MARE Focus

JANUARY 9, 2026 | FROM THE DESK OF MR. KEVIN SANDLIN, MARE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ENDORSEMENTS

American Fidelity Assurance Co.

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.

Veregy

MARE PARTNERSHIPS

- **LEGAL 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.

Breckenridge R-I Superintendent Search – Dr. Margret Anderson is the Search Consultant. She can be reached at (816) 898-0005 or **mg2.anderson@gmail.com**. **(TBD)**

Newburg R-II Superintendent Search – Dr. Michael Jinks is the Search Consultant. He can be reached at (660) 441-7473 or **19mj46@charter.net**. **(02/06/2026)**

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, North Harrison R-III, Madison C-3, Prairie Home R-V & La Monte R-IV.

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 meet at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, January 26th at the State Board Meeting Room in Jefferson City. For more information on this work, please check out the website at this link: Missouri School Funding Modernization Task Force.

Quote of the Week

"Small steps taken daily can create big changes this year."
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.

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! Thanks to our very generous sponsors, we were able to commit over $43,000 to new scholarships for the 2026-2027 school year for students wanting to become Missouri teachers. Please make plans now to support this growing event!

Your Efforts are Making a Difference! Stay the Course!

MOCAAT – What Can You Do for Me?



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

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



Rural Schools Initiative – UCM

Our Mission

The UCM Rural Schools Initiative empowers students and educators in rural Missouri communities by providing equitable access to high-quality education, resources and support.

Supporting Our Rural School Partners

The UCM College of Education is committed to supporting the education of all students in the rural schools of Missouri. One of our priorities is supporting and aiding our rural partners in their efforts to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. We are committed to helping them improve the educational environment and supporting sound instructional practices. UCM's Rural Schools Initiative brings rural school districts together through two annual Rural School Summits and ongoing professional development opportunities. The summits, hosted each spring and fall, offer a day-long networking event at UCM with experts in different fields, plus the chance to meet with student-teachers seeking jobs. UCM also helps integrate computer science into rural classrooms and provides flexible pathways for paraprofessionals to earn teaching credentials, helping schools grow their own educators and address teacher shortages.

Legislative Issues Impacting Rural Education

GREATER MARYVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

OUR FIRST POWER HOUR OF 2026 IS AN EDUCATIONAL SESSION ON

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES IMPACTING RURAL EDUCATION



TUESDAY, JANUARY 27
8:30 -9:45 AM
NODAWAY CO ADMINISTRATION
403 NORTH MARKET, MARYVILLE

Session topics & speakers include

- Diversion of funds from public education to private, urban schools and charters - **Duane Martin, EDCounsel**
- The impact of potential funding changes on local school districts panel conversation with **John Rinehart of LJ Hart, Nancy Greeley of MO Dept of Elementary & Secondary Education**, and others

Attend to learn how decisions in Jefferson City are impacting the educational system in Nodaway County.

for more information

660-582-8643

director@maryvillechamber.com

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

Missouri Youth Leadership Forum

The Governor's Council on Disability is pleased to announce **that applications are now open for the 2026 Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF)**.

This is a highly regarded, week-long program designed for Missouri high school students with disabilities, ages 16-21. MO-YLF provides delegates with a structured, immersive experience focused on developing critical leadership skills and ensuring a successful transition to post-secondary education, employment, and independent living.

Delegates will spend the week on the University of Missouri campus in Columbia, engaging with successful adult mentors and leaders from the disability community. **The entire program is offered at no cost to selected delegates**, thanks to support from our generous sponsors and donors.

Please share this opportunity with your colleagues, family members, or constituents who may know a student who would benefit from participation.

Watch the Experience Come to Life!

To truly capture the **energy and scope** of the Forum, we encourage you to view the following promotional videos. Produced by the Office of Administration (OA) communications team, these resources feature highlights from the 2024 Forum, including legislative role-playing, collaborative projects, adaptive sports, social events, and personal testimonials from parents and staff:

- Missouri Youth Leadership Forum Video for Parents and Teachers
- Missouri Youth Leadership Forum Video for Potential Delegates

Mark your calendar!

