



Feedback Form

State Monitoring and Assistance Team

What should be the role of this Team and what responsibilities should they have?

The undersigned respectfully submit the following for consideration by the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education.

First and foremost, the focus of everyone involved – the State Board, the Commissioner and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Kansas City, Missouri School District (KCMSD) board, administration, principals, teachers, staff and the entire community – must be the approximate 17,000 students currently being served by the KCMSD and delivery of the highest quality education to every child. The children deserve nothing less.

The urgency and complexity (now and even more so in the near future) of the current situation demand something more drastic than simply appointing yet another “monitoring and assistance” team. We remember all too well the desegregation monitoring board that was given no authority and, consequently, had no impact. Instead, it was a distraction and a hindrance to forward progress. An oversight committee with monitoring responsibilities and no authority simply diffuses responsibility and accountability.

The only way to ensure the ability to recruit individuals of the highest quality to serve and to maximize their effectiveness is to appoint a special administrative board (SAB) and empower it with full authority over all affairs and functions of the KCMSD, pursuant to RSMo. § 162.081.3. We understand the implications of this with respect to the elected local school board; but we also recognize and believe that this situation calls for bold actions and drastic measures. We cannot continue doing the same things we have been doing for the last 40 years and hope to change the results. We believe appointment of an SAB with full authority is “in the best interests of the education of the children of the district.” § 162.081.3.

What are the desirable characteristics of the people who serve on this Team?

The members to be appointed to the SAB – individually and collectively – need to be visionary; they must possess the competence, capacity and confidence to independently, thoroughly and honestly assess the situation within the KCMSD and determine an appropriate course. The charge and directive to the SAB – and everyone involved – needs to be the identification and

implementation of a set of strategies that provide the highest quality education possible and prepare all current and future KCMSD students for post-secondary college and career success. With all due respect, the charge cannot be about attaining a few additional points toward provisional accreditation; that alone is insufficient to ensure productive futures for the students currently served by the KCMSD.

What this means is yet to be determined. With the potential ramifications of the pending Turner lawsuit, the (in)stability of the administration under an interim superintendent, and other issues out of the control of the KCMSD, the situation remains fluid. The SAB needs to be flexible and capable of responding as circumstances arise to do what is in the best interests of the children – both short and long-term, with the full support of the broad community. The composition of the SAB should also reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the population living within the geographic boundaries of the KCMSD.

The list below is not intended to be exhaustive, nor is it expected, or even possible, for SAB candidates to satisfy all of these criteria. At a minimum, each member of the SAB must have the educational and work experience commensurate with the demands of governing a \$250 million organization that is responsible for preparing all of Kansas City's students for post-secondary success. We also expect that each individual will have a demonstrated track record in strategic governance and in making difficult, even unpopular, decisions.

This list is intended to help guide the Department during the candidate identification, recruitment and selection process:

- Experience with large, complex organizations (for-profit and/or non-profit) at policy, leadership and board levels;
- Record of concern for children; putting children's needs above personal and special interests
- History of ethical behavior, transparency in dealings, open/honest/candid communication, no conflict(s) of interest;
- Personal qualities supportive of effective teamwork including: collaborative style, flexibility, professionalism, pragmatism, open-minded, thoughtful, strong communication/interpersonal skills; problem solving capacity;
- Specific expertise: legal, business/finance/accounting, human resources, education, social service/healthcare, marketing/public relations, public administration, real estate, communications;
- Post-secondary credential (minimum Bachelor's degree; Master's degree or higher preferred);
- Minimum years of work experience (5-10);
- Minimum age (30);
- Appreciation for teaching and learning in an urban environment; and,
- Satisfy all legal requirements and qualifications.



Other Suggestions:

The SAB should take effect simultaneously with the removal of provisional accreditation by the State Board on January 1, 2012.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input to the Commissioner and State Board of Education. We stand ready to work collaboratively to improve the educational outcomes for the children of the Kansas City, Missouri School District.

Respectfully submitted by:

Do the Right Thing for Kids

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