



# DESE Missouri DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION UPDATE

August 1, 2023

## What's New?

### Prekindergarten Grant Application – Deadline is August 11

State funds are available to local education agencies (LEAs) who apply for Missouri Quality Prekindergarten (MOQPK-LEA) Grants designed to serve students in the year prior to kindergarten (age 4 as of July 31, 2023). Funding can support an existing Pre-K classroom or a new classroom/program. LEAs may apply for both grants if they have an existing program and want to open a new classroom. Learn more about these funds in the [Administrative Memo for OC-23-002 - Prekindergarten Grants](#) or visit the [MOQPK-LEA webpage](#) for guidance and the online application. Deadline to apply for grants is August 11, 2023. For questions, contact the Office of Childhood at [Preschool@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Preschool@dese.mo.gov) or call 573-751-6793.

### Free School Safety Symposium on Aug. 15

The Missouri School Board Association (MSBA) and Safe Haven Defense are offering a one-day symposium on **August 15** in Arnold, Mo., about security laminate for schools. There will be national experts on school safety to help attendees make informed decisions about security laminate in their schools. Learn more about the opportunity on the [MSBA flyer here](#).

### Thank You for Attending the 2023 Cooperative Conference for School Administrators: "Moving Forward Together"



Thank you so much for attending DESE's 62nd Annual Cooperative Conference for School Administrators! We would appreciate you taking a few minutes to [complete this survey](#) to share your feedback about our conference to help us improve this event for the future. The survey will close at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 9.

Thanks for your continued leadership. Best wishes in the coming weeks as you welcome staff members and students back for the 2023-24 school year!

### Annual Adjustment for Reimbursement Rates for National School Lunch Program

The annual adjustments to reimbursement rates for lunches, afterschool snacks, and breakfasts served to children participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs as well as Special Milk Program are in effect from **July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024**. Rates are posted on the [DESE Food and Nutrition Services webpage](#).

This reflects the June 20, 2023, expiration of the temporary reimbursement rates provided under the Keep Kids Fed Act of 2022 (Pub. L. 117-158), which included an additional 40 cents per school lunch and 15 cents per school breakfast meal reimbursement. The reimbursement rates in this notice reflect an adjustment to the base rate from the 2022-2023 school year.

## Items of Continued Interest

### August Dates to Remember

- **August 31** - Random Acts of Kindness Day

### Missouri's Annual Sales Tax Holiday August 4-6, 2023

Missouri's annual back-to-school sales tax holiday begins at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 4, and runs through midnight on Sunday, Aug. 6. During this time, certain back-to-school purchases such as school supplies, computers, clothing, and other qualifying items as defined by statute are exempt from all state and local sales tax.

Learn more about qualifying purchases in the [Missouri Department of Revenue's news release](#).

New this year, in addition to the state sales tax, local sales tax will also be waived in all cities, counties and special tax districts.

### LETRS for Administrator Training Dates

Lexia is hosting several LETRS training sessions for Administrators. LETRS for Administrators is designed for literacy coaches, principals, and administrative leaders who are making the shift to best practices in literacy instruction and who want to support their teachers on their science of reading journey. More information and training dates are available on the [flyer here](#).

### Show-Me ECHO Hosts Cultivating Positive Classroom Climate Sessions

Together with a team of experts and specialists, participants will be able to:

- Build stronger teacher-student relationships
- Promote students' prosocial behavior
- Increase students' sense of belonging
- Increase students' engagement in learning

### Missouri Honors Pioneers in Education at the 62nd Annual Cooperative Conference for School Administrators



Five Pioneers in Education will be in the spotlight on Monday, July 31, in recognition of their commitment and contributions to public education in Missouri. DESE will recognize the 2023 Pioneers during the 62nd Annual Cooperative Conference for School Administrators. The ceremony will take place during a luncheon with more than 600 school leaders in attendance.

The following individuals will be honored as Pioneers in Education:

- Audrey Brown-Mitchell, Crystal City
- Maxine Clark, St. Louis
- Shirley Cummins, Neosho
- Dr. Bernard (Bernie) J. DuBray, O'Fallon
- Dr. Roger Dorson, Salisbury

Read the [full news release here](#).

### Substitute Teacher Reimbursement for Read, Lead, Exceed LETRS® Training

The "Substitute Teacher Expenses for K-5 Educators Who Attended LETRS® Training" is a reimbursement focus area now available for LEAs with K-5 educators who attended required in-person LETRS® Training through DESE's Read, Lead, Exceed initiative. This focus area offers reimbursement to LEAs for substitute teacher expenses incurred between August 2022 and May 2023 based on the actual expenditures (up to \$500 per educator) for attending the in-person LETRS® trainings through Read, Lead, Exceed. The Substitute Teacher Expenses for K-5 Educators focus area will be allocated with federal funding. Access the [federal guidance document](#) for additional details and access to the application link.

### TeachWell, a Micro-Learning Wellness Program for Educators

There is a new micro-learning wellness program for educators called TeachWell. The Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) Office of Disaster Services recently launched this comprehensive program which aims to support the mental health and well-being of today's Missouri educators. Emotional and mental well-being directly impacts an educator's ability to create a positive learning environment for students. TeachWell offers a series of short courses addressing key

- Gain skills that reduce burnout and feel greater
- Become effective in for developing a positive learning environment

Join these collaborative, virtual learning sessions the first Wednesday of every month from 4:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. More information is available on the [ECHO flyer here](#).

### National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) Poster Contest

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) is now accepting entries for the poster contest for NDEAM in October. All Missouri residents are invited to showcase their artistic talents by submitting original artwork. The winning poster will be featured on the GCD's 2023 poster celebrating NDEAM.

NDEAM celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and raise awareness about the value of an inclusive workforce.

Find out how you can participate at [disability.mo.gov/gcd/PosterContest](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/PosterContest).

Posters must be submitted by **September 15**. The contest is open to all Missourians. Poster themes for your artwork should be Inclusion, Employment and/or Community. For questions, call 573-751-2600.

### Administrative Memos

Miss a recent Administrative Memo? You can [view them all here](#).

#### Recent memos include:

- [OC-23-002: Prekindergarten Grants Now Available](#)
- [OCCR-23-009: GEER II Parent Reimbursement Revisions](#)
- [OCCR-23-008: Evidence-Based Reading Instructional Materials](#)

topics such as preventing burnout, seeking help, the benefits of movement, managing depression and anxiety, as well as self-care and team care.

Courses are made available every two weeks and can be received by email or text. Schools throughout Missouri are encouraged to contact DMH for free TeachWell promotional materials to help spread the word about this new program.

For more information, visit the [DMH website here](#).

## Statewide COMMUNITY Service Challenge



First Lady Teresa Parson is inviting all Missouri elementary students (K-6) to participate in the statewide COMMUNITY Service Challenge. The goal of this challenge is to instill in kids a heart for service and ask them to join the First Lady in devoting a small portion of their summer break to serving others. Check out the [CommUNITY Service flyer](#) with more information about registration and requirements.

Now more than ever, it is crucial that we continue to care for and serve one another in safe, meaningful ways. The challenge starts on **June 1** and concludes on **August 4**.



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