MARE Focus

JULY 15, 2026 | FROM THE DESK OF MR. KEVIN SANDLIN, MARE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ENDORSEMENTS

American Fidelity Assurance Co.

Claim Care, Inc.

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

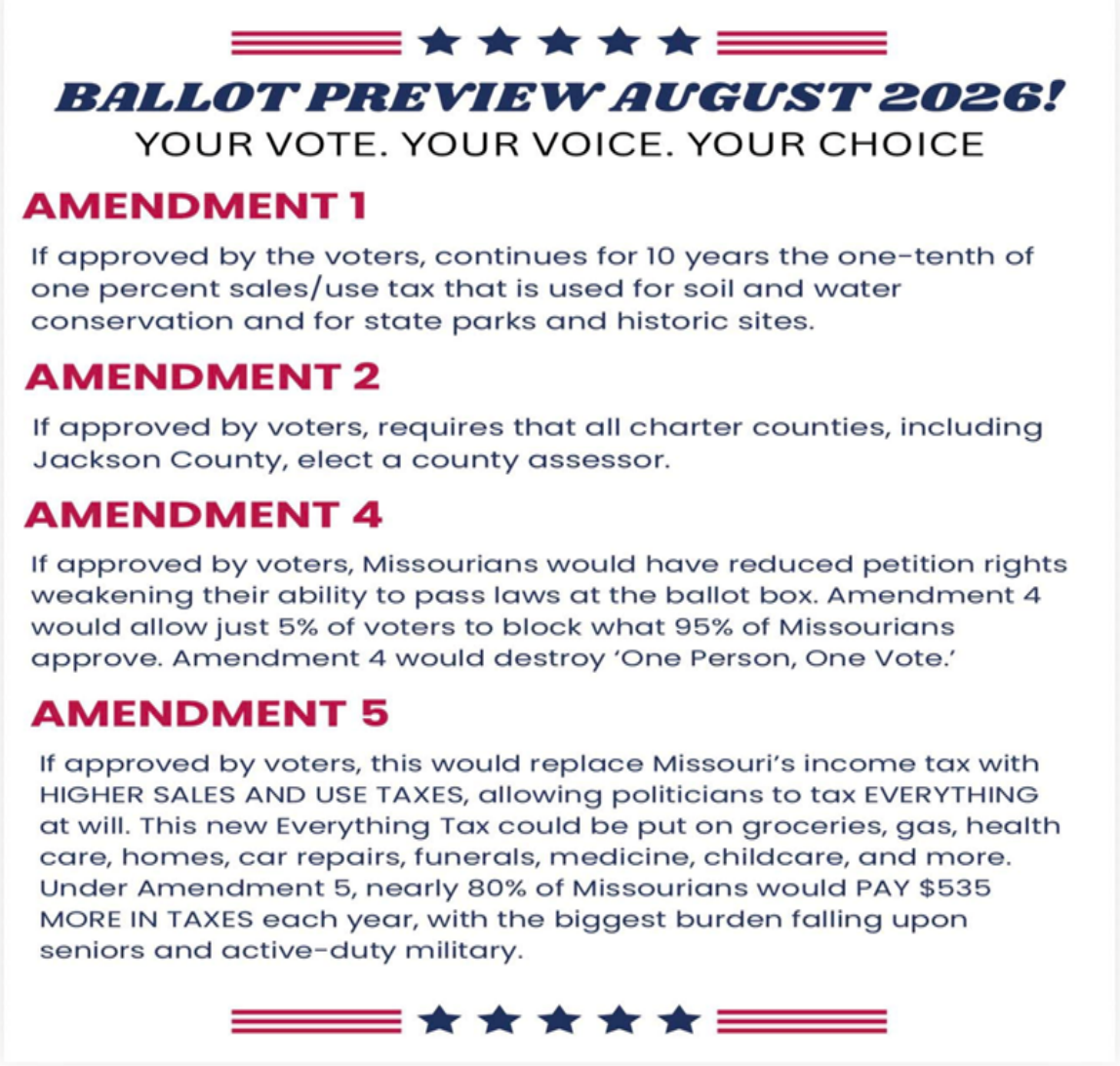
2026-2027 Superintendent Searches

– 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.

