



MISSOURI STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

December 7, 2020

State Board of Education
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
205 Jefferson St.
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Dear State Board of Education Members,

The Missouri State Teachers Association advocates for and empowers public educators so they can teach. At the 2020 MSTA Assembly of Delegates, members supported a number of new resolutions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To address the issue of statewide student assessments in the 2020-2021 school year, delegates adopted the following resolution: "MSTA opposes statewide student assessments and punitive measures against school districts, educators, and funding during any pandemic."

In a June survey of MSTA members, with over 2,500 responses, over 70 percent of members said that state testing should be eliminated for the 2020-21 school year to allow for additional time to teach content. Time that was lost as a result of school closures in 2019-2020.

The department recognizes the validity of the data obtained from this year's assessment is questionable; hence, the department is already advocating not to use the data for accountability purposes. MSTA agrees with this conclusion, but questions why the department would want districts to allocate time on an assessment knowing the data collected would not be a reliable reflection of student progress. MSTA asserts this time should be spent on student instruction and not sacrificed on an assessment that will have little to no use for the department, school districts and teachers.

Missouri public schools and their teachers have risen to the occasion to deliver the highest quality education possible to all students during these challenging, unimaginable times. MSTA is asking that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education work on behalf of all Missouri students and pursue a waiver on statewide assessments from the United States Department of Education. This action from DESE and the State Board of Education will convey an understanding of the stress and trauma our students and educators are experiencing during this unprecedented pandemic.

Sincerely,

Bruce Moe
Executive Director

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