



May 2003

Missouri Association of Rural Education

Our goal is to work in cooperation with all other education organizations, but our programs and effort will be designed to meet the specific needs of schools in rural Missouri.

Please copy and share this newsletter with board members and other school staff.

Ray V. Patrick,
Executive Director
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Fax (660) 747-8160
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MARE 2003-2004 Calendar

August 1-2, 2003

Summer Board/Planning Meeting
Holiday Inn
Lake Ozark, MO

October 6, 2003

Board Meeting**
10:00 am
Jefferson City, MO

October 22-25, 2003

National Rural Education
Convention
Kearney, Nebraska

December 1, 2003

Board Meeting**
10:00 am
Jefferson City, MO

February 27-28, 2004

Annual MARE Conference
Board/Membership Meeting
Holiday Inn
Lake Ozark, MO

April 5, 2004

Board Meeting**
10:00 am
Jefferson City, MO

May 3, 2004

Board Meeting**
10:00 am
Jefferson City, MO

** Board Meetings are held at the PSRS Building in Jefferson City, MO

Executive Director Report

Dr. Ray V. Patrick

Congratulations are in order to the MARE Membership and the MARE Board of Directors for another outstanding year that the MARE organization is completing. Membership stands at an all time high of 319 school districts, 15 individuals, and 37 associates. What makes this so great is that of this number, there are 33 new school district members and 14 new associate members. I want to especially thank Burnell Crain, MARE Board President for his leadership, as well as the support provided by the MARE Board of Directors and advisory members.

For me this past year has been a very rewarding. I have had the opportunity to work with many of the school districts in providing services that are critical to the rural programs. In January, I represented Missouri rural school districts at a National Rural Education Association meeting in Washington DC dealing with the current years Rural Legislative Platform. Two of the main issues dealt with was IDEA reauthorization and continuation of the REAP funding. Next years legislative agenda will look at the reauthorization of the Vocational program funding.

This year, the Missouri legislative session has been one of the most interesting ones that school district personnel have seen for several years. Although I spent time in Jefferson City working with the MCSA Lobbyist team, I would encourage each of you to continue to be in contact with your Senator and Representative. Once the budget is set, inform them of any program/personnel cuts or adjustments that your district has made because of the funding decreases.

On behalf of the MARE Board of Directors and Staff, we want to thank you for your support of the organization. We want you to know that MARE will continue to work to recognize the needs and concerns unique to rural education. **MARE is us -- working together.** Have a good summer!

Missouri Association of Rural Education

Officers and Board of Directors
2002-2003

Officers

President: Burnell Crain (Miller Co. R-III)
Vice President: Ken Spurgeon (Stockton R-I)
Secretary: Charlotte Baker (Mid Buchanan Co. R-V)
Past President: Bert Doerhoff (St. Elizabeth)

Regional Board Members

C: Bob Biggs (Pleasant Hope R-VI)
D: David Sparks (Osage Co. R-I)
E: Diann Bradshaw (Scott City R-I)
F: Terry Beasley (Pettis Co. R-V)
G: Stephen Cookson (Naylor R-II)
H: Larry Flanagan (Elsberry R-II)
I: Kenneth Dudley (Meadville R-IV)
J: Francis Moran (North Platte Co. R-I)

School Board

Wes Rutherford (Kingsville R-I)
Johnny Sutton (Archie R-V)

Higher Education/K-8 Schools

Dean Cone (Maplewood Community College)
Chris Welch, K-8 School Districts (North Wood R-IV)

Advisory

Larry J. Hart (L.J. Hart & Company)
Audie Cline (Missouri State Teachers Association)
Vick Hobbs (Missouri Distance Learning)

Executive Director

Ray V. Patrick—*Executive Director*
Phil Dorth—*Associate Director*

Superintendency Search

The MARE organization is available to all school district throughout Missouri to facilitate superintendency searches. MARE prides itself in being able to help school districts locate and employ leaders in a very cost competitive manner.

School districts interested in more information about the superintendency search services should forward inquiries to:

MARE Superintendency Searches
Dr. Frank Dean Cone
2601 NE Barry Road, Office 202 E
Kansas City, MO 64156
Phone: (816) 437-3225
Fax: (816) 437-3441

Religious Expression

Policy: _____

The District is committed to provide educational services and to maintain a learning environment, which does not limit or deny participation in constitutionally protected prayer or other protected religious expression. Consistent with the provisions of the First Amendment, the District and its employees, who are engaged in official duties, will not sponsor any religious activity or expression. Conversely, the District and its employees, who are engaged in official duties will not discourage or preclude religious expression that is privately initiated, consistent with this policy and regulation.

In order to ensure clarity in application of the District's Religious Expression policy, the following guidelines have been developed and implemented.

Religious Expression

Regulation: _____

Prayer During Non-instructional Time

Students are permitted to engage in religious expression during non-instructional time, (i.e. before school, after school, lunch and recess and while not engaged in school activities). Religious expressions permitted include Bible reading, prayer, scripture reading, grace before meals. These activities may be engaged in by individual students or by groups of students. However, the exercise of constitutional rights of religious expression may not be engaged in when the expression disrupts educational programs or student activities. The decision to participate or not participate in religious expression is a matter of individual choice. No student will be permitted to harass or intimidate other students to participate or refrain from participating in religious expression.

