

2023 End-Of-The-Year

MO Equity Education Partnership



Introduction

The MO Equity Education Partnership (MOEEP) began in 2021 as a grassroots movement in support of equity in our schools. Since that time, we have expanded our mission to not just address equity in schools, but also in our communities and state. We believe that our organizational mission includes four primary areas: Education, Activism, Advocacy, and Support. Each of our teams consider these four areas as they plan and execute events through either MO Equity Education Partnership (501c3) or MO Equity Education Partnership–Action (501c4).

During 2023, we continued to grow and develop. This report will outline some of our successes, as well as our areas of growth for 2024.

Mission

The MO Equity Education Partnership’s mission is to advocate and mobilize for inclusion, diversity, equity, academic integrity, and accessibility for all individuals in all aspects of community life. (Rev. October 2023)

Vision

We envision an informed, just, and evolving society of inclusive communities fostered with anti-biased methods to achieve our mission.

In pursuit of inclusion and equity:

We envision individuals and groups...

- Empowered with agency, voice, and presence.
- Equipped with the tools and information to navigate the intricacies of a complex society and influence positive change.
- Validated to use their ability to make a difference and contribute to a more inclusive and fair future for all.
- Supported by their communities and allies

To ensure representation, voice, policy, and daily practice in this mission:

We envision...

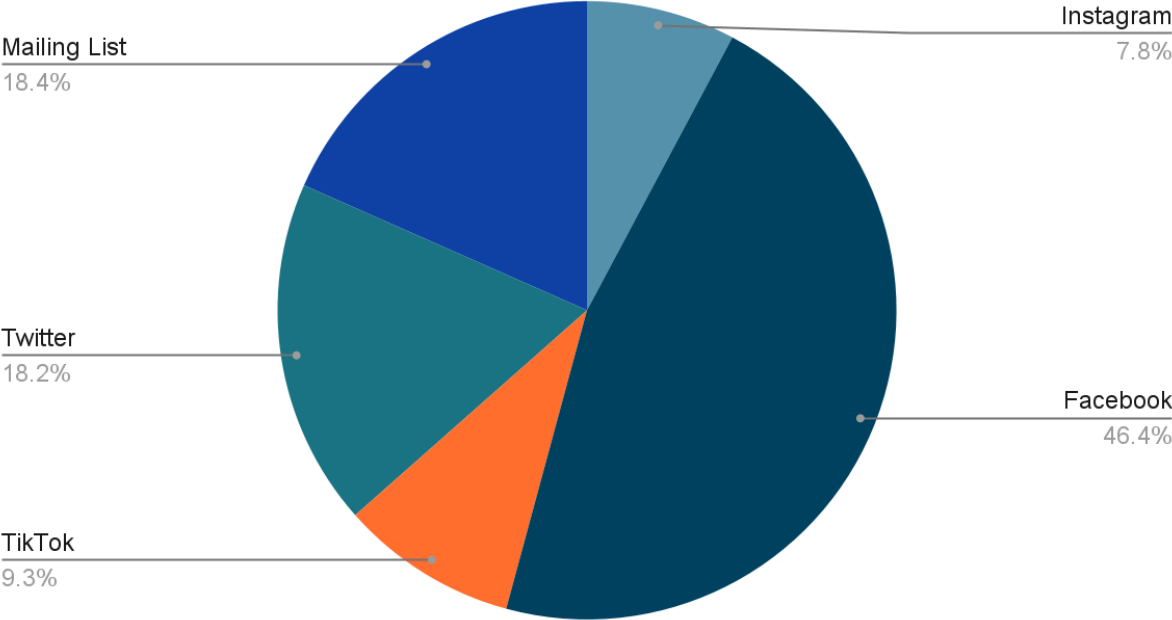
- Communities and all persons who value each individual’s unique abilities and viewpoints, paving the path for a brighter and fairer future for all..
- Public spaces where free expression, historical accuracy and intellectual integrity, and personal safety are protected and accessible to all.
- Advocates willing to challenge false narratives that unjustly criticize Missouri educators and devalue the importance of I.D.E.A. (inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility).

Marketing and Communications

Our marketing efforts are key to our ability to organize. We use social media and other means to communicate with supporters, to ensure that the community is informed, and plan actions in support of equity.