New Search Postings Coming Soon!

Ballot Measures for Tuesday, August 4th

– **It is imperative that we share this information and rally voters to take a stand on Tuesday, August 4th! Amendment 4 & Amendment 5 are of utmost importance! Please share!**



More Information on Amendment 5 – Please review and share!

Just an FYI for anyone interested in the potential impacts of Amendment 5 on Missouri public school districts clients. If you go to **Across the Aisle for Missouri Public Schools'** website (**AAMPS.US**) and click on the Amendment 5 tab (Amendment 5 - Across the Aisle for Missouri Public Schools), you will find a wealth of information about the topic. Please feel free to share.

Blended Security for K-12 Schools – Webinar Opportunity

Topic The Challenge of Blended Security for K-12 Schools

Description SlateXP and Central Technologies invite you to an important webinar discussion on how relying on physical security alone - without strong digital protections - puts your K12 students at risk. Join us for a timely and practical conversation led by Tim Carter, who has over four decades of K-12 education and school safety experience and has helped districts strengthen their safety practices through assessment, training, and policy development. Today, Tim leads customer success and training for SlateXP and will explore the power of layered security to safeguard students, staff, and faculty from both external and internal threats. We look forward to having you join this important discussion. REGISTER TODAY!

Time Jul 22, 2026 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

You are invited to register for a Zoom webinar!

When: Jul 22, 2026 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)
Topic: The Challenge of Blended Security for K-12 Schools

Register in advance for this webinar:
https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_p1AlDv-XT1-QhB8HUwNypg

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

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!

Foundation Formula Modernization Task Force – The next meeting is on Monday, August 10th 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, bookkeepersetc.)
- ***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!

Scholarship Golf Tournament - Monday, July 20th

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

Quote of the Week

"It is not the team with the best players that win. It is the players with the best team that win!" InstaQuote

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

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.com

The Voice of Rural Schools – 2026 NREA Annual Report

You are viewing the first annual report in the history of the National Rural Education Association.

NREA was founded in 1907. For more than a century, this organization has been the national voice for rural schools, and for most of that time, the work happened without a formal public accounting of the year behind us. That changes now.

This report is for you - our members, our state affiliates, our partners, and the rural education community we exist to serve. It is a snapshot of where NREA is, what we accomplished this year, and where we are headed. It is also a commitment. Going forward, you will hear from us each year in this form: honest, clear, and grounded in the work.

Rural schools deserve an organization that operates with the same transparency and accountability it asks of the systems it advocates for. This report is that standard in practice.

Follow the link for more information: - 2026 NREA Annual Report

American Heart Association – Our friends with the American Heart Association have reached out share information regarding rural health concerns and issues. Please access the links below to find more useful information. Share within your education community!

The one thing I'll add to this conversation is around the Cardiac Emergency Response Plan piece given that it is state law now. The below paragraph may add some additional context and be useful for sharing in some fashion:

- Last summer, Governor Parson, in seeking to strengthen community level preparedness, signed SB 68. The bill requires every school to have a **Cardiac Emergency Response Plan** by the **start of the 2026-2027 school year.** Missouri joined a growing number of states in working to ensure the cardiac arrest chain of survival is strong in schools, an effort that is often especially

important in rural areas given longer EMS response and transport times. Because this work is so important, groups like the **American Heart Association** and the **Missouri EMS Association** are working to support schools in building out – and executing - strong plans. More information – including potential funding – can be found **here** and schools can reach out to the American Heart Association for technical assistance using this **quick survey** or by contacting the Association's Rural Health Director for Missouri: **Tim.Nikolai@heart.org**.

..\Newsletter Content MARE July2026.pdf
..\Presentation - Rural MO.pdf
..\AHA Rural Health Update (07.26).pdf

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.

