

January 2, 2015

Dear District and School Leaders:

I hope this note finds you well and in good spirits as we usher in a new year. Although most educators are accustomed to celebrating the “new year” in July or August, the calendar year does provide time to reflect on the past twelve months and to chart a course of action for the year ahead.

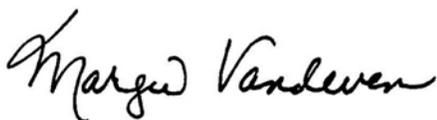
As the newly appointed commissioner of education, I would like to take a moment to briefly introduce myself, share the ambitious goals for education in Missouri, and offer assistance in working closely together with you to ensure that Missouri’s students receive the best possible education.

Many new year’s wishes speak to continued prosperity. Quality public education is vital to Missouri’s continued prosperity and increases opportunities for each of our students. In 2009, Missouri launched the Top 10 by 20 initiative, which calls for Missouri to be one of the top 10 states nationally for education by 2020. It is essential that we continue to strive toward the goals of the plan. Ensuring that all Missouri students graduate college and career ready, that all Missouri students enter kindergarten prepared for success, and that there is an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every school requires the collaborative efforts of many. I look forward to working together with you to make these goals a reality.

I began my career in education nearly 25 years ago as a communication arts teacher in O’Fallon. Since joining the Department in 2005, I have had the opportunity to observe classrooms all across the state in urban, rural and suburban districts. This exposure to our diverse state and the unique needs of the children we serve has reinforced my commitment to the Top 10 by 20 plan. All Missouri students deserve access to high-quality education. I would personally like to thank you for your continued efforts in assisting our children.

I am excited and ready for the rewards and challenges that come with serving as Missouri’s sixth commissioner of education. If I have not already met you, I hope to do so when I am in your area in the next several months. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you need anything from the Department. Please accept my best wishes to you and your families for a happy new year!

Sincerely,



Margie Vandeven  
Commissioner of Education