Followers:

Total Audience--8016



One goal we have set for 2024 is to increase our reach across platforms significantly. Please follow at the accounts below:

Facebook and Instagram--MO Equity Education Partnership

Twitter--@ EquityMissouri

TikTok--@ MOEquity

Events And Fundraising

This year, we were able to sponsor a number of wonderful events in support of equity. Some were completed prior to our creation of MO Equity Education Partnership–Action (MOEEPA) and the renaming of the 501(c)3 to be MOEEP. Below is a short summary of these events.

The members of the Missouri Equity Education Partnership (MOEEP) embarked on a series of impactful events, bringing together a diverse community of members and volunteers committed to fostering positive change. Through engaging activities and advocacy initiatives, MOEEP aimed to empower individuals, educate the community, and champion causes that resonate with our values.

- **Breaking Bread Social Event**—members and volunteers gathered to experience a tapestry of ethnic foods. This event not only tantalized taste buds but also created an environment of fellowship, strengthening the sense of community at the heart of MOEEP.
- **Lobby Day**, held in February 2023, became a platform for MOEEP members to directly engage with legislators, advocating for their community's interests and dissecting the impact of specific bills.
- **Karaoke Trivia Night** added an element of entertainment to the advocacy, raising an impressive \$10,000 through enthusiastic participation in challenging song lyrics trivia and lively karaoke performances.
- **Monthly Educational Sessions** provided a forum for guest speakers to enlighten MOEEP members and volunteers on critical aspects of community activism, local needs, and the repercussions of specific legislation. Simultaneously, the relentless fight against book banning showcased MOEEP's dedication to preserving freedom of speech and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in education. MOEEP also invested in empowering its members through skill-building initiatives, such as the Personal Narrative workshop. Here, participants learned to articulate their personal stories and their commitment to safeguarding communities against threats to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

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- **Legislative Preview**, sponsored through MOEEPA, facilitated a deeper understanding of impending bills, equipping members to advocate effectively for or against proposed legislation.
 - **The Volunteer Appreciation** celebrated that volunteers are the backbone of our advocacy efforts, bringing together hardworking individuals for an evening of celebration and camaraderie at Chillax in St. Charles.
 - **The Equity Fair**, a vibrant celebration, highlighted educators and community members shaping the state's greatness. With a teacher band, vendor stalls, and games, the fair encapsulated the spirit of equity and inclusivity in education and community life.

MOEEP's journey through these diverse events underscored the organization's commitment to empowerment, education, and advocacy. By fostering a sense of community, engaging with legislators, celebrating volunteers, and championing important causes, MOEEP continues to be a driving force for positive change in Missouri.

Education and Youth Council

Through our Education and Youth Council (EYC), we connect with individuals within school districts throughout the state to teach them how to organize and to support them as they attempt to do so. These individuals are deemed district captains for MOEEP, and we work closely with them to teach organizing skills and help them develop an organizing strategy.

We have found active district captains for the following districts:

- Fox
- Francis Howell
- Kirkwood
- Mehlville
- Nixa
- Northwest
- Parkway
- Rockwood
- Wentzville

However, we continue to recruit for additional school districts with a goal of having a chapter or affiliate equity group in every district. For individuals who are interested in exploring the district captain role, please contact Heather Fleming at info@missouriequity.com.

Coalitions

MOEEP has always been committed to the coalition-building process, believing that we will only be able to achieve our goals through collective power-building with other stakeholders in our state and country. Below is a brief summary of the coalitions we have proudly participated in over the past year.

The Let Them Learn/Y'all Means All Coalition

This coalition was organized at the end of 2021 and began its work in 2022 with a number of statewide organizations who wanted to coordinate our efforts to defeat anti-equity bills and their proponents. In 2023, we expanded this coalition to include a collaboration with PROMO (a pro-LGBTQ civil rights organization) because we realized that anti-equity forces were also heavily focusing on removing LGBTQ rights in addition to attacking equity and belonging for all minority stakeholders. Through this coalition, we have been able to organize stakeholder groups who wished to testify, hold rallies and events in support of equity for all, and advocate strongly for more effective policy to support all citizens of MO. We continue to add organizations, advocates, and concerned citizens to this group each session.

The Unite Against Book Bans Campaign

This is a national campaign organized through the American Library Association. The purpose is to fight against attempts throughout the nation to ban books and lower access to diverse stories. MOEEP joined with a number of national organizations to support this effort. Our executive director Heather Fleming serves as a member of the coordinating committee of this campaign, as well as the chair of the Policy and Legislative Subcommittee. For this effort, she has helped plan coordinated campaigns in support of free access to literature, written a blog post encouraging average citizens and advocates to use their voices, and worked to inform the work that the subcommittee will be doing in 2024.

