



Video Transcription

Commissioner of Education Chris Nicastro

June 2014

Hi, I'm Chris Nicastro, Commissioner of Education for the State of Missouri. Thanks for watching this month's Top 10 by 20 Update.

At its May meeting, the State Board of Education voted to lapse the Normandy School District and replace it with a new local education agency and a new governing board. This means that local schools will continue operating in the district's footprint under new governance.

The decision was made based on months of community input and a report from the Normandy Transition Task Force. The State Board will retain authority over the new board, which will begin serving on July 1.

The State Board plans to address a number of additional issues related to Normandy at its June meeting. I would like to thank everyone who has provided the Department with feedback during the past several months. Your input has been greatly appreciated.

Our goal with the Normandy Schools Collaborative will be to provide every child in the district with a high-quality education in their community. It won't happen overnight, but working together with many community partners and state support, we can ensure ALL students learn.

We were very excited to see legislation pass this session that will provide funding for early childhood education in Missouri. One of the primary goals of the Top 10 by 20 is that all Missouri students will enter kindergarten prepared to be successful in school. Funding will be available for up to 4 percent of eligible preschool-aged children in unaccredited school districts beginning with the 2015-16 school year, and available in provisionally accredited districts the following year. Studies continue to show the impact quality early childhood education can have throughout a child's life. This is a step in the right direction toward providing access to high quality early childhood education.

Registration is now open for the School Administrators Conference which will take place July 27-29 in Columbia. This year's theme is "Feedback That Matters." Speakers include educator and author Dr. Mike Schmoker, as well as Dr. Brian McNulty, a well known educator in leadership development. You can register for the conference by visiting our website and clicking on the rotating button at the top of the page. Please don't miss out on this exciting opportunity.

We are excited to announce that Missouri is partnering with MetaMetrics to launch a special reading program this summer. "Read More, Missouri!" is a new statewide summer reading challenge aimed to

prevent a loss of learning that students experience while they are out of school. We encourage all parents and teachers to spread the word and get our kids to spend time this summer enjoying a good book. Please visit our website for more details.

I would like to congratulate the three Missouri seniors who were named U.S. Presidential Scholars for their academic achievement. The winners were Eric Lee of Francis Howell, Jenny Yao of Rock Bridge and Jonathan Chu of Pembroke Hill. The winners will attend a ceremony in Washington D.C. where they will receive a U.S. Presidential Scholars medallion. The award is one of the highest honors a student can receive. Their commitment to excellence is a model for all students in Missouri.

As we close the book on another school year, I want to congratulate members of the Class of 2014. Graduating from high school is no small accomplishment. Good luck to all graduates as you continue your future endeavors.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer. Thanks for everything you do to help Missouri's kids reach the Top 10 by 20.