MARE Focus

APRIL 8, 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

2026-2027 Superintendents from MARE Searches

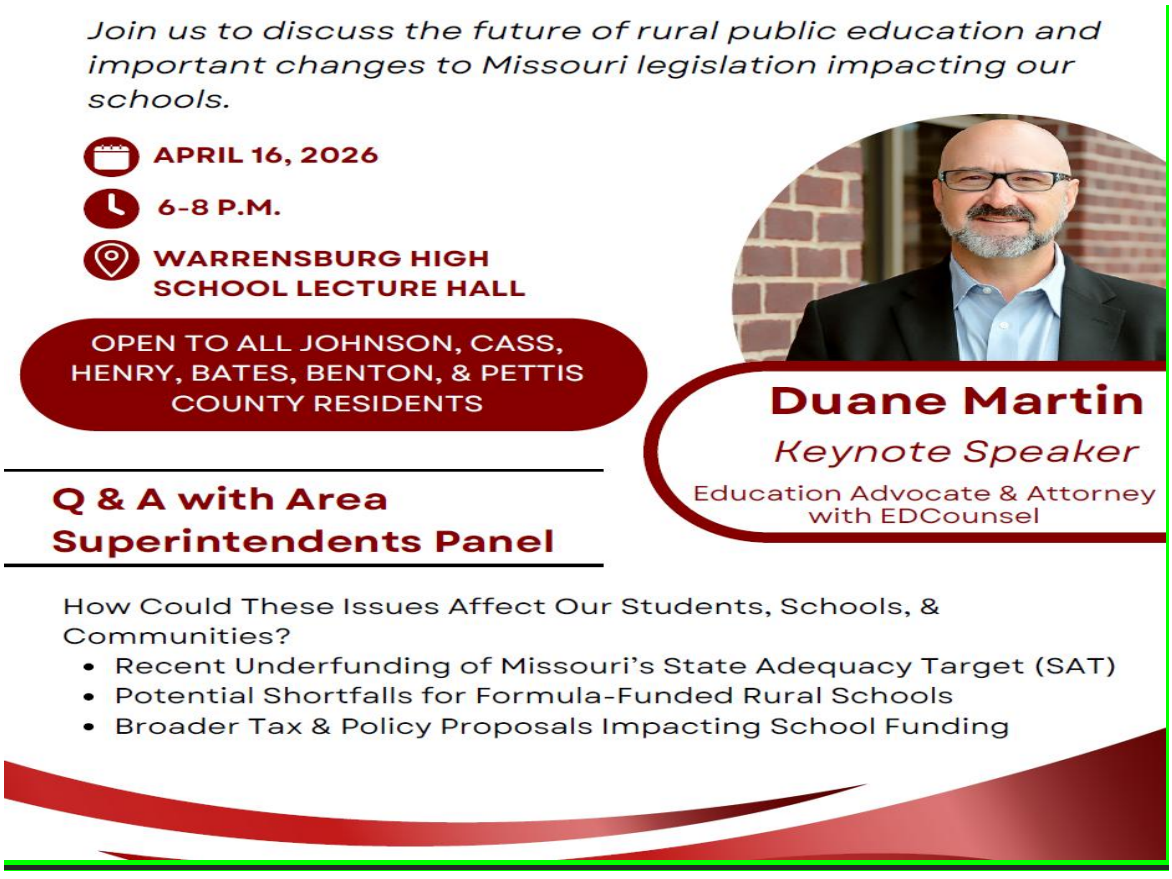
– The following individuals were selected to serve as Superintendents for the 2026-2027 school year through MARE facilitated Superintendent Searches:

Name	District	Name	District
Dr. Seth Ward	Altenburg 48	Mr. Phillip Pohren	Maryville R-II
Mr. Tim Thompson	Archie R-V	Dr. Chris Marshall	Morgan Co. R-I
Mr. Dereck Wilson	Bismarck R-V	Mr. Bryant Jones	NE Randolph Co. R-IV
Mr. Michael Creekmore	Breckenridge R-I	Mr. Doug Dunn	Newburg R-II
Mrs. Emily Koenig	Chaffee R-II	Mr. Josh Smith	North Harrison R-III
Dr. Tony Warstadt	Kirbyville R-VI	Mr. Seth Morton	Orrick R-XI
Dr. James Frank	La Monte R-IV	Mr. Justin Thomas	Pettis Co. R-V
Dr. Kimberly Walters	Linn Co. R-I	Mrs. Melody Paulson	Prairie Home R-V
Mrs. Nicole Roark	Madison C-3	Mrs. Paul Brown	Santa Fe R-X

**** Please join us in making these new leaders feel welcome!**

Contact Kevin Sandlin, MARE Executive Director, at (660) 747-8050 or by email at ksandlin@moare.com for more information.

