

June 9, 2020

State Board of Education Response

(Delivered by Board President Charlie Shields)

Being together today for our regularly scheduled board meeting gives our group the opportunity to weigh in on the important, historic conversations taking place in our country.

As members of the Missouri State Board of Education, we've been entrusted to provide oversight of our public schools. With this trust, comes the obligation to act in the best interest of the children of Missouri, some of whom rely more heavily than others upon our public institutions to prepare them to contribute meaningfully to our world.

Education must fulfill its promise of being the great equalizer. This important work must shed light on intolerance, discrimination and systemic racism. But it doesn't stop there. Leaders together must further their efforts to identify and remove policies and practices that have fostered oppression of people of color and historically underrepresented, underserved and marginalized groups for generations.

Today, we re-affirm our commitment to advancing educational equity and assert the following as the Missouri State Board of Education:

1. Every child in this state deserves a quality education and the opportunity to develop into contributing, self-sufficient citizens.
2. In partnership with DESE and our legislature, we embrace the challenge to examine long-standing structures and policies that may now be hindering wide-spread educational equity and the preparing of a workforce-ready constituency.
3. We promise to look beyond our present approaches and explore new pathways and partnerships, mindsets and methodologies, and innovations and technology available to us to create the education system that all students and citizens in this great state deserve.

Our society has reached a race relations tipping point and we have been challenged to respond to the moment. History will judge us on what we do with this opportunity.