

## **Purpose and Guiding Principles**

The Missouri Association of School Administrators (MOASPA) advocates for legislation that strengthens public education, supports effective school leadership, and ensures equitable opportunities for all Missouri students. MOASPA's 2026 legislative priorities are grounded in the association's 2025 platform while responding to the Governor's stated priorities and the evolving legislative landscape.

MOASPA's positions are guided by the following principles:

- **Public funds must prioritize public education**
  - **Local decision-making and capacity must be respected**
  - **Accountability systems must be fair, transparent, and research-based**
  - **Workforce stability is essential to student success**
  - **Policy changes must be fully funded and responsibly implemented**
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## ***2026 MOASPA Legislative Priorities***

### **1. Protect and Stabilize Public School Funding**

MOASPA supports the full funding of Missouri's Foundation Formula and the protection of categorical funding streams, including transportation and special education. Missouri's public schools require predictable, stable funding to plan responsibly, retain staff, and meet student needs.

MOASPA supports efforts to review or modernize the school funding formula **only if** changes are:

- Fully funded
- Phased in over time
- Transparent and predictable
- Designed to avoid unintended harm to districts, particularly rural and high-need communities

MOASPA opposes any funding changes that reduce predictability, shift costs to local districts, or create unfunded mandates that undermine long-term financial planning and districts' ability to meet legal and educational requirements.

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### **2. Address the Statewide Educator and Certified Staff Shortage**

Missouri continues to face challenges in recruiting and retaining quality teachers, administrators, and other certified school professionals. MOASPA supports comprehensive workforce strategies that improve recruitment, retention, and sustainability.

MOASPA supports legislation that:

- Improves educator compensation and benefits
- Expands "Grow Your Own" programs and educator preparation pipelines
- Provides responsible certification flexibility in high-need areas

MOASPA strongly opposes any legislation that weakens Missouri's public employee retirement systems or reduces long-term workforce stability.

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### **3. Oppose the Diversion of Public Education Funds to Privatized Programs Without Accountability**

MOASPA opposes the expansion of voucher programs, Empowerment Scholarship Accounts (ESAs), and education tax credit programs that divert public funds away from public schools.

Public dollars must be subject to public accountability. Any private school, charter school, or program receiving public funds—directly or indirectly—must meet comparable standards required of public school districts, including:

- Financial transparency and independent audits
- Nondiscrimination protections and enrollment transparency
- Student discipline, safety, and incident reporting
- Compliance with applicable state labor and prevailing wage requirements when public funds support construction or capital projects
- Compliance with minimum educator salary and credentialing expectations aligned to public education standards

MOASPA supports parental engagement and educational innovation in public education and opposes policies that undermine the fiscal and operational stability of public school districts, while not applying consistent expectations to other entities that receive public funds, directly or indirectly.

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### **4. Open Enrollment Only With Clear Guardrails and Sustainable Funding**

MOASPA recognizes that open-enrollment proposals may be advanced during the 2026 legislative session. MOASPA supports open enrollment **only if** participation remains voluntary and districts retain full authority over capacity and program availability.

MOASPA urges that any open enrollment legislation include:

- Clear enrollment timelines, capacity protections, and transparent acceptance criteria
- Explicit funding mechanisms that cover the true marginal cost of enrollment
- Clear responsibility for special education services and compliance
- Clear transportation responsibility (provider, funding source, and eligibility)
- Protections against unfunded mandates that worsen staffing shortages

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### **5. Ensure Fair, Transparent, and Responsible School Accountability Systems**

MOASPA supports accountability systems that provide families with meaningful information about school performance. However, accountability models must accurately reflect district context and student populations.

MOASPA supports accountability systems that:

- Recognize student growth alongside achievement
- Recognize local district priorities and focus areas
- Account for student mobility and small subgroup sizes
- Include a data verification and appeals process prior to public release
- Avoid punitive consequences based on incomplete or unstable data
- Ensure that all schools receiving public funds—directly or indirectly—are subject to uniform evaluation standards and processes