

General Session Descriptions

General Session – Wednesday, October 16 – 1:00-2:00 p.m.

Room – Marbella A/B

Presenter: Mike Lodewegen, MCSA Director of Government Affairs

Title: “Preparing for the 2025 Legislative Session”

Description: In this presentation, MARE’s legislative team will discuss takeaways from the previous legislative session, review Missouri’s 2024 primary election results, preview the upcoming 2024 general election, and forecast the upcoming 2025 legislative session. Also, we will be discussing strategies and tactics that rural school districts can implement between now and January to improve their ability to engage in the legislative process.

General Session – Wednesday, October 16 – 3:45-4:30 p.m.

Room – Marbella A/B

Presenter: Dr. Paul Katnik

Title: “Missouri’s Teacher Workforce – Our Greatest Asset”

Description: Missouri’s teacher shortage has reminded us of a very simple, but important truth. A school can’t teach its students any more effectively than the overall effectiveness of its teachers. This has led to many conversations and some actions around teacher pay, Grow Your Own, teacher working conditions, elevating the profession and many others. The last three years have taught us many things that must inform where we as a state go next. This presentation will offer an overview of what the data is telling us and what all of us must do to maintain a high-quality, high-quantity teacher workforce.

General Session – Thursday, October 17 – 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Room – Marbella A/B

Presenters: Natalie Hoernschemeyer & Jennifer Hansen, Mickes O’Toole, LLC

Title: “Discipline by the Rules: Understanding the Legal Framework for Public School Students”

Description: This session explores the laws on student discipline, including due process, special education considerations, and the handling of violent crimes, threats, and off-campus misconduct. This concise presentation equips educators with essential knowledge to navigate discipline fairly and legally.

General Session Descriptions

General Session – Thursday, October 17 – 12:40-1:10 p.m.

Room – Marbella A/B

Presenter: Dr. David Ardrey, NREA President

Title: “Becoming a Voice for Rural Education”

Description: How do you become an authentic voice for rural education at the school, community, state and federal level? What are the most important aspects to consider when taking this path to advocacy? This session will engage grassroots efforts, leading to the most significant changes for your community.

General Session – Thursday, October 17 – 3:20-4:20 p.m.

Room – Marbella A/B

Presenters: Attorneys from EdCounsel, LLC; Guin Mundorf, LLC; Mickes O'Toole, LLC and Tueth Keeney Cooper Mohan & Jackstadt, P.C.

Title: "Legal Panel Discussion - Hot Topics Q&A"

Description: Panel attorneys will provide answers to various "hot topic" questions that have been submitted prior to the session. An open "Q&A" session is also planned.

General Session – Friday, October 18 – 8:00-9:00 a.m.

Room – Marbella A/B

Presenter: Dr. Kari Monsees, Deputy Commissioner

Title: "School Finance & Governance Update"

Description: Dr. Monsees will provide updates on a variety of school finance and governance topics, including information on the status of the state budget and how it is impacting school funding in Missouri (Formula, CTF, Transportation, Prop C). Other topics include Federal Relief Funds and SB 727 implementation. Time will be provided for questions and answers.

General Session Descriptions

General Session – Friday, October 18 – 9:10-10:00 a.m.

Room – Marbella A/B

Presenter: Dr. Karla Eslinger, DESE Commissioner

Title: "A Conversation with the Commissioner"

Description: Commissioner Eslinger will provide the audience with an update on current state education activities. She will answer questions and engage in casual dialogue with those in attendance.

General Session – Friday, October 18 – 10:05-10:55 a.m.

Room – Marbella A/B

Presenters: Duane Martin & Emily Omohundro, EdCounsel, LLC

Title: "Elections Happen": Legal Issues for Board Members & School Leaders in an Election Year

Description: Employee political speech, student political speech, use of school facilities as polling stations, voting leave for employees, and many other legal issues surface for school districts in an election year. Duane and Emily will discuss issues that tend to come up in an election year and the latest legal developments affecting Missouri's rural public schools that you need to be aware of for the 2024-2025 school year!