

August 2015



## Learning for All

A few weeks ago, school administrators from across the state gathered in Columbia for the Annual Cooperative Conference for School Administrators. The three-day meeting is an opportunity for district leaders to share ideas that ultimately help foster student growth and achievement.

This year's conference centered around the theme "Learning for All." While many Missouri students learn and achieve at a high level, many do not equal all.

The challenges we face are real. There are more than 900,000 students in Missouri k-12 public schools. More than half of those students are eligible for free and reduced lunch prices, many do not have access to high-quality early childhood education. Many endure traumatic experiences throughout their school-age years.

During the conference, a number of sessions addressed how these factors can be mitigated. While there is still a lot of work to be done, it is wonderful to see school leaders and students taking action. Superintendents are collaborating to support students in their regions. Students involved with Gateway2Change are using their voices to talk openly about issues such as race and poverty which often plague schools and communities. These solution-driven approaches are to be commended.

All of Missouri's children deserve nothing less than our best efforts, and it is our responsibility to give them the skills and knowledge they need to attain fulfilling lives and careers. The entire state of Missouri benefits when our students are well prepared for life after high school and beyond.

Thank you for everything you do to help Missouri's children. I wish you the best as you begin the 2015-16 school year.

Margie Vandeven



*Commissioner Vandeven with Gateway2Change representatives at the 2015 Annual Cooperative Conference for School Administrators*