2026 MARE College Scholarship Recipients

Student	College Attending
Garrett Austin	Missouri State University - Lebanon
Darcy Elizalde	Missouri State University - SP
Delaney Feldmann	Columbia College
Laydon Fields	Northwest Missouri State University
Seanny Freeman	Hannibal-LaGrange University
Josie Gilbert	Missouri Southern State University
Bethany Ginnings	Drury University – St. Robert
Michaela Grannemann	Missouri State University - WP
Melanie Hartman	Missouri Southern State University
Terra Huffman	Central Methodist University
Lyndsey King	North Central Missouri College
Kiley Mattson	Northwest Missouri State University
Abagail Mooney	Culver-Stockton College
Andrew Nix	Southeast Missouri State University
Hannah Phillips	Missouri State University – SP
Cora Pittsenbarger	Missouri Southern State University
Clare Scott	Missouri State University – WP
Kamryn Stubenrauch	Southeast Missouri State University

MOCAAT – What Can You Do for Me?

MOCAAT™



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

Before the First Bill: Understanding the Process Behind Missouri's Legislative Agenda

The most important education debates often begin long before legislators file their first bill. This post may seem really early. The August and November elections are still emany weeks or months away, but right now organizations across the state are setting t their legislative priorities for 2027.



Jesse Uhlmeyer

Every January, hundreds of bills are filed in Jefferson City.
To most school leaders, it can feel like those ideas appeared overnight.
They didn't.
Months before the legislative session begins, organizations across Missouri are busy deciding what they want lawmakers to discuss. They conduct research, commission studies, write policy papers, meet with legislators, and publish legislative agendas. By the time the first committee hearing is held, many of the year's biggest conversations have already started.
If you're only paying attention once bills are filed, you've already joined the conversation late.

Every Organization Has Priorities

One of the biggest misconceptions about state government is that legislators create every idea themselves.
In reality, lawmakers hear proposals from countless organizations that represent different interests.
Some advocate for business.
Some advocate for agriculture.
Some advocate for taxpayers.
Some advocate for teachers.
Some advocate for public schools.
Some advocate for private school choice.
Some advocate for local government.
Some advocate for less government.
Each believes its recommendations will improve Missouri.
None of that is unusual. It's how representative government works.

Why This Matters for Rural Schools

Here's where rural education often gets caught off guard.
Many advocacy organizations have full-time policy staff.
They publish reports.
They draft model legislation.
They meet with lawmakers year-round.
Meanwhile, rural superintendents are...
Driving buses.
Covering classrooms.
Managing budgets.
Attending extracurricular events.
Playing part-time custodian.
Meeting with parents.
Preparing board agendas.
Running levy calculations.
Trying to keep schools open.
These things are all just part of the job under the portion of your contract that says "other duties assigned".
It's difficult to compete with organizations whose full-time job is influencing policy.

If You Aren't In the Room...

There's an old saying: If your not at the table, then you're probably on the menu

For rural schools, that statement isn't about politics.
It's about perspective.
No think tank, association, or advocacy group knows your community better than you do.
No one understands your staffing challenges better than your board.
No one understands what happens when funding changes better than the superintendent balancing next year's budget.
Your voice matters because your reality is different.

Read More Than People Who Agree With You

One habit every superintendent should develop is reading everyone's agenda.
Read organizations you support.
Read organizations you disagree with.
Read the policy papers.
Read the research.
Read the recommendations.
Not because you'll agree with every conclusion, but because you'll understand what conversations may soon reach the Capitol.
You can't effectively respond to ideas you've never seen coming.

A Case In Point

Last November, the Show-Me Institute released its 2026 Blueprint.
Whether you agree with its recommendations or not isn't the point.
The document is a reminder that many of the ideas debated in Jefferson City don't begin in the Capitol. This document was released in advance of the 2026 Legislative session and many of the priorities are still at the forefront of legislative debates and ballot measures.
Things like...
Expanding the MoScholars voucher program
Expanding charter schools
Revising the Foundation Formula for public school funding
Income tax reform
Property tax reform
These priorities took shape months before the legislative session began as organizations, like the Show-Me Institute, developed policy agendas and advocated for them.

The UnCommon Challenge

Leadership isn't simply reacting to legislation.
It's understanding where legislation begins.
The next education debate isn't being written under the Capitol dome today.
It's being drafted in conference rooms, research offices, board meetings, and policy organizations across Missouri.
The superintendents who understand that process are better prepared—not just to respond, but to help shape the conversation before someone else shapes it for them.