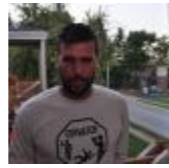




Developing
[Live Updates: Ferguson and Beyond](#)



Accountability
[California Group Gives Ferguson Residents Cameras To Monitor Police](#)



Politically Speaking
[Politically Speaking: Roorda On His Record, His Senate Race And Darren Wilson](#)

Missouri Board Of Education

8:02 PM SUN JUNE 15, 2014

Big Questions And Small Ones Linger About Normandy

By [DALE SINGER](#) (/PEOPLE/DALE-SINGER)

While the Missouri board of education wrestles with big questions concerning Normandy schools – who will run them, how will the curriculum change, how can student achievement be raised – parents in the district have much more personal concerns:

Will their children still be able to transfer to nearby accredited districts in the coming school year?

The state board is expected to clear up some of the uncertainty about the district's future at its meeting today in Jefferson City. It voted last month to dissolve the district as of June 30, to be replaced the next day by the Normandy Schools Collaborative, but many details on how it will operate were left undecided.

Chris Nicasastro, commissioner of elementary and secondary education, gave some indication earlier this month of recommendations her department will present to the state board on Monday. She said she would recommend that Normandy have no accreditation status at all, as opposed to its current status as unaccredited, and that while the approximately 1,000 students who transferred this past school year would be allowed to do so again, no new transfers would be allowed.



(http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/kwmu/files/201401/photo_%284%29.JPG)

Superintendent Ty MacNichols with Normandy students.

Credit Courtesy Normandy School District

She also said she would recommend that the financial drain on Normandy's budget be eased by a cap on tuition paid to districts receiving transfer students of about \$7,200 each – approximately the same amount that is paid to districts accepting transfer students under the voluntary desegregation plan. Tuition this past year ranged up to \$20,000, with none as low as \$7,200.

The recommendations that Nicasastro said would be presented by DESE still have to be accepted by the state board, so for a bit more parents remain in limbo about where their children might be attending classes when the new school year begins.

'I don't want to move him'

In an effort to help clarify the situation for parents – as much as possible, anyway – the

Children's Education Alliance of Missouri held an informational meeting last week at the Indian Trails branch of the St. Louis County Public Library.

There, the organization urged parents to contact the state board about their transfer concerns and other issues surrounding the new Normandy entity. It also released a [video \(http://www.ceamteam.org/transfer-parents-speak-out/\)](http://www.ceamteam.org/transfer-parents-speak-out/) featuring parents who want to make sure the transfer program remains as broad-based as possible.

Parents who spoke with St. Louis Public Radio had the same message.

Savonna Stacey transferred her son Jonathan to kindergarten in Ritenour last school year and worries about what a change would mean as he moves on to first grade.

"He's used to the environment and I'm used to it, as well," Stacey said. "You know, I don't want to move him to anything new right now, I just want to keep what we have."

As the school year closed with lingering questions about the transfer process, she began considering moving into the district to keep Jonathan in the same school.

Portia Porter is also concerned about making tough choices. She transferred both of her sons, Keven and Jeffery, to middle school in Rockwood last school year.

"As a parent, you know your children, you know what's best for them," Porter said. "I felt that this best for my children, they're doing wonderful in the school that they're in."

She recalled that Kevin and Jeffery got a chilly reception in Rockwood early on, but as the semester progressed, Porter said they came to feel more and more welcome. By the time the year drew to a close, parents in the district offered to put up her two sons during the week to ease their travel burden.

"Next year it would be a little less challenging," Porter said, "because I know people out there who are willing to help me."

Alisa Thompson is hoping her daughter, Tamia, will spend her senior year in University City. Nevertheless, she's spent plenty of time thinking about what might happen if Tamia is no longer able to transfer.

"I try not to let it bother me," Thompson said. "I try to stay positive. I've prayed on it."

Since last month's board meeting, state education officials have been busy trying to complete the details of the transition to the Normandy Schools Collaborative.

A transition task force that presented recommendations to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education spelled out many of the paths it thought the new Normandy should take. But filling in those broad strokes has taken up a lot of attention in recent weeks.

Sources say many people have been asked about their willingness to serve on the appointed board of the new entity, including members of the current elected board. Making sure that the board has the right mix of people who understand the needs, nuances and history of the district will be seen as a crucial step in its success.

Still unclear is how big the new board will be and how many elected board members will be included, if any.

Also unclear is the future of



<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/kwmu/files/201405/tyronemcNichols300.jpg>

The future is unclear for Normandy Superintendent

Superintendent Ty McNichols, who began his job running the district last July 1, just as planning for the transfers began. His contract, like those of all employees of the district, will lapse on June 30. As that date approaches, teachers and others who have re-applied for their jobs have been interviewed by teams made up of people from the district, the state, the University of Missouri-St. Louis and other sources.

Ty McNichols, whose contract lapses on June 30.
Credit Normandy School District

Other issues that could be decided by the state board Monday include when the new school year will start in Normandy and what role a [lengthy plan](#)

(<http://www.normandy.k12.mo.us/Default.asp?>

[PN=%27News2%27&SubP=%27DNewsStory%27&gn=&DivisionID=&DepartmentID=&SubDepartmentID=&NewsID=61067&ShowNav=&StoryGroup=Current](http://www.normandy.k12.mo.us/Default.asp?PN=%27News2%27&SubP=%27DNewsStory%27&gn=&DivisionID=&DepartmentID=&SubDepartmentID=&NewsID=61067&ShowNav=&StoryGroup=Current))

for improving achievement that McNichols and his administration put together will play in the new school organization.

TAGS: [education \(/term/education\)](#) [Normandy School District \(/term/normandy-school-district\)](#) [school transfers \(/term/school-transfers\)](#)

Related Content:



Hollow Victory
[Breitenfeld Won Student Transfer Case But Now Home Schools Children,](#)



Transfer Ruling Anniversary
[One Year Later, No End In Sight To School Transfer](#)

0 Comments

St. Louis Public Radio

Login ▾

Sort by Best ▾

Share Favorite



Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

Subscribe

Add Disqus to your site

Privacy

DISQUS