The Future of Rural Schools – Town Hall Meeting



Voices of Small School Leaders – Podcast – Please check out the link below for a podcast featuring Will Darter & Jesse Uhlmeyer. Thanks to these school leaders for sharing.
https://youtu.be/2H9zP7FXFSQ

MARE Recognizes BOE Member Marie Day – Marie Day, BOE member at Chadwick R-I, was recognized by MARE at their scheduled BOE meeting on Thursday, March 26th. Marie served in various teaching roles for a total of 38 years, with the vast majority of those served in the Chadwick R-I School District. In addition to that, she is completing 12 years of service as a BOE member in April of this year. It is our privilege and honor to recognize nonagenarian (90 plus) Marie Day for her loyal and dedicated service to Chadwick R-I. We wish her the very best!



Foundation Formula Modernization Task Force – The group met on Monday, March 30th. The next meeting is on Monday, April 20th at 10:00 a.m. in Jeff City. **Scenarios are on the horizon!** For more information on this work, please check out the website at this link: Missouri School Funding Modernization Task Force.

Quote of the Week

"A good leader inspires people to have confidence in the leader; a great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves."

- Eleanor Roosevelt, former First Lady of the United States

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 **$64,500** 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!

2025-2026 MARE Scholarship Program Information – MARE will award a total of 80 scholarships this year (up from 65 last year) including 18 - $1,000.00 scholarships to college juniors/seniors & 62 - $750.00 scholarships to graduating seniors from MARE member school districts = **Total of $64,500.00** (up from $54,250 last year). Proceeds from the annual golf tournament are our primary source of funding for scholarships. A complete list of scholarship recipients will be posted soon on the MARE website.

2026 MARE/EdCounsel HS Senior Scholarship Recipients

Student	District	Student	District
Sierra Allen	Hickory Co. R-I	Desiray Lewis	Scott City R-I
Joshua Arendt	Hickory Co. R-I	Jana Limberopoulos	Gasconade Co. R-I
Isabella Asante	Camdenton R-III	Joel Long	Santa Fe R-X
Sienna Billings	South Nodaway R-IV	Madelyn Lumby	Neelyville R-IV
Kayden Box	Green Ridge R-VIII	Isabelle Magner	Dixon R-I
Keely Byrd	Odessa R-VII	Helanea McKenzie	Wellsville-Middletown
Kelsey Carter	Montrose R-XIV	Brooklynn Morris	Glasgow
Lillian Chesser	Silex R-I	Alexis Neeley	Tri-County R-VII
Isha Cunningham	Miller R-II	Jordan O'Quinn	Hartville R-II
Jocelyn Curtis	Community R-VI	Abigail Parker	Fayette R-III
Kaylee Drunert	Santa Fe R-X	Jordan Patterson	Clearwater R-I
Addison Eaker	North Callaway R-I	Madison Paxson	Cole Camp R-I
Miley Edens	Bakersfield R-IV	AnnaBelle Perkins	Higbee R-VIII
Carter Fewins	Tri-County R-VII	Kendall Phillips	Bloomfield R-XIV
Annelise Forney	Savannah R-III	Aubrey Rehmert	Maries Co. R-II
Karley Frank	Osage Co. R-II	Taylor Rice	Neelyville R-IV
Trinity Futrell	Naylor R-II	Madelynn Ritter	Warrensburg R-VI
Alana Gauthier	Prairie Home R-V	Jaiden Rodenberg	Chillicothe R-II
Braxton Greer	Hallsville R-IV	Addison Rogers	Pleasant Hope R-VI
Jailee Griffin	Tri-County R-VII	Katelyn Schuman	South Holt Co. R-I
Ashley Haley	Brookfield R-III	Rylie Scott	North Callaway R-I
Naomi Hand	Richland R-IV	Mallory Shaw	Stoutland R-II
Gavin Harding	Chillicothe R-II	Madeline Swope	Clever R-V
Aleksander Harman	Elsberry R-II	Gracie Thompson	Polo R-VII
Jordan Harms	Sherwood Cass R-VIII	Helen Waller	North Callaway R-I
Jenna Helton	Summersville R-II	Seth Walton	Montgomery Co. R-II
Phoebe Hornickel	Maryville R-II	Kristin Waters	Norborne R-VIII
Molly Kelley	North Platte Co. R-I	Dakota Williams	Montgomery Co. R-II
Michael Kincaid	Stoutland R-II	Taylor Williams	Winona R-III
Maggie Kramm-Neighbors	Glasgow	Carman Woodworth	Chillicothe R-II
Blake Lee	Dexter R-XI	Izabelle Yates	Clinton

