



# Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Jefferson State Office Bldg.  
205 Jefferson St., PO Box 480, Jefferson City 65102  
Telephone: (573) 751-4212  
www.dese.mo.gov

## State Board of Education

Under the Missouri Constitution (Article IX), the State Board of Education has general authority for “supervision of instruction in the public schools.” Today, this responsibility includes the oversight of educational programs and services that serve Missourians from preschool through the adult levels.

The State Board of Education is composed of eight lay citizens, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate to serve eight-year terms. The terms are staggered so that one term expires each year. No more than four members may belong to the same political party. No more than one member of the board may live in the same county or congressional district.

The board appoints the commissioner of education to serve as its chief executive officer and as director of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The board is required by law to meet at least twice a year in Jefferson City. Generally, though, the board meets each month.

The primary role of the board is to provide leadership and advocacy for the improvement of Missouri’s public education system. The board also establishes policies and regulations needed to carry out state and federal laws related to public education. The board’s major duties include:

- Setting accreditation standards for local school districts through the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP). The accreditation standards define basic requirements for curriculum, student performance, staffing, high school graduation and other areas of school operations.
- Establishing “academic performance standards” for the public schools and designing

an assessment system to measure students’ learning, as required by state law.

- Setting education and certification requirements for all professional personnel (teachers, administrators, librarians, counselors, etc.) in public schools.
- Approving educator-preparation programs in the state’s community colleges and four-year institutions, both public and private.
- Establishing regulations and administrative requirements for the distribution of state and federal funds to school districts and other agencies.
- Monitoring school districts’ compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. This includes the administration of federally supported programs in the areas of special education, career-technical education and child nutrition (the school lunch and breakfast programs).
- Administering the Missouri School for the Blind (St. Louis), the Missouri School for the Deaf (Fulton) and the system of Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled.
- Administering vocational rehabilitation services for adult citizens with disabilities. (See Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.)

## State Board of Education

**Liechti, David G.**, (D), president, St. Joseph;  
**Herschend, Peter F.**, (R), vice president, Branson;  
**Archie, Stanley**, (D), Kansas City;  
**Demien, Deborah L.**, (R), Wentzville;  
**Ponder, Michael**, (D), Cape Girardeau;  
**Slaughter, Sybl**, (R), Lebanon;  
**Thompson, Russell V.**, (R), Columbia;  
**Vacancy** (1).

## Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Article IX of the Missouri Constitution reads, in part: “A general diffusion of knowledge and intelligence being essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people, the General Assembly shall establish and maintain free public schools for the gratuitous instruction of all persons in this state within ages not in excess of twenty-one years as prescribed by law.”

To help carry out this mandate the legislature first established a state office of education, with an elected state superintendent, in 1839. The office went through several transformations until the current constitution, adopted in 1945, established the State Board of Education in its present form and created a Department of Education, headed by an appointed commissioner of education.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) was reorganized and



DAVID G. LIECHTI  
President  
State Board of Education



PETER F. HERSCHEND  
Vice President  
State Board of Education



STANLEY ARCHIE  
Member  
State Board of Education



DEBORAH L. DEMIEN  
Member  
State Board of Education



MICHAEL PONDER  
Member  
State Board of Education



SYBL SLAUGHTER  
Member  
State Board of Education



RUSSELL V. THOMPSON  
Member  
State Board of Education



JEANNE KUJATH  
Executive Assistant  
State Board of Education

established in its present form by the Omnibus State Reorganization Act of 1974.

The department is primarily a service agency that works with educators, legislators, government agencies, community leaders and citizens to maintain a strong public education system. Through its statewide school-improvement initiatives and its regulatory functions, the department strives to assure that all citizens have access to high-quality public education.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is the administrative arm of the State Board of Education. In addition to the commissioner of education, the senior staff of the department consists of one deputy commissioner, one associate commissioner and five assistant commissioners. The associate and assistant commissioners each head one of the department’s six main divisions.

