Dr. Michael Jinks is the Search Consultant. He can be reached at (660) 441-7473 or at 19mj46@charter.net. **The deadline to submit an application is Friday, June 20th.** Applications and other materials are to be sent only through email to him.

Fairfax R-III Superintendent Vacancy Announcement

Fairfax R-III Superintendent Application

Gold Star Schools Announced – MARE is thrilled to recognize Eugene Field Elementary (Poplar Bluff R-I School District), Green Forest Elementary (Green Forest R-II School District), and Marion County Elementary (Marion County R-II School District) as recently DESE named Gold Star Schools. These three were among eight announced by the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. We are very proud of all of those selected for this distinguished award, especially our MARE member district schools.

Foundation Formula Modernization Task Force – The Governor's Appointed Task Force met for the first time on Monday, June 2nd at the Truman Building in Jefferson City. The group is scheduled to meet again on Monday, June 23rd from 1:00-3:00 p.m. at the Truman Building to continue the discussion. There was a lot of interesting comments, discussion and opinions shared during the initial meeting. It is imperative that school leaders, community patrons and other interested parties attend these meetings to hear the conversations and to let those sitting around the table know that we care and we want our voices heard throughout this process. It is a monumental task that they have been commissioned to accomplish. Please consider joining us at the next meeting!

Missouri Job Board for Educators

Please access the newly created DESE-sponsored Missouri Educator Job Board at this link www.hirenimble.com/connect/missouri

Share this information with those looking for teaching positions in our great state!

MARE Scholarship Information – MARE will award a total of 65 (up from 61 last year) scholarships this year including 22 - \$1,000.00 scholarships to college juniors/seniors & 43 - \$750.00 scholarships to graduating seniors from MARE member school districts = **Total of \$54,250.00 (up from \$51,500 last year)**. Since 2017, MARE has awarded \$316,250.00 in scholarships to students interested in becoming teachers! **(Articles on website soon!)**

Have a Wonderful Summer! We appreciate you!

NREA Announces New Executive Director



NREA Appoints Dr. Melissa Sadorf
as New Executive Director



The NREA is proud to announce Dr. Melissa Sadorf as their new Executive Director, effective June 1. **[Name of Org]** is proud to be a State Affiliate of the NREA and we welcome Dr. Sadorf to her new role. Read more in NREA's official press release: <https://www.nrea.net/dr-melissa-sadorf-new-exec>

Devon Brenner

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Welcome New District Members - MARE is pleased to welcome Moberly & Malta Bend R-V as district members! Welcome to the MARE family of 425 districts!

Gateway Superintendent Summit in St. Louis

Great leadership requires more than just vision—it takes the right strategies, support and space to recharge. Join us June 23–24 in St. Louis for the **Gateway Superintendent Summit**, a powerful two-day experience designed for superintendents looking to grow, connect, and lead with clarity.

Highlights include:

- **Tim Elmore** on leading across generations
- **Dr. Matthew Montgomery** on board-superintendent alignment
- **Sara Boucek** on navigating today's legal landscape with confidence

Your \$325 registration includes:

- Two days of high-impact professional learning
- Overnight stay at *Live! by Loews*
- Cardinals vs. Cubs game in a private Party Suite
- Meals, parking and plenty of time to network

This isn't just professional development—it's a chance to strengthen your leadership and leave recharged.

[Register now](#) for the Gateway Superintendent Summit. Space is limited.

Full details are available on the [conference website](#).

Chris Gaines, Ed.D.

Chief Executive Officer

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1460 Craig Road | St. Louis, MO 63146

Lucas & Associates ID Shield Opportunity

No Cost Benefit for High Peace of Mind Coverage

Dear MARE Superintendents,

As you are focused on finishing the school year, I want to ask you to consider the following before you close the books on the year.

As 2024 was the MOST invasive breaches to date in our country, and AI adding even more challenges to this already complex problem, I have some special pricing for you and your staff to take advantage of with *no cost to your district*.

Why IDShield?

- Over 125 districts in Missouri offer IDShield as their comprehensive personal information, online reputation and cybersecurity protection, at **no direct cost** to the district when they make it available as a voluntary benefit.
- With an effective date no later than 8.1.25, I can offer your district **a 44% savings** to add this coverage to your employee benefits.

All you need to do is call me today so I can show you how easy this is to implement. Schedule a brief chat [here](#)

Cathy Lucas

Lucas & Associates, LLC

MOARE Associate Member

Save the Date – The 15th Annual MARE Scholarship Golf Tournament will be held on Monday, July 21st at Osage National Golf Course in Lake Ozark, Missouri. We will accept the first 36 paid teams for this growing event. Last year's event raised over \$35,900.00 for scholarships for students interested in teaching in rural Missouri schools.