Access of Student Religious Groups to School Media

Religious related student groups will be given the same access to school facilities and school communications as are given to other non-curricular student groups. For example, and to the extent that non-curricular student group are permitted to advertise in school media, participate in school announcements, make use of student activity bulletin boards and hand out leaflets announcing group activities, religious related groups will be given the same privileges. In all instances, the District maintains the right to control the means and timing of such activities. In all such matters, the District neither favors nor disfavors religious related student groups or the activities sponsored by such groups.

Released Time for Religious Activities

Upon written parental request, students may be released from school to participate in off-premises religious in-

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struction or to satisfy religious obligations. Students who are released from class for religious activities will not be penalized for missing school. However, such students will be responsible for all assignments and for the content of lessons missed. The District will not provide transportation to or from off-premise locations for religious observances and will not be responsible for the safety or welfare of students while away from school.

Religious Expression in Class Assignments

Students are free to express their personal beliefs about religion in homework assignments, artwork or other written or oral assignments. Such assignments will be evaluated by teachers based upon academic standards of substance, quality and relevance. Students will neither be rewarded nor penalized because of the religious content or lack of religious content in their assignments.

Student Assemblies and Extracurricular Activities

Generally, school administrators will determine or substantially control the content of what is expressed at student assemblies and at extracurricular activities. In such cases religious expression will not be permitted as the religious expression may be attributed to the school or seen as an endorsement of a particular religious belief or expression. However, in instances where students are selected to speak at assemblies based upon neutral selection criteria and where the student speaker has primary control over the content of that oral presentation, the school will not restrict the student speech because of its religious or anti-religious content. In such cases, school authorities will publicly clarify that the content of the student's speech is the speaker's opinion and not the school's.

Prayer at Graduation/Baccalaureate Ceremonies

Where students or other graduation speakers are selected on the basis of neutral criteria and retain control over the content of their speech, the content of the speech will not be restricted because of the religious or anti-religious content of the speech. The school disclaims responsibility for such speech—neither encouraging nor discouraging its content. However, neither district nor school officials may direct or encourage prayer at graduation or select speakers because of the expectation that such speakers will include religious or anti-religious expressions in their speech.

To the extent that the District makes its facilities and related services available to private groups, the District will provide similar access and similar terms to private groups for a baccalaureate ceremony. The District and the school will not mandate student attendance nor participate in the organization of the ceremony. School em-

ployees are free to attend but will not be required to attend the private baccalaureate ceremony.

Religious Activities of School Employees

When not engaging in work-related activities, (i.e. before school or lunch), school employees may take part in religious activities such as prayer or Bible study. Such activities should be conducted in private in order to avoid the appearance that they are acting in their employment responsibilities. School employees are prohibited from encouraging or discouraging religious expression and from actively participating in religious expression with students.

Certification of Compliance

The District will provide annual written certification of compliance that the District does not maintain any policy that prevents or denies participation in constitutionally protected prayer in public elementary and secondary schools. This certification will be provided to Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on or by October 1 annually. A copy of the certification will be maintained in the District's administration office and will be available for public review.

McREL Rural Technology Institute

Join your colleagues at a three-day seminar to learn how administrators, curriculum specialists and IT staffs can work together to effectively integrate technology throughout rural K-12 schools. McREL's Rural Technology Initiative (RTI) will be held July 23-25, 2003 in Rapid City, SD. The RTI is offered free of charge to rural schools and districts from Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. For this and other rural education workshops visit the *Opportunities section of County Road 1 at McREL Web site at: <http://www.mcrel.org/programs/rural/opportun/index.html#RTI>*

NCLB Guidance for Rural and Small Schools

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the National Association of State Boards of Education has published a new report on the impacts of No Child Left Behind on small and rural school districts. ***No Child Left Behind: A Guide for Small and Rural Districts*** analyzes the landmark No Child Left Behind Act in light of how it will affect small and rural school districts. The authors identify 15 specific areas of the law that will have the greatest impact on these schools. For each area, the Guide includes (1) the relevant language from the Act, (2) information relative to policy implications, and (3) guidance for implementing the legislation in small and rural schools, including information on best practices. To download a pdf version of the report, go to http://www.aasa.org/government_relations/rural/index.htm.

Form _____

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires that the U.S. Department of Education issue guidance on constitutionally protected prayer in the public elementary and secondary schools. As a result, Secretary of Education Rod Paige recently issued guidelines relating to religious expression by students and teachers in public schools. It is available from the U.S. Department of Education at www.ed.gov/initis/religionandschools/prayer_guidance.html.

To comply with NCLB, school districts MUST certify in writing to the state educational agency by October 1 that they have no policies that prevent or otherwise deny participation in constitutionally protected prayer. Since the guidance was only recently issued, the deadline for providing this assurance has been extended to March 15, 2003.

To expedite the compliance process for this year, DESE is using this e-mail form. All school districts MUST respond to this message by March 15. You simply need to click on "Reply," fill in the name of your school district, and send this message back to our office. This will constitute your compliance statement for this year.

