

St. Louis Regional College Access Pipeline Project

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May 12, 2011

Missouri State Board of Education
P.O. Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear State Education Leaders:

On behalf of the St. Louis Regional College Access Pipeline Steering Committee, we are writing to express CAP's support for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Top 10 by 20 initiative.

The St. Louis Regional College Access Pipeline (CAP) is a coalition of college access service providers, philanthropic and business leaders, K-12 educators and higher education administrators with a shared goal of increasing the proportion of St. Louis area adults who have a post-secondary degree to 50% by 2020. Our focus is on low-income and first-generation college students because they represent the greatest potential for long-term improvement in regional degree completion rates.

Over the past six months, CAP has engaged nearly 70 community leaders and educators in developing a strategic plan to increase post-secondary enrollment and degree completion among low-income and first-generation students in the St. Louis region. This process has been shaped by research regarding best practices here and elsewhere. Our belief is that outcomes data should inform strategic development and implementation.

CAP wholeheartedly endorses the concept articulated in Top 10 by 20, that "every high school student should graduate prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce." Further, CAP is pleased to see the state is focused on best practices and accessible data as part of the Top 10 by 20 vision. Specifically, CAP recognizes the important role the state must play in tracking and analyzing longitudinal student data to ensure our education system is meeting the needs of Missouri students and the state's workforce.

Research, reporting and the emerging regional strategic plan of the St. Louis Regional College Access Pipeline Project aligns very well with three goals articulated in Top 10 by 20:

- Higher, clearer and fewer standards;
- A rigorous internationally-benchmarked assessment system; and
- A longitudinal data system that improves instruction.

The CAP Steering Committee recognizes that achieving these and other Top 10 by 20 goals will be challenging but believes Missouri must set the bar high to improve outcomes for students.

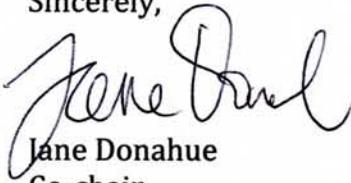


Achieving such an ambitious vision will necessitate a discussion of how the state will get there. CAP's strategic plan for the St. Louis region is one piece of the puzzle, focused on college and career readiness for low-income students.

CAP recognizes achieving this vision requires a corresponding discussion of resource alignment statewide.

CAP stands ready to work with DESE to implement strategies to improve student outcomes related to college and career readiness in the St. Louis region. We applaud the State Board of Education for setting the bar high for the benefit of our students and our state.

Sincerely,


Jane Donahue
Co-chair


Faith Sandler
Co-chair

cc:

Chris Nicastro, Commissioner, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Margie Vandeven, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education