2026 MARE/MO K-8 Conference – Our conference is scheduled October 21st through October 23rd at the Lodge of Four Seasons. Make plans now to join us. More information can be found on the MARE website at www.moare.com.

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 contact ksandlin@moare.com

Thanks for Making a Difference Today!

Leading with Quiet Conviction – Jesse Uhlmeyer

Leading with Quiet Conviction: Faith, Service, and the Work of a School Leader

Most leadership isn't tested in the spotlight—it's revealed in the quiet moments no one else sees. When the room is empty, titles lose their weight and what you believe takes over. Those are the moments that define you. Because servant leadership isn't a strategy you turn on in meetings— It's a calling you live out daily, shaped by faith and grounded in humility.



Jesse Uhlmeyer

First Thing First

This week's article circles back to where UnCommon EdLeaders began—*Servant Mentality vs. Being a Servant*—because some ideas are too important to visit just once.
The topic found its way back to me at the MASA Spring Conference, when a friend offered a simple but piercing reminder: *"It's not about self-promotion, it's about service."*
That line has stayed with me.
And honestly, what better moment, during this Easter season, to return to the heart of servant leadership—because in a profession that can quietly reward visibility, titles, and recognition, we need the reminder that the most meaningful leadership is often the least self-centered.

Now for This Week's Content

There are moments in school leadership that never make the agenda.
They don't show up in board reports.
They aren't captured in strategic plans.
You won't find them in any leadership framework or evaluation tool.
But they are the moments that define you.
They happen when the room is empty.
When the pressure is real.
When no one is watching.

- It's the conversation you choose to stay in with a staff member who is barely holding it together.
- The decision you make when you could justify it either way.
- The way you respond when you're tired, frustrated, and still expected to lead well.

Those moments reveal something deeper than skill.
They reveal what you believe.

The Leadership No One Sees

In education, we talk a lot about visible leadership—
Communication.
Instruction.
Systems.
Outcomes.

All of it matters.
But there's another layer of leadership that rarely gets discussed—
The internal compass that guides you when the work gets heavy and the answers aren't clear.
For some, that compass is shaped by experience.
For others, by mentors who left a mark.
And for many, it is grounded in faith.
In Mark 10:45, we are reminded: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve..."
That is the model.
Not power.
Not status.
Not control.
But faith expressed through service.
And if that's true, then leadership is no longer about position—
It's about the posture you choose every single day.

Servant Leadership Isn't Soft—It's Sacrificial

"Servant leadership" sounds good.
Until it costs you something.
And it will.
It asks you to:

- Stay patient when you're running out of it
- Extend grace when it isn't deserved
- Carry responsibility without recognition
- Do what's right—even when it's unpopular

That kind of leadership isn't passive.
It's demanding.
It's disciplined.
And at times, it's deeply sacrificial.
It requires humility—but not weakness.
Conviction—but not ego.
And most days, it happens quietly—without applause.

Faith as an Anchor, Not a Spotlight

For leaders who are faith-filled, belief doesn't need to be loud to be powerful.
It shows up in quieter ways:

- In the belief that every student has inherent worth
- In the decision to extend grace, even when it's undeserved
- In the commitment to do what is right, even when it is difficult
- In the understanding that leadership is stewardship—not ownership

Faith isn't something you impose.
It's something that shapes you.
It becomes the anchor that holds steady when criticism comes, when decisions feel heavy, and when outcomes don't come easily.