Assurance Statement

As a condition of receiving funds under the No Child Left Behind Act, the local educational agency certifies that no policy of the local educational agency prevents or otherwise denies participation in constitutionally protected prayer by students or teachers, as detailed in the guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Education.

To submit the required compliance statement, please type the name of your school district in the space below:

School District hereby certifies that it has no policies or practices that prevent or deny participation in constitutionally protected prayer.

NO PRAYER LEFT BEHIND

Three years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court in Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe struck down a school district policy which permitted student-led, student-initiated invocations prior to high school football games. In apparent response to the Santa Fe decision, Congress added language to the No Child Left Behind Act ("NCLB") dealing with student prayer.

In essence, Congress required districts to certify that they do not maintain policies, which prevent or deny participation in constitutionally protected prayer. Congress also directed the Secretary of Education to issue guidelines to public school districts which reflect the "current state of the law" concerning constitutionally protected prayer in public schools. These guidelines are not regulatory but are to serve as guidance. The Department's guidelines were released on February 7, 2003. This article will review these guidelines; discuss their implementation and suggest policy and regulation models.

The direction to the Secretary was to issue guidelines consistent with the current state of the law. The problem with this task is that the current state of the law is rather murky, changing depending on which federal appellate court your district is situated. On the one hand, it is clear that public school districts run afoul of the First Amendment when they adopt and implement policies encouraging student or school religious expression. However, it is equally clear that students enjoy wide latitude to engage in voluntary, private non-disruptive prayer during the school day. Obviously, a large gray area exists in between these positions. The situation in Missouri is further complicated because our federal appellate court, the Eighth Circuit, has not decided a school prayer case, although the Court has issued equal access type decisions.

The Department's Guidelines review most of the potential sources of friction between the "Free Exercise" and "Establishment" clauses of the First Amendment. With respect to prayer during instructional time, the guidelines are for the most part non-controversial. The attached MCE regulations reflect the established right of students to private prayer during non-instructional time. As set out in the MCE regulation, prayer is one aspect of broader category of protected religious expression, including private Bible reading, grace before meals and scripture reading. While this protected religious expression is limited to non-instructional times, "moments of silent meditation" are permissible even during instructional time.

The guidelines also speak to the access of students initiated religious groups to school media and communications. The guidelines are for the most part consistent with the regulations issued under the Equal Access Act. Simply stated, religious related student groups (i.e., FCA) must be given the same access to school media, publications, space that are provided to other non-religious related, non-curricular student groups.

The third area of guidance involves part-time school attendance. Specifically, the guidelines provide that students may be released during the school day to participate in off-premise religious instruction or religious celebration. Given Missouri law permitting part-time attendance, release from instruction for religious exercise will likely be upheld. Clearly, a student requesting an excused absence for a day of religious exercises would be engaged in a constitutionally protected activity. Absence for part of a day would appear to be similarly protected. Of course, such participation must be voluntary and not financially underwritten by the school (i.e., transportation). While students can be held accountable for obtaining the material

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covered in their absence, they cannot be punished for the absence itself.

The next area, religious expression in class assignments may be more controversial. The Guidelines provide that students are free to express their personal beliefs in homework, artwork or class assignments. This freedom would appear to also include religious expression. This expression may take the form of creative assignments in art or writing, where the students are given the choice of topics by their teachers. The key phrase is that the students must conform to the teacher's topic and direction. Utilizing a religious approach to a teacher-directed, non-religious topic will not be protected. Equally, students working on creative assignments may legally choose anti-religious expression.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the Guideline falls within the area of student assemblies including graduation. The guidelines suggest that as long as student speakers are selected based upon neutral criteria, the speaker is free to issue religious or anti-religious comments. On the one hand, it is clear that it is unconstitutional for public schools to encourage or authorize religious expression. Undoubtedly, courts will be called upon to determine if school officials through various subtleties have in fact encouraged religious activities. It also appears clear that where districts choose not to encourage or discourage religious expression, school officials should not participate in pre-review of student speeches or screening of statements of student selected as speakers at school assemblies and graduation exercises. Again, the safest approach is to permit a moment of silence at appropriate assemblies.

Finally, the Department's Guidelines also speak to religious exercise by school employees. The guidelines suggest procedures that are consistent with practices in most Missouri districts. During non-

work times, employees may, in private, individually or collectively engage in religious expression, i.e. prayer, Bible study, scripture reading. However, it is unlawful to discriminate against any employee because of their participation or lack of participation in such religious exercise.

Also, included in the attached MCE models is a form for certification to DESE of compliance. This certification must be made annually by October 1. The attached form is currently utilized by DESE and will satisfy federal requests.

Questions have been raised about a potential conflict between the Education Department's Guidelines and Article 9 § 7 of the Missouri Constitution. However, the state constitution is primarily if not exclusively focused on financial support for religion (i.e., transportation of religious students, textbooks, technology, etc.). It is my opinion that implementation of the Security of Education's Guidelines does not involve financial support for religion and likely will not be deemed to violate state law. Remember that the Guidelines mandate neutrality on religious expression, neither encouraging nor discouraging such expression.

