



Missouri Regional Professional Development Centers

Building the capacity of educators and schools to maximize student performance through high quality professional development.

Dear School Leader:

We want to thank you for your untiring efforts to provide the best possible education for our students. We realize this has become increasingly more difficult as we all face declining financial resources. There have been several issues and concerns regarding public education in the past months, but you consistently strive to improve your schools and offer a quality education to all children. We know you will continue to expect high standards for yourself as well as your teachers and students.

The recent goal of the State Board of Education to be in the Top 10 by 20, a major improvement effort that aims for student achievement in Missouri to rank among the top 10 states by 2020, is of critical importance to all of us. We want to encourage each of you to be supportive of this laudable goal. There may be things we are not supportive of, or about which we can disagree, but a quality education for every child should not be negotiable.

We share your concerns about diminished resources and support that help your schools improve student achievement. We want to thank you for your efforts to support your Regional Professional Development Centers and your advocacy for the legislature to restore some funding for staff development. There is a lack of awareness among several legislators and others regarding the loss of millions of dollars to a statewide system of support. We have spoken to first-year legislators who are not aware that the Governor withheld \$6.1 million dollars this year for our system and do not know that a few years ago DESE had \$20 million dollars to offer programs and initiatives to help all schools in the state. We applaud the legislature's efforts to protect the school formula at the highest possible levels, but we are concerned about the increased cost to districts for staff development and the support necessary to help meet higher standards.

Hopefully, we will all support the Top 10 by 2020 goal for our children. We also would hope that elected officials and policy makers would support restoring and increasing resources to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,

Julie Blaine *Dr. Sheryl Copeland* *Aron [unclear]* *John M. Harris*
Darl W. Doves *David Sanders* *Cheri Fuemmeler*
Linda Kostner *Beccy Baldwin*

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