## Office of the Commissioner of Education

Telephone: (573) 751-4212 / FAX: (573) 751-1179  
Email: [pubinfo@dese.mo.gov](mailto:pubinfo@dese.mo.gov)

The commissioner of education directs the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and fulfills other duties as prescribed by law (Section 161.122, RSMo). These duties include: supervising schools and directing the process by which school districts are accredited; suggesting

ways to upgrade curriculum and instruction in public schools; working with state and local officials to assure efficient management of public schools; advising local school officials, teachers and patrons about education-related issues and laws; and seeking “in every way to elevate the standards and efficiency of the instruction given in the public schools of the state.” The commissioner is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the State Board of Education.

## Deputy Commissioner

Telephone: (573) 751-3503 / FAX: (573) 751-1179  
Email: [pubinfo@dese.mo.gov](mailto:pubinfo@dese.mo.gov)

The deputy commissioner serves as chief of staff for the agency, maintains liaison with the legislature and other agencies, and oversees all of the department’s activities related to school improvement.

## Division of Administrative and Financial Services

Telephone: (573) 751-2587 / FAX: (573) 751-1179  
Email: [webreplyadm@dese.mo.gov](mailto:webreplyadm@dese.mo.gov)

The associate commissioner heads this division. It is responsible for distributing all federal and state funds to local school districts and other agencies that provide education-related services. The school finance section assists local



CHRIS L. NICASTRO  
Commissioner of Education



BERT SCHULTE  
Deputy Commissioner of  
Education



ROBIN COFFMAN  
Assistant to the Commissioner



GERRI OGLE  
Associate Commissioner,  
Administrative/Financial Services

school officials with budgeting, audits and the reporting of financial statistics. This division also manages the department's internal business operations, such as accounting, budget, human resources, information technology and planning and research.

### Division of School Improvement

Telephone: (573) 751-4234 / FAX: (573) 751-9434  
Email: [webreplyimpr@dese.mo.gov](mailto:webreplyimpr@dese.mo.gov)

A primary function of this division is to manage the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP), the state's accreditation system for public school districts. It also assists local educators with curriculum development and student testing. This division also administers a wide range of state and federally funded grant programs that assist local schools (Title I and other federal programs, early childhood and parent education, charter schools, gifted education, educational technology, etc.).

### Division of Special Education

Telephone: (573) 751-5739 / FAX: (573) 526-4404  
Email: [webreplyspedc@dese.mo.gov](mailto:webreplyspedc@dese.mo.gov)

This division administers state and federal funds to support services for students and adults with disabilities. Staff members in this division work with other state and local agencies to coordinate the Missouri First Steps program, which provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. The division works with local school districts in developing and improving special education services for students (ages 3–21) with disabilities. It also provides financial and technical support for all approved sheltered workshops in the state. Sheltered workshops provide employment for adults with disabilities.

The division is responsible for the operation of three school systems administered by the State Board of Education. These are the Missouri School for the Blind, the Missouri School for the Deaf and the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled.



STAN JOHNSON  
Assistant Commissioner  
School Improvement



HEIDI ATKINS LIEBERMAN  
Assistant Commissioner  
Special Education

### Missouri School for the Blind

3815 Magnolia Ave., St. Louis 63110  
Telephone: (314) 776-4320 / FAX: (314) 776-1875

The Missouri School for the Blind provides elementary, secondary and vocational/career instruction, in both residential and day-school programs, for children who are legally blind, deaf-blind, or have other multiple disabilities. A five-member board of advisors, appointed by the State Board of Education, assists the school in planning its programs and services. The advisors serve four-year terms.

### Missouri School for the Blind Board of Advisors

**Burkemper, Ellen**, Troy;  
**Edwards, Eugene (Deke)**, St. Louis;  
**Gerard, Donald K.**, St. Louis;  
**Hamilton, Philip D.**, Union;  
**Selvaggio, Frank**, St. Louis.

### Missouri School for the Deaf

505 E. Fifth St., Fulton 65251  
Telephone: (573) 592-4000 / FAX: (573) 592-2570

The Missouri School for the Deaf provides elementary, secondary and vocational/career instruction, in both residential and day-school programs, for deaf or hard-of-hearing children.

The State Board of Education appoints a five-member board of advisors to assist the school. The advisors serve four-year terms.

