



June 13, 2008

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College of Arts and Science
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Dr. Melvin George
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University of Missouri-Columbia
Professor Emeritus, Mathematics
104 Ellis Library
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Dear Drs. O'Brien and George:

Thank you for your May 5, 2008 correspondence related to the important competency work underway in K-12 and higher education in Missouri. As Commissioner of Education and the Commissioner of Higher Education, we are appreciative of the concerns raised about these two important initiatives and the goal of ensuring Missouri students remain competitive in the national arena.

The recommendations of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel, which were released only recently, represent an important perspective. While earlier versions were considered, we understand that final reports will give fuller information that will be considered as the work on these two mathematics initiatives in Missouri continues.

Concerning instructional methodologies, each of the documents (K-12 and higher education) takes a little different approach. However, we have asked both groups who are working on the next phase of these initiatives to consider again the implicit and explicit messages about instructional practices, i.e., student centered or teacher centered, encouraging a balanced method.

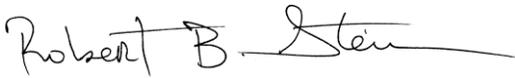
Since the receipt of your letter, two other important changes are underway. Both in- and out-of-state mathematicians have been invited to participate in the review of the draft K-12 document. In addition, the higher education competency document has further clarified that the entry-level competencies are minimum for prospective students, and that in many fields, especially METS related, it is essential for students to take additional rigorous courses and master higher level competencies to be successful in collegiate level coursework.

While mathematicians are now involved in both processes, we understand additional mathematicians may have constructive perspectives to share as documents are revised.

We understand that additional mathematicians have been invited to review the proposed curriculum. This is timely as K-12 and higher education review the gap analyses that have been completed and explore potential changes to either document. Please be assured that whatever indicators and standards are adopted are intended to be dynamic, depicting a snapshot in time, and are subject to modification as state and national recommendations evolve.

Should you wish to further discuss these matters, please contact either of us.

Sincerely,



Dr. Robert Stein, Commissioner
Missouri Department of Higher Education



Dr. D. Kent King, Commissioner
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary
Education

c: Mark Ashbaugh, Chair and Professor, MU Department of Mathematics
Glen Himmelberg, Chair-Designate, MU Department of Mathematics
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