

2025 Missouri Charter Public School Association Annual Conference Agenda

Marriott St. Louis Grand / St. Louis, MO

Register here

Thursday, October 9, 2025

School Leaders, Board Members, Community Members, Philanthropy, and Civic Leaders

Join us for an engaging afternoon designed to inform, inspire, and connect. We'll begin with a dynamic panel discussion on the evolving charter landscape, featuring voices from across the sector. This will be followed by a keynote from renowned educator and advocate Geoffrey Canada. The evening continues with a cocktail reception accompanied by live music from the Gateway Science String Quartet. It concludes with dinners offering opportunities for deeper connections.

Time	Title and Description	Speakers
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Conference Check-In Arrive and get settled to kick off the annual conference.	MCPSA Staff
3:00 PM – 3:10 PM	Opening Welcome Kickoff remark from emcee Melanie Johnson and a look ahead for the annual conference.	Noah Devine, Executive Director, MCPSA & Melanie Johnson (Emcee), Journalist and anchor, iHeartRadio
3:10 PM – 4:00 PM	State of the Sector A look over the 25 years: A candid conversation on where we've been, where we are, and what's next.	TBD
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Keynote Address A fireside chat with one of the nation's most inspiring education voices.	Geoffrey Canada, President, Harlem Children's Zone
5:00 PM – 6:30 PM	Cocktail Reception Network with fellow leaders, community members, funders, and civic leaders over drinks and live string music.	Gateway Science Academy String Quartet



Friday, October 10, 2025

School Leaders, Leadership Teams, Support Teams, Teachers, and Charter Constituents

Join us for a full day of learning and connection, beginning with a keynote from Geoffrey Canada and remarks from Missouri Department of Education Commissioner Karla Eslinger. Breakout sessions will cover topics across three core areas: Innovation, Implementation, and Inspiration. Within these three areas, noted topics will be Artificial Intelligence (AI), literacy implementation, innovation, and wellness.

	Time Slot	Topic	Speaker
	7:30 AM –	Breakfast & Exhibit Hall	
	8:30 AM		
		Connect with your colleagues.	
	8:30 AM –	Welcome	Noah Devine, Executive
	9:00 AM		Director, MCPSA &
		Emcee Melanie Johnson previews the day's	Melanie Johnson
		sessions, followed by remarks from Noah	(Emcee), Journalist and
		Devine and the presentation of the Bette	anchor, iHeartRadio
		Morff Award.	
	9:00 AM –	Keynote Address	Geoffrey Canada,
	9:45 AM		President, Harlem
		Inspiring remarks from a national education	Children's Zone
		leader on the role of leadership, innovation,	
		and equity in education.	
	9:45 AM –	Commissioner of Education	Karla Eslinger,
	10:15 AM		Commissioner of
		Welcome and an update on Missouri	Education, State of
		education with questions and answers.	Missouri
DESE Office	10:15 AM -		
Hours	10:30 AM	Exhibit Hall Break & Morning Coffee	
	10:30 AM -		
Meet one-on- one with DESE	11:15 AM	Breakout Sessions 1	& 2
staff for	(Session 1)	Innovation: AI & The Future of Education:	Jomar McDonald
		Missouri Policy & Practical Application	



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	Time Slot	Topic	Speaker
guidance, resources, and answers to your school-	11:20 AM – 12:05 AM (Session 2)	An overview of AI and how it intersects with national best practices and emerging research.	Vice President, Technology - TNTP
specific questions. Appointment	Pick one session for each time	Audience: School and Building Leaders	
slots and types (finance, accountability, etc.) will be communicated closer to the	slot, so you will attend two of the four offered.	Inspiration: Whole-School Wellness Supporting Students (and Staff) through the Mind-Body Connection of Pain and Mental Health Audience: Counselors, Teachers, Staff	Amy Graham, Executive Director, The Danielle Foundation
conference.		Innovation: Innovative Schools Explore fresh approaches to learning from school leaders paving the way. Audience: School Leaders	TBD
		Implementation: The Differentiation Shortcut Making Grade-Level Content Accessible.	Dana Coleman, Founder/CEO, Dana Coleman Consulting
		Audience: Teachers, Instructional Coaches, Building Leaders	
	12:05 PM – 12:30 PM	Lunch & Exhibit Hall Connect with your colleagues.	
	12:30 PM – 1:15 PM	Legislative Update: State & Federal Policy – Get the latest insights on education policy from Missouri and Washington, DC., and what it means for your school.	TBD
	1:15 PM - 1:30 PM	Exhibit Hall Break and Prizes	



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	Time Slot	Topic	Speaker
DESE Office Hours	1:30 PM – 2:15 PM	Breakout Sessions 3 & 4	
Meet one-on-one with DESE staff for guidance, resources, and answers to your school-specific questions. Appointment slots and types (finance, accountability, etc.) will be communicated closer to the conference.	(Session 3) 2:20 PM – 3:05 PM (Session 4) Pick one session for each time slot, so you will attend two of the four offered.	Innovation: Artificial Intelligence in Education Explore how artificial intelligence can enhance teaching, boost student engagement, and improve outcomes—along with the strategies and safeguards schools need to make it work. Audience: Teachers, Leaders	Travis Jiskra, Director of Educational Technology, Concept Schools
		Innovation: Rooted in Resilience: Educating the Post-Pandemic Child A dynamic, evidence-based toolkit built around a tri-generational support system designed to help students thrive. Audience: K–12 Educators, Admin, Social Workers	Tenyana M. Rhinehard. Educator, University Academy Charter School / Spark Ventures (Zambia)
conjerence.		Implementation: Read, Lead, Exceed Hear about what is working, how others are implementing the initiative, and what is working around the state. Audience: Leaders, Educators, Instructional Coaches	Heather Knight, Coordinator of Literacy, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
		Inspiration: Personal Organization as a Tool For Restoration Learn to use personal organization as a way to communicate, offering true opportunities to feel balanced and refreshed by their schedule - not defeated and drained. Audience: Leaders, Educators, Instructional Coaches	Candace Wilson, Talent and Hiring Strategy Consultant, Dana Coleman Consulting

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Time Slot	Topic	Speaker
	Innovation: Protecting kids online a community commitment	Brock Murphy, Founder/CEO, Parent Protech
	Safely navigating technology is a critical skill for today's students.	
	Audience: Educators, School Social Workers, and Counselors	
1:30 PM -	Panel Discussion for Leaders and Board	TBD
3:05 PM	Members	
	A dynamic panel of school leaders will dig	
	into common challenges, swap proven	
	strategies, and build a stronger network of	
	support for every school in the room.	
	Audience: Leadership and Board Members	
3:05 PM	Conference Concludes	