MARE Focus

JUNE 17, 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

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 Superintendent Searches

– MARE prides itself in providing a thorough, district-focused and economical Superintendent Search service. If you are making plans to retire or leave your current district next year, please give MARE an opportunity to visit with your district about our Superintendent Search Program. We have a team of seven former district Superintendents who make up our search team. For the sixth year in a row, MARE has provided more facilitated searches than any other entity in the state. Please contact Kevin Sandlin, Executive Director, at (660) 747-8050 or ksandlin@moare.com for more information.

Rural Leaders Literacy Fellowship

My name is Heather Zuerblis, and I lead rural literacy support at Leading Educators. I'm reaching out because we're recruiting rural elementary principals for the Rural Literacy Leaders Fellowship, part of Leading Educators' Science of Reading Network, and I wondered if this opportunity might be relevant to principals in your state network.

The fellowship is fully funded and designed specifically for rural elementary principals who want to use assessment data more effectively, align literacy supports, and strengthen schoolwide systems for lasting improvement through practical coaching, implementation support, and collaboration with peers facing similar realities.

The experience begins with a **free 4-day intensive** that gives principals dedicated time, practical tools, and peer connection to support literacy leadership in rural school communities.

Applications are open through June 30

Heather Zuerblis | Leading Educators
Senior Director, Science of Reading
hzuerblis@leadingeducators.org

August 4th Primary Ballot – Issues to Be Aware

Gov. Mike Kehoe will ask Missouri voters in August to decide whether lawmakers should have new power to expand sales taxes to replace the income tax and whether citizen-led constitutional amendments should face a higher bar for passage.

Kehoe moved four proposed constitutional amendments to the Aug. 4 primary ballot: Amendment 1, renewing a sales tax for state parks and soil conservation; Amendment 2, requiring direct election of county assessors; Amendment 4, changing the threshold for constitutional amendments proposed by initiative petition; and Amendment 5, authorizing lawmakers to expand sales taxes as part of an effort to eliminate the state income tax.

Check out this link for some information on these amendments from our friends at MRTA! ..\YourVoteMatters.pdf

Foundation Formula Modernization Task Force

— The next meeting is on Monday, July 13th 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. **Please note and share the link below for community input on this process.**

Submit Comments to DESE Task Force

Opportunity to Recognize Outstanding Staff

The Missouri Association of Rural Education will present awards for outstanding performance in the area of rural education. Four such awards will be given during the luncheon on **Thursday, October 22nd** as part of the Annual MARE/MO K-8 Conference at The Lodge of Four Seasons, Lake Ozark, Missouri. One award will be presented in each of the following areas.

- ***Outstanding Rural Teacher (1 award)***
  (Teachers from any grade level are eligible.)
- **Outstanding Rural Support Staff Member (1 award)**
  (Secretaries, aides, cafeteria employees, bus drivers, bookkeepers, etc.)
- ***Outstanding Rural Administrator (1 award)***
  (Principals and Superintendents are eligible.)
- ***Outstanding Rural School District (1 award)***
  (Any MARE member school district is eligible.)

To submit a nomination for an award, please complete the nomination form for each nominee. (No limit on number of nominees a school district may submit.) A minimum of three support letters is needed to validate the nomination. The support letters should provide information explaining why the individual or school district is being nominated. Nominations may be submitted by:

- Completing the nomination form on the MARE website and linked here 2026 Outstanding Rural Education Awards Nomination Form or
- Mailing or emailing (ksandlin@moare.com) all the requested information in an envelope marked, **"Award Nomination"** to the MARE office at the addressed listed above.

All nominations & materials must be received by 12:00 noon on Friday, September 25, 2026 to be eligible for consideration by the Awards Committee!

Inclusive Leadership Lab Survey – Please Participate!

Our friends at Inclusive Leadership Lab are inviting all to participate in a survey regarding the collaboration between Special Education & General Education Departments. Your input is desired so that the team will have more accurate data to base future programs and presentations on.

Inclusive Leadership Lab is partnering with the National Organization of the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) in this endeavor to gather more input. They would love to have feedback from Missouri leadership in this effort.

Please take a moment to access the link below and provide your input. Share with other team members within your respective district staffs as well. Survey closes soon!

https://www.inclusiveleadershiplab.org/survey



DR. NIKKI HARDING
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, FOUNDER
785-547-5936
nikkieinclusiveleadershiplab.org
www.inclusiveleadershiplab.org

Dr. Nikki Harding
CEO, Founder
Inclusive Leadership Lab
Here is my calendar!
785-547-5936
We improve special education processes for teachers and administrators so they can better support their most vulnerable students in achieving their full potential.

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.