Not surprisingly special interest groups on both sides of this issue will be closely scrutinizing public school districts reaction to the religious expression guidelines. The ACLU is threatening suits against districts that comply while the American Center for Law threatens action against district's that don't comply. Districts should solicit input from their communities and tailor policies that generally follow the guidelines but provide latitude for implementation. If your district is going to be sued, you may consider for public relations purposes--Who would you rather sue you--the ACLU or parents approving of religious expression? It may well be impossible to satisfy both groups!

GreaterNET

Judy Stainback has recently taken over as Executive Director of GreaterNET. Contact information for Judy is:

4807 S. Gold Road
Battlefield, MO 65619
Phone: 417-882-2509
Fax: 417-882-6264
E-mail: jstainba@mchsi.com

GreaterNET is currently beginning the process of matching and brokering I-TV classes for next fall. Districts interested in contracting with GreaterNET or learning more about the organization should contact Judy.

FMLA

(Family Medical Leave Act)

Do you know the in's and out's?

What's covered.....

- ✓ Birth and care of a newborn child
- ✓ Adoption or foster care of a child
- ✓ To care for an immediate family member
- ✓ When an employee can't work because of a serious health condition

Review your record keeping procedures.....

Keep careful records of hours worked - To be eligible for time off under the FMLA employees must have.....

- ✓ Worked for your company for at least 12 months -- does not have to be consecutive months.
- ✓ Worked at least 1250 hours in the last 12 month period.

Eligible employers are those with 50 or more workers within a 75 mile radius.

Dear Rural School Administrator:

As a member of the USAC E-Rate Task Force on the Prevention of Waste, Fraud and Abuse, I would like to take this opportunity to solicit any input that you can provide to the Task Force. As you may know the E-Rate program has come under intense scrutiny as of late and has several detractors among the US Congress.

The fourteen- member Task Force is charged with the responsibility for "identifying areas where improvements can be made in the support mechanism and in outreach and training and will recommend specific actions to combat potential waste, fraud and abuse by both service providers and applicants." We are also charged with reviewing "all aspects of the E-rate program where waste, fraud and abuse can occur" -- including the application process, application review, funding commitment, and invoicing -- in addition to reviewing publicly available documents and forms to determine what changes could be made to help prevent waste, fraud and abuse.

You can see the list of members and their bios at <http://www.sl.universalservice.org/whistleblower/default.asp>

Below is a brief summary from the 1st meeting of the Task Force held on May 1-2. Please scan the topics on which we have determined to concentrate our future discussion, then please respond to the following questions:

1. Do you have concerns/issues in these areas you want to share?
2. Do you have specific recommendations about how to strengthen the program in these areas?
3. Are there other areas you don't see covered you would like the Task Force to consider?

Although my constituency group is rural schools, I would welcome any input from those involved in the E-Rate program -- telcos, service providers, schools or libraries.

Please forward all input to: vicki.hobbs@ruraledu.org. (This will help me sort out the Task Force input from my regular messages.) Also, feel free to forward this announcement to others whom you believe could provide input.

All of us wish to insure the continuation of the E-Rate program, but in order to do that changes in the program are not only wise--they are necessary. I assure you that the input and suggestions you provide will be incorporated into the work of the Task Force!

Thanks,
 Vicki Hobbs
 Telecommunications Policy Analyst
 Rural School and Community Trust

Update on Task Force on the Prevention of Waste, Fraud and Abuse

The Task Force on the Prevention of Waste, Fraud and Abuse held the first of three planned meetings on May 1-2.

Task force members heard presentations from representatives of the Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), the assistant inspector general for audits of the Federal Communications Commission's Office of Inspector General, the head of special investigations for the SLD's Program Integrity Assurance staff, and a senior auditor from the internal audit staff of USAC. They described, in general terms, the kinds of situations that have raised concerns in the areas of waste, fraud and abuse. They also provided general information about auditing and other enforcement activities.

The 14 task force members then shared their own different perspectives on the potential for waste, fraud and abuse in the program. By the end of their first meeting, they identified these topics as broad, shared areas of concern that should be the focus of future discussions:

- ? Lack of clarity in program rules and requirements;
- ? Rules and processes that may inadvertently encourage waste;
- ? Shortcomings in applicants' competitive bidding processes;
- ? Need for review and clarification of "eligible" services;
- ? Lack of accountability and consequences for program violations;
- ? Funding models and their impact on waste, fraud and abuse;
- ? Maximizing the deployment of SLD resources;
- ? Required standards for applicant documentation of program compliance.

Persons who wish to discuss these issues or other concerns related to waste, fraud and abuse can contact a member of the task force by e-mail. The [List of Task Force Members \[http://www.sl.universalservice.org/overview/wbtaskforce.asp\]](http://www.sl.universalservice.org/overview/wbtaskforce.asp) posted on this web site contains an active e-mail link from each member's name.

The task force currently plans two more meetings in late May and late June before preparing a series of recommendations to USAC and the FCC.