[Plan now to join us!](#)

Boys State & Girls State 2025 – MARE will be sponsoring two young men and two young women to attend their respective State gatherings this year. We are proud to be a part of these amazing programs and opportunities for our students. More to follow in an upcoming MARE Focus!

Save the Date – The 2025 MARE/MO K-8 Conference will be held on October 22-24, 2025 at the Lodge of Four Seasons. Plans are underway to make this our biggest and best ever. Please block this on your calendar now and make plans to join us! I promise you will have a great time and learn a lot! More information will be posted on the website and appear in an upcoming MARE Focus. Our goal this year is 325 in attendance!

Tobacco-Free School Policy Survey

Need Help with Student Vaping or Tobacco Use? Speak Up for Your Schools!

More youth are vaping than ever before! Speak up about your schools' needs and challenges with student vaping and tobacco use by completing the highly recommended Tobacco-Free School Policy Survey! The results will inform the creation of resources to better support schools statewide. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) Tobacco Prevention and Control Program (TPCP) and Missouri State University (MSU) Ozarks Public Health Institute (OPHI) created the voluntary survey to identify the needs of schools in implementing tobacco-free policies and addressing student tobacco use. MSU OPHI emailed the confidential survey to superintendents. It can also be completed by clicking [this survey link](#) or scanning the QR code. Please have the person who can most easily answer the questions complete the survey by Friday, June 20, 2025. If you have any questions, contact DHSS TPCP at motobaccoprogram@health.mo.gov or 573-522-2820. Thank you for taking the time to complete this crucial survey for the health of Missouri's students and schools!



MARE Board Training Calendar for 2025

MARE Board Training Dates – 2025

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

- Friday, June 13, 2025 (12:00 noon - 6:00 p.m.)
- Saturday, June 14, 2025 (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

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

- Friday, June 20, 2025 (12:00 noon - 6:00 p.m.)
- Saturday, June 21, 2025 (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

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

- Friday, June 27, 2025 (12:00 noon - 6:00 p.m.)
- Saturday, June 28, 2025 (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

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

- Friday, July 11, 2025 (12:00 noon - 6:00 p.m.)
- Saturday, July 12, 2025 (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

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

- Wednesday, October 22, 2025 (11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)
- Thursday, October 23, 2025 (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

Lake Ozark, MO - The Lodge of the Four Seasons

- Friday, December 5, 2025 (12:00 noon - 6:00 p.m.)
- Saturday, December 6, 2025 (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 and fax to (660) 747-8160, scan and email to ksandlin@moare.com, or go online (www.moare.com) and complete the electronic form found under Board Training.

Quote of the Week

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together”
African Proverb

MEUHP Executive Director Vacancy – MEUHP is accepting applications for its next Executive Director. Please see the link below for detailed information on this opportunity.

..\MEUHP - Executive Director Description - updated 5-8-25 (1).pdf

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, thoroughly manages nearly \$4 billion in assets for over 260 Missouri Participants, including school districts (as of March 31, 2025).

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

Maximize the potential of your reserve funds, tax revenues, state revenues, and bond proceeds with our professional guidance.

For financial support tailored to your district's unique needs, contact us:



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Investment Services

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Jason Hoffman
Vice-President
Investment Services

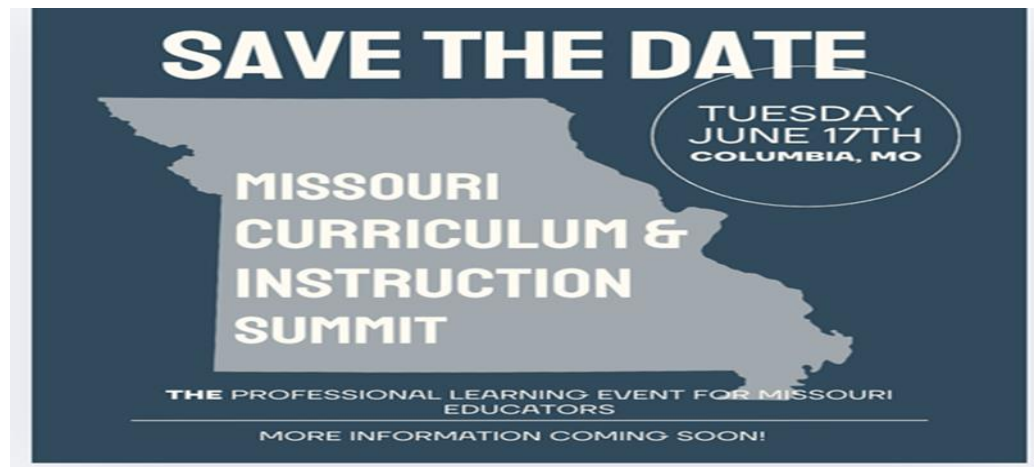
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STEPUp Missouri Curriculum & Instruction Summit



I wanted to reach out because we believe members of MARE would greatly benefit from attending the **Missouri Curriculum & Instruction Summit**, happening on June 17, 2025 in Columbia, MO.