..\2026 Conference Folder\2026 Conference Registration.pdf

..\2026 Conference Folder\2026 Exhibitor & Sponsor Registration (1).pdf

..\2026 Conference Folder\2026 Exhibitor & Sponsor Registration (2).pdf

..\2026 Conference Folder\Conference Call for Presentations Application - 2026.pdf

2026-2027 District Membership Invoices – Membership invoices for 2026-2027 will be mailed on June 17, 2026. Please be on the lookout for the mailing addressed to the District Superintendent. Membership invoices should be paid by September 16, 2026! If you have any questions regarding your status as a MARE member, please reach out to me. If you are not a current member, we would love to have you join the other 419 MARE member school districts across the state!

Quote of the Week

"An education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don't. It's knowing where to go to find out what you need to know; and it's knowing how to use the information you get."

– William Feather

2026 DHSS School Health Academy –



To register, click on the link below:
2026 School Health Academy Registration

MOCAAT – What Can You Do for Me?



Board Training Schedule for 2026 – See dates/locations below!

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, August 14, 2026 (12:00 noon - 6:00 p.m.)
- Saturday, August 15, 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.co

June Learning Blade Corner

June 2026 LB Corner

School's Almost Out… But Learning Doesn't Have to Be!

Summer is the perfect time to explore Learning Blade, your go-to tool for STEM/CS/CTE enrichment!

Whether you're planning for the fall, brushing up on tech skills, or exploring exciting career pathways for your students, Learning Blade is here to support you all summer long.

From self-paced lessons to hands-on activities, you can:

- Discover new ways to integrate STEM into your classroom
- Try out engaging missions on real-world careers
- Get ahead on lesson planning with zero stress!

Make this summer count. Start exploring with Learning Blade today! Sign up for your fully funded account: LearningBlade.com/States



Plato R-V Partners with Team Builders Academy

Plato R-V School District Invests In Connection Keys PD Partnership With Team-Builders Academy To Strengthen Connection, Engagement, And Classroom Success.

PLATO, MO – [June 4, 2026] – Plato R-V School District is partnering with Team-Builders Academy (TBA) to provide ground breaking professional development opportunities for educators throughout the upcoming school year.

The partnership includes a comprehensive suite of training services, featuring foundational courses such as Connection Keys Part 1: Unlocking Everything Relationship, Connection Keys In The Classroom, Cooler Heads Prevail, and the 10+ System of Contagious Engagement. These workshops are designed to strengthen relationships, improve classroom management, enhance communication, and increase engagement among staff and students.

For Plato leaders, the decision to partner with Team-Builders Academy was driven by firsthand experience.

"It's rare for me to walk into a room of 100-ish strangers and walk out 90 minutes later feeling like a community," said Linda Meckem, Instructional Coach for Plato Eagles School District. "I was amazed at the growth I had personally and professionally during this PD. For me, it was a masterclass in engaging educators where we used everything from uno cards as visual aids to intentional movement, we explored the depth of our personality traits through laughter and connection. The time flew by! I was expecting nervous awkwardness with these people I didn't know. But again, for me, it proves that when learning is interactive, a short amount of time is all you need to bridge the gap between stranger and colleague. If it took 90 minutes to connect 100 strangers, I am beyond excited to see what we will accomplish in an entire school year, and how we will increasingly thrive as a staff."

Schools investing in intentional professional development are creating stronger cultures, improving collaboration, and equipping educators with practical tools they can use immediately. With this partnership, Plato R-V School District joins a growing number of schools investing in meaningful professional development that focuses on relationships, engagement, communication, and long-term success.

Team-Builders Academy, LLC Office: 573-842-8026 bryanrush@tbaconnect.net Helping leaders build connected and inspired teams!

Would it be a bad idea to explore what intentional professional development could accomplish in your district?

About Team-Builders Academy:
Team-Builders Academy is a proven company of Certified Maxwell Leadership Members, we are formally trained in speaking, training, and coaching leadership and team development methodologies. Our team includes Certified Behavioral Analysis Consultants in the Maxwell DISC Method, equipping organizations with data-driven insights to improve collaboration and performance. We are the creators of the Connection Codes Ecosystem Team Training Program and hold specialization from Harvard Business School in Leadership and Management.

We leverage our collective 40 years of experience and strategic expertise to deliver impactful training and consulting services tailored to client specific needs, driving measurable results and sustainable organizational growth.

Contact Bryan Below.

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

Scholarship Golf Tournament - Monday, July 20th

MARE/MO K-8 Conference - October 21st-23rd

Special Thanks to Dr. Troy Marnholtz, Dr. Carless Osbourn & Mr. Nick Larson – Former MARE Board Members!

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

If you are the intended recipient but do not wish to receive communication through this medium, please notify the sender immediately.