### Missouri School for the Deaf Board of Advisors

**McDavid, Cyndra**, president, Holts Summit;  
**Hankins, Harold Dean**, Lee's Summit;  
**Wolfe, Donna**, Fulton;  
**Vacancies (2)**.

### Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled

PO Box 480, Jefferson City 65102  
Telephone: (573) 751-4427 / FAX: (573) 751-0276

The Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled operate day-school programs for students with severe disabilities (ages 5–21) in 36 facilities across the state. The comprehensive educational program consists of developmental and therapeutic services, functional academics and vocational preparation.

### Division of Teacher Quality and Urban Education

Telephone: (573) 751-2931 / FAX: (573) 526-3580  
Email: [webreplyqual@dese.mo.gov](mailto:webreplyqual@dese.mo.gov)

This division is responsible for evaluating teacher-training programs offered by Missouri's higher education institutions and for issuing certificates (licenses) to all professional personnel who work in the state's public school system. Personnel in this division also conduct background checks on applicants for teaching certificates and investigate certificate-holders who are charged with misconduct.

### Division of Career Education

Telephone: (573) 751-2660 / FAX: (573) 526-4261  
Email: [webreplyvae@dese.mo.gov](mailto:webreplyvae@dese.mo.gov)

This division is responsible for a wide range of programs that serve the career and technical training needs of high school students, postsecondary students (community college), adults and industry. Personnel in the division provide professional leadership and administer state and federal funds to support programs in local high schools, area career-technical schools and community colleges.

The division's programs and services provide students and adults with the knowledge and skills needed for employment in current or emerging fields, to continue their education, or to be retrained for new business and industry practices. This division also administers statewide adult education services, including adult education and literacy, the high school equiv-



CHARLES BROWN  
Assistant Commissioner,  
Teacher Quality and Urban  
Education



TOM QUINN  
Assistant Commissioner  
Career Education



C. JEANNE LOYD  
Assistant Commissioner  
Vocational Rehabilitation

agency-testing program (GED), and workforce development (job training).

### Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

3024 Dupont Circle, Jefferson City 65109  
Telephone: (573) 751-3251 / FAX: (573) 751-1441  
Email: [patsy.helmig@vr.dese.mo.gov](mailto:patsy.helmig@vr.dese.mo.gov)

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provides specialized services to adult citizens with disabilities to help them achieve employment and independence. The division maintains offices across the state to provide convenient services to clients. Vocational Rehabilitation personnel provide individualized counseling, training and other services to help clients achieve gainful employment or independent living. The VR program is supported primarily by federal funds.

The division currently funds 21 independent living centers across the state. These centers provide counseling, advocacy, personal care and training in independent living skills for adults with disabilities.

The Disability Determinations program is part of this division and operates under regulations of the Social Security Administration. Located in offices across the state, Disability Determina-

tions personnel adjudicate claims from Missouri residents seeking federal disability benefits.

### **Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

*1500 Southridge Dr., Ste. 201, Jefferson City 65109*

*Telephone: (573) 526-5205 (Voice/TTY)*

*FAX: (573) 526-5209*

The Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was created in 1988 to improve the quality of life for all deaf and hard of hearing Missourians. It advocates for public policies, regulations and programs to improve the quality and coordination of existing services for people with hearing loss and promotes new services whenever necessary.

The commission promotes deaf awareness in the general public and serves as a consultant to any public agency needing information concerning deafness; administers the Missouri

Interpreter Certification System; conducts and maintains a census of the deaf population in Missouri; advocates for improved physical and mental health services for deaf Missourians; promotes the development of services for deaf adults such as shelter homes, independent living skills training, and postsecondary educational programs; facilitates a communication network among deaf adults; and promotes improvements in telephone relay services (TRS).

### **Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

**Blicharz, Paul**, chair, St. Louis;

**Basteau, Thomas**, Fulton;

**Boyd, Michael**, Florissant;

**Geier, Lisa**, Springfield;

**Northcraft, Emily**, Kansas City;

**Pack, Gloriana**, St. Louis;

**Wilson, Antonina**, St. Ann.