This event is designed to support Missouri's instructional leaders with innovative learning opportunities. Right now, **Early Bird registration is open**, and we'd love your help in spreading the word to rural educators who could take advantage of this opportunity.

You can find more information and register here: <https://sites.google.com/stepupconsultingservices.com/mocis/home>

Valorie Montgomery, Senior Director of Marketing & Operation

MU's National Center for Rural School Mental Health - We are actively recruiting 35 more rural MO schools to join us in this randomized control trial research project this fall. Check out the link below to learn more!



<https://sway.cloud.microsoft/nvyI1UPzGaH1fD4t?ref=email&loc=play>

STEM & CTE Career Pathways Leadership Cohort

We're excited to invite you to learn how to join the **STEM & CTE Career Pathways Leadership Cohort Information Webinars** hosted by Learning Blade in partnership with DESE. Only 20-25 teachers will be selected to participate in the actual cohort that will take place in the 2025-2026 school year. Participation in the cohort will give teachers the opportunity to:

- Increase educator capacity to motivate students through real-world STEM and CTE career connections.
- Build and refine leadership skills.
- Connect with fellow educators who are equally passionate about career readiness.
- Enhance professional reputation and become a thought leader in STEM and CTE education.
- Be recognized for their work statewide, which will be highlighted to state education leaders, professional organizations, and through public platforms such as social media and press releases.
- Obtain professional development hours.

These information sessions are a great opportunity for teachers to learn how to participate in the **STEM & CTE Career Pathways Leadership Cohort** to expand access to STEM and CTE career paths in rural Missouri.

What:

Increase your capacity to impact rural communities in Missouri and motivate students to increase STEM skills and pursue STEM and CTE career paths. Grow as an educator leader in the state to impact educators and elevate the significance of STEM and CTE pathways.

Informational Webinar Dates:

- Wednesday, September 10
- Wednesday, September 17
- Wednesday, September 24

Time: 4:00 PM CT

Here's the link to [REGISTER NOW.](#)

Need your free Learning Blade account? Go to www.LearningBlade.com/MO.

For more information, please contact Dr. Michele Linch at michele@learningblade.com.

Numbers – Any Meaning? – Dr. Michael Jinks

Open enrollment discussions and state funding issues keep Missouri school systems on the forefront of legislative and regulatory debate. Considering how important school districts are to the state budget (not to mention students, parents, community image, and more), knowing the sheer number of districts seems like useful information. A few keyboard strokes and Google will offer an answer! Not counting charter schools, Missouri comes in at eighth place nationally with 518. By comparison apparently only nine states have 500 or more school districts. While there are many implications of ranking eighth in the number of school districts, one is commonly overlooked. The opportunity for advancement in the profession of school administration! In brief, the chances of becoming a superintendent in Missouri is quite different from Wyoming, W. Virginia, or Florida. If you have a desire to be a school district superintendent, Missouri has more opportunity than most states. The following table compares the number of school districts in the ten states with the largest number to the ten states with the fewest – according to Google.

State	Districts	State	Districts
Texas	1,022	Hawaii	1
Calif.	977	Delaware	19
Illinois	853	Nevada	20
New York	686	Maryland	24
Ohio	615	Rhode Island	34
New Jersey	546	Utah	42
Michigan	539	Wyoming	49
Missouri	518	Alaska	53
Oklahoma	512	W. Virginia	55
Pennsylvania	499	Florida	69

Associated with the number of public-school districts is the not so delicate debate over open enrollment and the emerging variety of voucher programs. Aside from the debate regarding the merit of such programs as vouchers and subsidies for private schools, what kind of costs might a family face for some of the 'well regarded' private schools? Again, according to Google (!), at the national level the cost of the premier private schools makes enrollment all but impossible for the majority of families. However, for your next conversation over coffee at the local café, when topics related to money and schools arise, try to remember a few of the following – just for comparisons sake!