Vicki M. Hobbs Phone: 573-445-4940
 4001 S. Coats Lane FAX/Voice Message: 573-446-0483
 Columbia, MO 65203 E-mail: vhobbs@coin.org
 Telecommunications Policy Analyst
 Rural School and Community Trust
<http://www.ruraledu.org/>

FOR SALE
 Navco gymnasium scoreboards-one displays all game info-other is for alternate end of gym. 12 years old.
 Working condition-good. Highest bidder. Kingsville R-I Schools, POB 7, Kingsville, 64061 or call 816 597 3422 — lpotthas@kingsville.k12.mo.us

Annual Summer Executive Board/Delegate Meeting

The annual summer regular board and planning meeting of the Missouri Association of Rural Education will be held on Friday and Saturday, **August 1 and August 2** at the Holiday Inn SunSpree, Lake Ozark, Missouri. Friday morning is a planning/business session for members of the MARE executive board. Friday afternoon is devoted to golf, shopping, recreation and committee meetings.

Saturday morning is a meeting of delegates to consider a legislative platform, resolutions, any proposed changes in the constitution and by-laws and any other business that needs to be considered. The MARE Board will give recognition to the MARE Scholarship Recipients. The Friday and Saturday morning meetings begin at 8:30 am and are open meetings.

Each member school district is entitled to send two delegates to this meeting. This is the voting body that will make decisions on Saturday morning. Hotel reservations may be made directly with the Holiday Inn at (573) 365-2334.

New Information about REAP!!!!

There has been some confusion about the deadline to spend your current REAP dollars. You have until September 30, 2003 to finish spending your dollars. However, according to recent information from the Department of Education, less than half of the eligible school districts have actually spent any dollars. The following warning is issued. The Department of Education monitors the rate of spending and often shares this information with Congress. If you do not spend your dollars until the last possible minute, it sends a message to Congress that you do not really need these dollars. By spending some of your money now, can ensure that life will be easier going into the next application process.

If you have not set up your bank account to accept this year's dollars from the Department of Education, you must do so soon. You may be risking your access to these funds. Contact REAP@ed.gov if you have further questions.

As for the next application process, information from the US Department of Education indicates that the process will begin soon. Should you want to look at the new state charts of eligible districts, go to the REAP website: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/reap.html>.

Once the state charts are up and running, the application process should be opened within a few days. Be sure to carefully READ the directions on the website for the new year's application process. ***There will definitely be some changes, so stay alert and possibly save yourself some work.***

Finally, Congress is now working on setting funding levels for FY-04 (2004-2005 school year). The fiscal picture at the federal

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set-up in advance. A pre-planning meeting with selected vendors is a good place to start.

Maintain written records for five years. The SLD performs random audits each year. Districts need to keep thorough records of RFP's, board resolutions, certified letters, and canceled checks. Make sure all and any changes are kept in the file. Your records should be kept in an accessible location. Each state has an E-rate coordinator. For any questions schools can contact their state coordinator or visit the SLD web site.

Dietrich Lockard Group is a consulting firm specializing in telecommunications and E-rate funding. They may be contacted at www.dietrichlockard.com or 314-961-3211. (This article was provided by the Dietrich Lockard Group for informational purposes.)

Who Got Penalized -- and Why?

Terrible accident leads to labor law investigation.

Employer: Martin Lightcap Box Farms, Midnight, MS

Business: 5,000 acre operation owned by a six-farm partnership

Law broken: Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) child labor provisions.

Type of violation: A minor was hired to work during school hours. Nobody verified the employee's age. The minor also worked more hours than the law permits. The Department of Labor (DOL) was called to the work-site after another teen worker was killed when he slipped and fell after trying to hop a ride on a tractor.

Penalty: \$11,275

Reminder: Local school officials play an important role in assuring that students under the age of 16 maintain a proper balance between school and employment. A child 14 or 15 years of age must obtain a work certificate and submit it to the Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Division of Labor Standards. The work certificate must be obtained from the superintendent or authorized designee of the public school district where the child resides, regardless of where the child attends school. There is one form used for summer employment (June 1 - Labor Day) and a second form used for During School Term employment (Labor Day - June 1).

level is very tight. There are not many education dollars to go around. There will probably be a fight for REAP funding once again. Contact your Representatives and Senators, urging them to support full funding for REAP.

This information was provided by Mary Kusler, Legislative Specialist with the American Association of School Administrators. Mary also works with the National Rural Education Association in Legislation Development. You may contact Mary at (703) 875-0733 or email: mkusler@aasa.org should you have any questions.

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School-Based Administrative claiming wwwccss.org/ClaimingGuide.html with the general expectation that CMS will implement these guidelines sometime this fall. For schools, it is expected that the single largest impact of the guidelines will be the requirement that districts must participate in the Direct Service program in order to receive funds for ACM.

HOW CLAIM CARE CAN HELP YOUR DISTRICT

Claim Care currently represents over 50 % of the Missouri public schools participating in the school-based Direct Service program. By providing services like no other, including provider enrollment, student eligibility determinations, HIPAA compliant electronic claim submission, Claim Care offers personal service and accessibility to meet your school's needs. Let Claim Care help you get your district's share of the \$35.7 million in Medicaid funds.

ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

The 13th annual **MARE Golf Classic** will be held during the MARE Summer Meeting. You may receive more information on this annual event by contacting:

D. Joe Phillips
1016 Bourn Ave.
Columbia, MO 65203
(573) 445-4766

West-Hall Software Solutions

The Missouri Association of Rural Education (MARE) Board of Directors is pleased to announce the partnering with West-Hall Software Solutions. West-Hall Software is a unique national provider of quality educational solutions for schools, faculty and students. The founder is Dr. Leonard W. Hall, a Missouri educator having served as Assistant Commissioner for Special Education at DESE from 1971-1983. Since 1984, Dr. Hall has worked with educators to empower students to improve basic skills through instructional technology.

Expected outcomes to the district include measurable change in:

Improved achievement test scores by ALL students;
More efficient identification and placement of special needs learners;
Reduced incidents of behavioral disruption and need for punitive actions;
Enhanced opportunities for inclusive instructional experiences by all students;
Empowerment of suspended/expelled students to have continuity of instruction.

The skills are consistent with the "Show Me Standards" including Language Arts, Reading, Mathematics, Writing, Informational Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, and Job Readiness Skills.



"AT least 300 Missouri School districts have relied upon our expertise in the financing of their capital facilities and equipment needs. Since our incorporation in 1991, more than 600 financings with a total par value of \$1,219,605,668 have been entrusted to L.J. Hart and Company. Our reputation for providing competent advice and good service is unassailable. The loyalty, appreciation, and willingness of our clients to refer and recommend our services to others are the key ingredients to our success. We welcome new opportunities and relationships"

- Larry J. Hart

P r o v e n S o u r c e s o f C r e a t i v e F i n a n c i n g I d e a s f o r M i s s o u r i D i s t r i c t s

- General Obligation Bonds for New Construction
- General Obligation Refunding Bonds
- Capital Facilities and Equipment Lease Financings
- School bus Lease Financing Program

No charge to prepare financial analyses for any proposed project

16401 Swingley Ridge Road
Suite 325
St. Louis, MO 63017

800.264.4477 or 636.537.9939

MARE Associate Membership 2002-2003

Below are listed the Associate Members of MARE. These members are important to the MARE organization in their long-term interest in the welfare of the Rural School Districts in Missouri. Please consider all the business associates when you are in need of services. Let them know that you saw their information in our newsletter when you contact them.

L.J. Hart & Company

Larry J. Hart
16401 Swingley Road
St. Louis, MO 63017
(800) 264-4477 (636) 537-9939

MO Consultants for Education

Roger Russell
19324 Deer Points
Glencoe, MO 63301
(636) 405-0649

American Boiler & Mechanical Services,

Mike Hemphill/Dean Phillips
4950 Bischoff Ave.
St. Louis, Mo 63110
(314) 865-3000

Forrest T. Jones & Company

John Farrar
3130 Broadway
Kansas City, MO 64111
(800) 821-7303

Jack Ball & Assoc. Architects PC

Chris Ball/Jack Ball
220 E. Chestnut Street
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 866-1904

Jim's Mobile Offices

James Helleny
P.O. Box 547
Marion, IL 62959
(800) 747-5467 (618) 997-6072

Missouri Energy Center

Bernard Thompson
P.O. Box 547
Marion, IL 62959
(800) 747-5467 (618) 997-6072

Budget Plus Software

Leland Foster
509 Graystone
Grain Valley, MO 64133
(816) 847-6610

Allied Bus Sales

Frank Wittmers
1101 Kenneth Street
Nixa, MO 65714
(800) 462-0173

Claim Care, Inc.

Stacy L. Dye
209 N. Main Street
Paris, MO 65275
(660) 327-5308

Arthur J. Gallagher & Company

Gary VanMeter
P.O. Box 1950
St. Charles, MO 63301
(800) 877-8218 (636) 916-3433

Doster, Mickes, James & Ullom, LLC

Thomas A. Mickes
17107 Chester Field Airport Road, Suite 320
St. Louis, MO 63005
ST=(636) 532-0042, KC=(816)531-1888

Lemberger Company

Dan Snodgrass
P.O. Box 110
Vienna, MO 65582
(573) 422-3354

EPM, Inc.

B.H. Trout
2105 Power Drive
Fulton, MO 65251
(573) 642-6550

Central States Bus Sales

Dale Meissbach
2450 Cassens Drive
Fenton, MO 63026
(636) 343-6050

Benee's Toys

Joan Reed, V.P. for Sales
1602 Airpark Drive
Farmington, Mo 63640
(573) 756-0035

George K. Baum & Company

Greg Bricker/Dick Bartow
435 Nichols Road, Suite 200
Kansas City, MO 64112
(816) 474-1100

First National Bank

Craig Heaton
1802 East State, Rt. K
West Plains, MO 65775
(800) 347-7855

Control Technology & Solutions

Scott Ririe
300 Ozark Trail, Suite 202
Ellisville, MO 63011
(636) 230-0843

Goosen Livingston Architects

Al Osborne
9229 Ward Parkway, Suite 210
Kansas City, MO 64114
(816) 444-4355

Howard Danzig Insurance

Howard Danzig
2157 Welsch Industrial Ct.
Maryland Heights, MO 63146
(800) 280-0010 (314) 997-8865

Citizens Bank and Trust

Tamara M. Vaughn
105 N. Main, P.O. Box 800
Maryville, MO 64468
(800) 399-3023

Septagon Construction Company

Eldon L. Kreisel
113 East Third Street
Sedalia, MO 65301
(800) 778-3113

Midwest Bus Sales

Jack Woolf
313 East Front Street
Bonner Springs, KS 66012
(913) 422-1000

Sam A. Winn & Associates, Architects

Sam A. Winn
1949 East Sunshine, Suite 4-400
Springfield, MO 65804
(417) 882-7821

DataTeam Systems, Inc.

