



News Release

Office of Communications

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Board Votes to Classify Normandy Schools as Provisionally Accredited

JEFFERSON CITY, MO -- The Missouri State Board of Education voted 8-0 to classify the Normandy Schools Collaborative as a Provisionally Accredited school district.

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) made the recommendation for Normandy to be reclassified at the December 1 State Board of Education meeting in Jefferson City.

Dr. Charles Pearson, Normandy Superintendent of Schools, appreciates the support the Collaborative has received from the state, and most importantly, the students, staff and families.

“This has become a mission for our teachers and staff,” said Dr. Pearson. “It has been challenging at times and rewarding, but our collective goal is to provide the best education possible for our students. Becoming accredited was the short-term goal, so we will take a breath and appreciate this accomplishment and return home to continue the work: to provide our students with an education that gives them tools to be successful and productive when they graduate.”

This is the third year in a row the Collaborative made double-digit improvements on the Annual Performance Report (APR) which DESE uses as part of its system to gauge student learning and education quality. In 2017, the Collaborative earned 87.5 points out of a possible 140 on the APR. In 2014, the Collaborative only earned 10 points. In 2015, the district quadrupled that number earning 42.5 points. Last year, the Collaborative earned 76.5 points on the state’s report card for public schools.

In 2014, DESE dissolved the Normandy School District and re-established it as the Normandy Schools Collaborative. The new entity is led by the Joint Executive Governing Board (an appointed board which replaced the elected school board) who selected Dr. Pearson as superintendent. Since then, the Collaborative has focused on improving instruction and school climate, and establishing a strong leadership team with the fundamental goal of increasing student academic performance.

Some of the improvements include:

- Establishing a Kindergarten Center and moving sixth graders to the elementary school;

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- Reinstating Advanced Placement, dual-credit/dual-enrollment courses at the high school;
- Implementing small group instruction for English language arts, reading and mathematics;
- Establishing ‘data teams’ at each school to evaluate student progress and implement support and additional instruction for students who need it;
- Incorporating ‘wraparound’ services throughout the Collaborative to help support students and families, and remove social/emotional obstacles to student learning; and
- Providing trauma-informed training for all staff to better address some of the issues students may bring to schools.

With the reclassification, Normandy is no longer required to participate in the student transfer program. The state law requires unaccredited districts to pay tuition for its students to transfer to surrounding accredited districts. Normandy also pays for transportation for transfer students to attend schools in the Francis Howell School District in St. Charles County.

The Collaborative has reached agreements with the current receiving school districts to allow transfer students to continue through the end of the 2017-2018 school year while capping the tuition amount at \$7,000 per student. Some districts will allow the transfer students to attend their current school until they reach the next transition point; high school students may stay at their school until graduation.

“Three years ago, there were families who left the district, but we also had more than 3,000 students whose families did not,” Pearson recalled. “Those families who decided to keep their children with us gave us an ultimatum -- make this school district better. We have made significant progress and will continue to do the work. We have 3,200 students and their families counting on us to do what’s necessary to become fully accredited.”

That work includes the planning and construction of a new Early Learning Center which will house the Collaborative’s PreK and Kindergarten programs. Normandy is also changing the configuration of its elementary schools from grades 1-6 to grades 1-8. In preparation for the return of the 7th & 8th grade students, the elementary schools are being renovated and expanded, with Jefferson and Washington also having new library media centers and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) studios added to these campuses. The new construction and expansions are made possible by the voters approving the no-tax-rate increase bond issue, Proposition N, in April 2017.

The new Early Learning Center and the elementary school expansions are scheduled to be complete by the 2019-2020 school year.

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CAPTION: Normandy Superintendent Dr. Charles Pearson gives a celebratory hug to long-time Normandy principal and alumna Robin Vaulx-Williams after learning of the state Board of Education’s vote to classify Normandy as provisionally accredited. Also pictured are (from left): Rev. Cedric Portis, JEGB president; Tina Clark-Scott, assistant superintendent of Academics and Student Support Services; Catheline Jones, English language arts curriculum coordinator; and Olga Hunt, science curriculum coordinator.

CAPTION #1: A group of staff, city leaders, and community members traveled to Jefferson City to show their support for the Normandy Schools Collaborative at the recent state Board of Education meeting. The state BOE voted unanimously to classify Normandy as a provisionally accredited school district.