

Full statement from Dr. Margie Vandeven:

I am grateful to the State Board of Education for entrusting me with the responsibility of serving as Missouri's Commissioner of Education. It is an honor to return to this role, and I remain committed to doing what is best for the children of our state.

I will begin by addressing my interest in returning to the position. The answer is relatively easy... there is still work to be done. While I am very happy in my current position, I am drawn to public service – particularly public service that has the potential to impact almost a million students' lives. It is an honor and a privilege with a responsibility that I do not take lightly.

In my time away from the Department, I had the good fortune of working for a company driven by curiosity, passion, authenticity and accountability. Through work with colleagues, study, and many visits to other states, I learned much about the national landscape of education needs and proposed solutions in areas such as: developing our workforce (including that of teachers), advancing early learning opportunities, improving early literacy skills, developing meaningful accountability measures, overcoming mental health issues, keeping our schools safe and helping communities create the conditions for every student to thrive – just to name a few.

And this is why I am excited for the chance to return ... to apply what we have learned as we pursue the Department's goal of ensuring that ALL Missouri students graduate ready for success.

I want to offer a special thanks to Dr. Dorson and the rest of our DESE team who continued to move things forward over the past year. And, I look forward to working with them and stakeholders from across our state – urban, rural and suburban to build on our past and expand for the future. Through active collaboration among state and local leaders, educators and our families we will – together – advance opportunities for each student.