Craig McCollam
4911 Legends Drive
Lawrence, KS 66049
(877) 843-8150

Partners for Life

David G. Huff
P.O. Box 1364
Raymore, MO 64083
(866) 211-3344

Fry and Associates

Steve Kippelmyer/Kristi Rice
101 E. 15th Avenue
North Kansas City, MO 64116
(816) 221-4825

American Trust Group Holdings

S. L. Baker/ Ray Shoaf
P.O. Box 966
Sunrise Beach, MO 65079
(573) 374-9991

**A list of new Associate Members
are listed in another section of this
newsletter**

We welcome the following new Associate Members

Architectural Services

S.M. Wilson & Company
 Rob Tinker
 13316 West 98th
 Lenexa, KS 66215
 (913) 322-3900

School Transportation

Tri State Bus Sales
 David Wilson
 1336 West New Monee Road
 Crete, IL 60417
 (708) 672-1410 Ext 23

Construction Management

TAC Americas
 Valerie Houchin/Sarah Gummer,/Tam
 Truong
 2127 Alfred Ave. #A
 St. Louis, MO 63110
 (573) 547-8130

Health Insurance

National Investors (Health Insurance)
 Gerald Littell/John Davis
 204 West Rollins
 Moberly, MO 65270
 (660) 263-5630

Educational Software

WestHall Software Solutions
 Adam Hall/Leonard W. Hall
 300 N. 4th Street
 St. Louis, MO 63102
 (314) 588-1524/(800) 222-3681

Administrative Software

Software Technology, Inc.
 Mary Ann McCann
 14105 N. Tolle Lane
 Mt. Vernon, IL 62864
 (877) 889-009—Fax (618) 244-3574

Legal Services

Thomeczek Law Firm, LLC
 James G. Thomeczek, Attorney
 1120 Olivette Exec. Pkwy, Ste 210
 St. Louis, MO 63132
 (314) 997-7733

We're on the web
MoARE.com

CLAIM CARE HELPS RURAL SCHOOLS GET THE MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENTS THEY DESERVE

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) estimates that \$35.7 million in Federal Medicaid funds were available to Missouri schools through the Direct Service Program for the 2002-03 school year. Yet, the vast majority of these funds go unclaimed!

Claim Care, Inc., based in Paris, Missouri, understands the crucial role that reimbursements for special services can play in helping a rural district on a tight budget. Many rural schools go to great lengths to satisfy requirements related to special needs children, often to the exclusion of main stream programs. Yet, most of these same schools do not have the staff time or expertise to obtain reimbursement for those same special services. Claim Care bridges that gap by making sure that rural schools obtain reimbursement for providing these government-mandated services.

DIRECT SERVICES IS NOT ADMINISTRATIVE CASE MANAGEMENT/

ADMINISTRATIVE CLAIMING

While many districts are enrolled in Administrative Case Management/Administrative Claiming, the vast majority do not participate in the school-based Direct Services program. As of December 2002, DESE lists 270 districts enrolled in Administrative Claiming, compared with only 90 enrolled in the Direct Services Program. Many districts involved in ACM assume that they are receiving the maximum allowable amount of Federal Medicaid Dollars, not realizing the Direct Service program is the natural progression following the ACM program. Unfortunately, Medicaid regulations aren't that simple. ACM only provides reimbursement for Medicaid eligible outreach, coordination of screening, examinations, assessment and evaluations, case planning and coordination, while school district providers must enroll separately for reimbursement when billing for services delivered to children which are part of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) has issued draft guidelines for Medicaid

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Securing E-rate Funding

By Donald Dietrich, vice-president, Dietrich Lockard Group.

School districts across the nation are after their piece of the next E-rate pie. The government, through the FCC's Schools and Libraries Division, has created the E-rate mechanism to help districts obtain affordable telecommunications and Internet access. Some \$2.25 billion will be available.

These funds are awarded based on discounts ranging from 20% to 90% of the cost of eligible services, depending on the level of poverty as defined by subsidized lunch numbers from your district and the urban/rural status of the population served. The funds are available for any eligible school, school district and library.

While many districts have been successful in securing these funds, a large number of school executives have been unable to work their way through the tedious application process. They send in the wrong forms, forget to include the right information, or simply fail to apply on time. Millions of dollars in potential discounts are thus left "on the table," resulting in lost funds that could have been used to upgrade their district's entire telecommunications system.

Sure the E-rate process can be confusing but it need not be a lost cause. Following are several tips learned from working with dozens of school districts over the past several years to help make your E-rate effort both productive and profitable.

