



State school board adjusts Normandy's accreditation

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UPDATED 11:15 a.m. to reflect comments from Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

CLAYTON • The Missouri Board of Education has made a change to a vote it took this summer on Normandy schools — one that could have significant consequences in a legal battle over whether Normandy students can continue to transfer to better schools.

On Friday afternoon, the board met in a hastily called meeting to change the Normandy's accreditation status -- or at least how that accreditation is described. Normandy now has "accreditation as a state oversight district," the revised June minutes now read.

Sarah Potter, a spokesman for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, said today that the latest action simply changed a clerical error in the minutes of a June Board of Education meeting.

Those minutes — along with subsequent news releases issued by the department — said the Board had voted to lapse Normandy's accreditation. But Potter said that description was an error.

"The correction was made prior to final approval," Potter said in an email. "Unfortunately, the wrong version of the minutes was posted in the Board's materials. The State Board met to approve the correct version of the minutes. There was no vote on Normandy's accreditation in Friday's Board meeting."

Normandy's accreditation status will be part of the state's defense against Normandy transfer parents who will be asking a judge today to restore the rights of their children to return to schools they'd transferred into last fall.

The parents filed the lawsuit last month after school boards in Ritenour, Pattonville and Francis Howell school districts voted to return transfer students to Normandy. At the heart of their lawsuit was a request for a judge to invalidate the Missouri Board of Education's actions in June when its members voted to give Normandy no accreditation status once it lapsed and fell under state oversight on July 1.

"The Missouri State Board of Education, pursuant to its statutory authority to waive its rules, including those regulating accreditation, has accredited the Normandy

Schools Collaborative and thus its schools,” the state’s motion to the court says. “Because of that accreditation, the Plaintiffs are not entitled to relief. ... ”

The accreditation terminology for the Normandy school system is unique.

The change in semantics could bolster the state’s defense. The parents had argued that with no accreditation status, Normandy still did not maintain an accredited school and still fell under the transfer law. That law allows children in districts with no accredited schools to attend higher-performing schools at the home district’s expense.

The term "accreditation as a state oversight district" gives accreditation to Normandy Schools Collaborative, the motion says, “which means that the Collaborative is not a ‘district in this state that does not maintain an accredited school.’ ”

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Tags Normandy, Student Transfers, Missouri Board Of Education

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