When: July 14-18, 2026

Where: University of Missouri – Columbia

Application Deadline: March 16, 2026

MO-YLF is more than just a leadership camp. It's an immersive program that delivers critical leadership and transition skills through five core pillars:

- **Leadership & Advocacy:** Workshops cover key areas like self-advocacy, goal setting, and self-determination.
- **History & Culture:** They will explore the rich history of disability rights and culture while connecting with successful mentors.
- **Career & College Readiness:** Delegates get vital resources to prepare for a successful transition to adulthood and careers.
- **Community & Friendship:** They will form friendships and networks with peers and young leaders from the disability community.
- **Recreation & Fun:** The experience is rounded out with adaptive sports, social events (talent show, dance), and more

If you know a student who would benefit, encourage them to apply or learn more by visiting: disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylf

Applications close on **March 16, 2026**—don't let them miss this chance!

Together, let's support the next generation of leaders in Missouri's disability community.

Sincerely,

The Governor's Council on Disability

Bronaugh R-VII Partnership for PD with TBA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Team-Builders Academy partners with Bronaugh R-VII School District for highly engaging staff and leadership PD supporting communications and retention initiatives.

ST. ROBERT, MO – [Dec 30th, 2025] – Team-Builders Academy is proud to announce a new partnership with Bronaugh School District to deliver high-impact, interactive professional development to every member of the Wildcats team. This district-wide initiative will provide hands-on, engaging training designed to strengthen relationships, build trust, increase retention, and create a shared language of connection that supports both staff and students.

The partnership centers on Team-Builders Academy's nationally recognized Connection Codes framework, beginning with an all-staff experience that establishes psychological safety, emotional intelligence, and contagious engagement. From there, educators will move into practical, classroom-focused training that translates these concepts into real-world strategies for classroom management, student connection, and teacher self-regulation.

Administrators and leaders will also participate in dedicated leadership sessions focused on communication, de-escalation, and trust-building, ensuring that the district's culture of connection is modeled from the top down. These sessions are designed to help leaders navigate conflict, maintain trust during high-stress moments, and align leadership practices with the district's shared values.

Through this partnership, Bronaugh School District is investing in more than professional development—it is investing in a sustainable culture of connection, trust, and leadership that empowers educators and students to thrive together.

Team-Builders Academy, LLC Office: 573-842-8026 bryan.teambuilders@gmail.com Helping leaders build connected and inspired teams!

About Bryan Rush: Bryan Rush helps education teams navigate change with clarity, connection, and purpose. For over 20 years, he's trained educators to reduce conflict, predict behavior, and build retention—equipping them with tools to thrive in times of transition. His mission is simple yet profound: to build others up so they can do good in the world.

As a leadership and staff development trainer, Bryan delivers high-impact, engaging experiences that have helped local schools enjoy over 90% retention rates over the last few years. He's proud to have served more than 25 businesses, K–12 schools, universities, and military bases—each with measurable improvement.

Bryan is a certified Maxwell Leadership Member with a Specialty in Leadership and Management from Harvard Business School. He's also a proud husband, father, and

U.S. Combat Veteran. His team at Team-Builders Academy is dedicated to making world-class development accessible to local schools.
Above all, Bryan shows up with care, curiosity, and a learner's heart. He's honored to serve—and excited to help your district succeed.
Contact Bryan Below.

Bryan C. Rush
Maxwell Leadership Certified Trainer | Harvard Leadership and Management Specialist
Team Builders Academy | Mobile: 573-842-8026 | bryan.teambuilders@gmail.com
Maxwell DISC Pattern - IDC

MARE Organization Staff

Kevin F. Sandlin -- Cell Phone: (660) 351-0596 -- Email: ksandlin@moare.com
Executive Director
Jerry L Cochran, EdD. -- Cell Phone: (660) 596-3184 -- Email: cochranj115@gmail.com
Assistant Executive Director
Ray V. Patrick, EdD. – Cell Phone: (660) 909 – 5118 – Email: rpatrick@moare.com
Associate Director
Missouri Association of Rural Education
710 N College, Suite C
Warrensburg, Missouri 64093
(660) 747-8050
Fax: (660) 747-8160
Website: www.moare.com

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