The Tension Leaders Carry

Here's the truth many leaders feel—but don't always say out loud:
You can be deeply committed to your faith
and still feel exhausted.
You can believe in serving others
and still feel underappreciated.
You can lead with humility
and still be required to make hard, unpopular decisions.
You can lead with integrity
and still be misunderstood.
That tension is real.
And it doesn't make you a lesser leader.
It makes you human.
Because leadership will wear on you if you let it.
Faith is what steadies you when it does.

What Grounds You Shows

You don't have to announce what you believe.
People already know.
Not because you told them—
but because they've experienced you.
They see it in the way you respond when someone is at their lowest.
They feel it in your steadiness when everything around you is unsettled.
They notice it in your tone when you're tired, frustrated, or under pressure.
They trust it in the consistency of how you show up—day after day.
Belief isn't proven in what you say when things are easy.
It's revealed in how you live when they're not.

A Different Measure

The world is very clear about how it keeps score.
A-F Scales
Numbers.
Rankings.
Recognition.
Visible results that can be reported, compared, and applauded.
And those things matter.
But they're not the whole story.
Because faith asks a different question—one that doesn't fit neatly on a dashboard:
Were you faithful in how you led?
When no one was watching...
When the decision was difficult...
When the outcome was uncertain...
Were you faithful?
Did you:

- Serve people, even when it required more of you than you had planned to give?
- Lead with humility when it would have been easier to protect your position?
- Choose integrity when compromise would have been unnoticed?
- Align your actions with what you believe—especially when it cost you something?

Because leadership isn't ultimately measured by what you produce.
It's measured by what you shape.
The culture you create.
The trust you build.
The people who grow because of how you led them.
That kind of impact doesn't always show up immediately.
But it shows up over time—in who people become long after they've left your building.

Closing: Faithful in the Work

Long after the meetings end...
after the initiatives change...
after your title is passed on to someone else...
What remains is not the position you held—
It's how you led.
That is the call.
To lead with quiet conviction.
To serve without needing recognition.
To stay grounded in something deeper than the noise of the moment.
Because in the end, leadership isn't about being seen.
It's about being faithful—
to the work,
to the people,
to the One who called you to serve in the first place and you hear those words — "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Until next time,
Choose UnCommon

Learning Blade Corner

LearningBlade Powered by eDynamic Learning CORNER

April 2026 Learning Blade Corner

Maximize Learning Blade This Testing Season!

State testing is underway, but learning does not have to slow down. Keep students engaged with Learning Blade's interactive, self-paced lessons that reinforce STEM, computer science, and CTE skills.

Looking for ideas? Our "**30 Ways to Use Learning Blade**" blog is packed with quick implementation tips, including:

- Bell ringers with quick STEM activities
- Early finisher assignments that keep students learning
- Hands-on offline STEM projects
- Career exploration through real-world missions



...and many more easy ways to keep students engaged during testing season!

Click here to explore all the 30 ways to use Learning Blade.

Sign up for your fully funded account here.

Nitazenes Health Advisory

DHSS issued a **health advisory** and **news release** on Tuesday, March 24, to alert the public about the rising use of **nitazenes**, a highly potent class of synthetic opioids increasingly found in counterfeit pills, powders, and vapes—often without users knowing. Because they are significantly stronger than fentanyl, even a very small amount can cause someone to stop breathing and lead to a life-threatening overdose very quickly. In Missouri, recent wastewater testing in schools has detected nitazenes in several communities, indicating that young people may be unknowingly exposed to these drugs through substances.

Please view and share the **health advisory** and the attached **Substance Abuse Prevention Guide**, along with information about the free **National Virtual School Assembly**: The Risks are Real: The Truth About Fentanyl and Fake Pills.

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Tobacco Prevention and Control Program
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health.mo.gov/living/wellness/tobacco/smokingandtobacco

Missouri's Rural Schools & The First Law of Holes



You are encouraged to join the Town Hall meeting at the Warrensburg High School on Thursday, April 16th at 6:00 p.m. The slide deck presentation link for that event is shared below: Please review and share this information with other concerned patrons!

Missouri's Rural Schools & The First Law of Holes

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