School (1 yr)	Enr.	Location	Av. SAT	Tuition
Groton	380	Groton, MA	1,460	\$59,995
Phillips	1,000	Exeter, NH	1,460	\$50,604
Choate Rosemary Hall	868	Wellingford, CT	N/A	\$51,880
Harvard-Westlake	N/A	Los Angeles	1,480	\$46,900
Phillips Academy	N/A	Andover, MA	1,480	\$53,950

As you reflect on the costs of these 'high end' schools, consider the annual tuition, fees, and living expenses for any of the Colleges and/or Universities in Missouri – remembering the above are high schools. More appropriately, what kind of investment is involved for a handful of Missouri private high schools? A few from the Kansas City and St. Louis areas are noted below.

Rock Hurst	Kansas City	\$18,340
Barstow	Kansas City	17,165-25,530
Pembroke Hill	Kansas City	\$31,685
St. Teresa's Academy	Kansas City	\$17,650
John Burroughs	Ladue	\$36,300
Mary Institute	Ladue	\$29,900
Whitfield	Creve Coeur	\$35,135
St. Louis Priory	St. Louis	\$30,135
St. Louis Univ. H. S.	St. Louis	\$24,600

Using Google as the search mechanism, the St. Louis area offers more private school choices than the Kansas City area and a bit more of a financial commitment. When you get a few idle moments, take a look at the expenditure per pupil for your respective public school. And, calculate the tuition you would (or do) impose for out of district students. When an opportunity develops this information might be worth sharing when open enrollment, vouchers, and attendance at private schools comes up for discussion.

From skeptic to supporter: Why teachers shouldn't dismiss AI

(Provided by Matt Argubright with SchoolAI, a MARE Associate Member)

Initial perspectives on AI

As a former ELA teacher, my first thought when I heard what AI would be capable of was, "Will students ever write their own work again?" That idea quickly faded, though. I had a similar thought when Google Docs rolled out, when Wikipedia was introduced to education, and with many other technology influences over the past 20 years. It's ok, and even helpful, to be skeptical and cautious about new technology, but we must never be closed-minded. AI offers tremendous opportunities for a [wide range of applications in education](#). I've most commonly used AI in my classroom to support more accessibility. As a teacher, making sure every student has access to the content I cover is paramount. AI can help save time and make content more accessible in ways that weren't possible before. Before you dismiss AI, consider how it can make a difference for students who will need it the most.

AI as a tool for differentiation

Differentiation has always been an essential part of what teachers are asked to do. Every classroom has a wide range of learning profiles, and it is crucial to make sure that all students have solid access to the content. That might require adjusting the lexile level of a news article, providing the article in another language, and so much more. These tasks are time-consuming, but critically important to students' engagement and learning. With AI, these tasks that could take many hours can now be completed in under 5 minutes! For example, you could upload an article and use AI to adjust the grade level to support a wide variety of students. The same article can be translated quickly to support ELL students. Even better, emails and other communications can be translated and shared for the educational community you serve. These quick AI tasks allow teachers to spend more time with their students and plan [more in-depth and engaging lessons](#).

Bouncing ideas off of peers is an important aspect of learning and growing as a teacher. Not all ideas shared by colleagues are winners, but they can spur creative approaches to instruction that you may not have previously considered. Too often, that brainstorming time with peers is lost in the name of larger, building-specific or district meetings. AI can act as a thought partner to help teachers find different ways to engage students. For example,

imagine a student with ADHD who is having trouble connecting with the content. They need a different approach than the ones you have tried. Using AI to brainstorm and develop alternative approaches is an excellent way to create differentiated learning experiences for students, leading to [higher student engagement](#) and improved student output.

Empowering students with AI

Teacher use of AI is not the only way curriculum can be made more accessible for students. Student AI can make all the difference a student needs to succeed in the classroom. The wide range of [student learning profiles](#) makes it difficult to differentiate and personalize for each and every student. However, student access to [AI tools can help them personalize independently](#) with teacher guidance. Teacher-designed chatbots allow students access to support in ways that meet their needs beyond the traditional supports that are in place. Imagine a student being able to access an AI chatbot that can help them "chunk" a project in a way that makes sense to them. They could have the chatbot break down the steps, provide guidance on how to approach each chunk, and provide feedback on the work as they complete it. As a teacher, you want to be there for your students, but there are only so many hours in a day and minutes in the classroom. Giving students access to secure, teacher-designed chatbots allows them to get the support they need, when they need it. Creating AI experiences and supporting students and their understanding of how to effectively utilize AI is key if students are going to be successful in other areas of their lives moving forward.

Using AI responsibly

Being cautious about new technology is a smart approach in education. Teachers must be mindful of student and teacher data privacy and the quality of generated content. AI output should always be considered a rough draft. The teacher remains the foremost expert on the content and the students in their classroom. AI allows them to take a rough draft output and make it meet the needs of their students. As teachers continue to strive to make content and support more accessible, it's key that we explore all possible tools to help students engage and learn.

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