Use proper forms and instructions. Sounds easy but these forms change every year. A number of districts send in the incorrect form causing their schools to be automatically rejected. A good practice is also to send your form early, at least two weeks before deadline. The SLD receives some 30,000 applications annually. You want to make sure it gets to the right place on time. The proper form can be found online at www.slx.universalservice.org.

Complete all three forms needed in the process.

-*Form 470 is the notification of the services desired.* Form 470 is where you describe the services you need in order to get the best rate. It must be completed by the entity that will negotiate with potential service providers. However, it cannot be completed by a service provider who will participate in the competitive bidding process. Once received it is posted on the SLD web site for 28 days so vendors can search it out and contact you for bids. After posting, you will receive a Form 470 Receipt Notification Letter indicating the earliest date you can execute a contract, select a service provider, and sign and submit the next piece of paperwork, Form 471.

-*Form 471 is your actual request for funding.* It is used to calculate the discount percentage to which the applicant is entitled. The minimum discount is 20% and the maximum is 90%. In general it is based on the percent of your student population eligible for the National School Lunch Program. This form is also where you list your actual vendors, services, costs and actual school locations involved in the proposal. Schools, of course, are required to pay the non-discounted portion of the services for which they receive discounts. The funding necessary to pay this portion must be budgeted and approved before the form can be submitted.

-*Form 486 indicates to the SLD that delivery of services has begun.* It lists each separate funded request, the aligned service, and tells the SLD the applicant's technology plan has been approved. It also informs the SLD of your compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

File separate Priority One and Priority Two requests. Priority One needs are funded first. These include telecommunications and Internet services, basically local and long-distance and monthly Internet service type fees. Once all Priority One requests have been satisfied the SLD will then fund additional requests for purchased equipment such as servers, routers and switches, as budget allows, for the neediest schools. This equipment is classified as a Priority Two request. The neediest districts did receive funding for Priority Two requests during the 2002 grant period. Districts filing for Priority Two should file a second 471 form, separating out its poorest schools to spend the approval process.

Enlist a high-level executive to take charge of the process. One of the biggest mistakes districts make is to assign the tedious E-rate process to low-level staff. Often the low-level person does not understand how to complete the necessary forms or becomes involved in other activities and fails to get the paperwork in on time. They often are re-assigned to other positions or leave for another job outside the school system. Thus there is no continuity. The process works best when a high-level district executive takes charge and makes sure all forms are filled-out as required and are filed on deadline. That person is also less likely to leave or change duties. Schools without a high-level staff person to execute the process can also out-source it to a consulting firm.

Ensure your technology plan is approved annually. Your plan must be approved by your state or governing body. Certification of approval, including the name of the approval authority, is required. The plan should include everything you can possibly file for including local and long-distance services, Internet service, and infrastructure such as wiring costs, local and wide area network equipment and servers. List anything that can be tied-in with the educational process.

Work with vendors to receive your funds. Instead of sending one complete bill to the SLD each quarter for reimbursement, have your vendors do the heavy lifting for you. Some vendors will easily track your expenses and then bill the SLD for their portion. Your district will still be billed by each vendor for your portion of the expense, but it is a lot easier than sending a total bill to the SLD, waiting for payment, and then distributing individual checks. One word to the wise however, not all vendors will automatically do this. These type of arrangements must be

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Missouri Association of Rural Education
201 South Holden St., Suite 202
Warrensburg, Missouri 64093-3400

NON PROFIT
Permit No. 1
PAID
Centerview, MO
64019

Our purpose is to LISTEN to the NEEDS of rural Educators and then help them meet those NEEDS as efficiently as possible. Through this type of SHARING and COOPERATION we can improve the OPPORTUNITIES for the CHILDREN of rural Missouri.

WISDOM OF THE AGES

Age 5I learned that you can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.
Age 10 .. I learned that when I wave to people in the country, they stop what they're doing and wave back.
Age 15 .. I learned that although it's hard to admit it, I'm secretly glad my parents are strict with me.
Age 20 .. I learned that if someone says something unkind about me, I must live so that no one will believe it.
Age 25 .. I learned that if you want to cheer yourself up, you should try cheering someone else up.
Age 30 .. I learned that children and grandparents are natural allies.
Age 35 .. I learned that you can make someone's day by simply sending them a little card.
Age 40 .. I learned that the greater a person's sense of guilt, the greater his need to cast blame on others.
Age 45 .. I learned that making a living is not the same as making a life.
Age 50 .. I learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back.
Age 55 .. I learned that whenever I decided something with kindness, I usually make the right decision.
Age 60 .. I learned that when I have pains it doesn't mean I have to be one.

YES!!!! I want to be a member of MARE

K-12 Schools — \$200 yearly

K-8 Schools — \$100 yearly

Not for Profit Corporations & Institutions — \$100 yearly

For Profit Corporations (Associate Membership) — \$250

Individual Member from Non-Member Institution — \$25

Student Membership — \$1 yearly

Newsletter sent to district board members — \$35. yearly

School District Six Digit School Code

Name: _____

Title: _____

School/Organization _____

Address _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email Address _____

Mail to: MARE, 201 South Holden St., Ste 202, Warrensburg, MO 64093