

# **General Session Descriptions**

## **General Session – Wednesday, October 22 – 1:00-2:00 p.m.**

### **Room – Marbella A/B**

**Presenter: Mike Lodewegen, MCSA Director of Government Affairs**

**Title: “Preparing for the 2026 Legislative Session”**

**Description:** In this presentation, MARE’s legislative team will discuss takeaways from the previous legislative session, and forecast the upcoming 2026 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 22 – 3:45-4:30 p.m.**

### **Room – Marbella A/B**

**Presenter: Dr. Paul Katnik**

**Title: “Teachers Wanted: Reimagining Recruitment in a Changing World”**

**Description:** This presentation explores strategies that have been proven effective for recruiting and retaining teachers, even in today’s evolving landscape. The presentation will highlight a number of state initiatives currently underway that can impact your local teacher recruitment and retention efforts. You will also learn ways to improve your own district strategies.

## **General Session – Thursday, October 23 – 9:30-10:30 a.m.**

### **Room – Marbella A/B**

**Presenters: Duane Martin & Emily Omohundro, EdCounsel, LLC**

**Title: “We’ve Got Your Six: Top Legal Issues Facing Missouri Public School Districts”**

**Description:** This session will focus on litigation, legislation, and areas of liability school leaders and board members need to be informed about for the 2025-2026 school year.

# **General Session Descriptions**

## **General Session – Thursday, October 23 – 12:40-1:10 p.m.**

### **Room – Marbella A/B**

**Presenter:** Dr. Melissa Sadorf, NREA Executive Director

**Title:** “NREA Update”

**Description:** Dr. Sadorf will provide a national update on rural education, including highlights from the “Why Rural Matters Report”. She will share insights on emerging trends, current priorities, and opportunities for collaboration to strengthen and support rural schools across the country.

## **General Session – Thursday, October 23 – 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 24 – 8:00-8:45 a.m.**

### **Room – Marbella A/B**

**Presenter:** Dr. Kyle Kruse, Deputy Commissioner with DESE

**Title:** "School Finance & Governance Update"

**Description:** Dr. Kruse 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 changes to federal funding and provisions of SB 68. Time will be provided for questions and answers.

# **General Session Descriptions**

## **General Session – Friday, October 24 – 8:45-9:30 a.m.**

### **Room – Marbella A/B**

**Presenter:** Dr. Kyle Kruse, Deputy Commissioner with DESE

**Title:** "Missouri School Funding Modernization Task Force Update"

**Description:** Dr. Kyle Kruse (filling in for Dr. Kari Monsees) will provide an update on the activities of the Missouri School Funding Modernization Task Force. The Task Force is charged with making recommendations to the Governor by December 1, 2026.

## **General Session – Friday, October 24 – 9:30-10:00 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 24 – 10:05-10:55 a.m.**

### **Room – Marbella A/B**

**Presenters:** Grant Wiens & Jennifer Hansen, Mickes O'Toole, LLC

**Title:** "From Overwhelmed to Organized: Streamlining Misconduct Investigations"

**Description:** School administrators are pulled in a thousand different directions each day. When serious questions of possible misconduct come up, how can you conduct both a thorough and prompt investigation – while still getting to the rest of your work? We will discuss effective strategies to avoid red flags and develop best practices.