National Right To Read Coalition

This coalition was created by the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC) and works to keep organization leaders of all types informed about how to fight book bans throughout the country. They provide educational opportunities for organizers to learn about the effective actions of other organizations and to make connections between leaders committed to educational freedom.

MO Right to Read Coalition

As our state faces more attacks on the right to read, a number of state-based organizations came together to create this coalition to address these attacks, provide information to proponents of the freedom to read, and to organize to push back against the policies and people who seek to ban books.

School Board Equity Table

This collective of national and state-based organizations was created with the intention of providing school board candidates with information about the need for equity in our schools and governing bodies. We work with our partner organizations to develop valuable access to resources that can be easily shared with individuals interested in working toward equity through their school boards.

Financial Report

This year, MOEEP was able to raise more money than in previous years because of our 501(c)3 designation which made donations to the organization tax-deductible. The bulk of our funding came from small donors who gave through our \$23 for 2023 campaign. However, we did receive a few donations from organizations, as well, which we will list below.

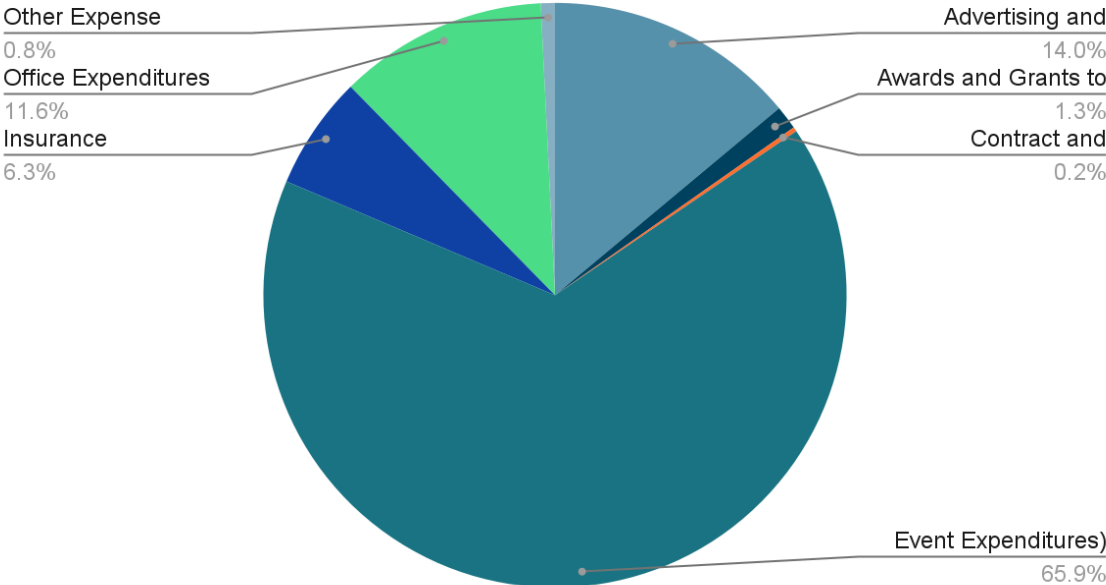
Total Revenue: \$17, 965.04

This amount includes large donations from the following:

- New Venture Fund via the Campaign For Our Shared Future-\$5000
- Deaconess Foundation "Seeding The Future" Microgrant-\$2000

Total Expenditures: \$6235.54

Total Expenditures



MO Equity Education Partnership–Action

MO Equity Education Partnership–Action (MOEEP-A) is the 501(c)4 portion of our organization. MOEEP-A, like MOEEP, is non-partisan but maintains the same mission and vision as we work through the political process to advocate for equitable outcomes in our schools and communities. We do this through two specific teams: our Political Action and Legal Team which is responsible for monitoring and disseminating information to our partner organizations and members before, during, and after the legislative session each year; and the Special Projects Team that is responsible for our Candidate Scorecard process for school board, mid-term, and general elections.

Political Action and Legal Team

Leader–Dava-Leigh Brush

This Legislative Session, MoEEP worked hard to change hearts, minds and actions.

Legislation Monitoring. We monitored at some level over 200 of about 2200 bills between both chambers. There were some that we monitored actively and for the duration; others were dropped when they didn't go anywhere.

- 13 bills stopped at the outset by never getting assigned to a committee
- 63 stopped at the committee level by not getting a hearing or not getting a vote
- 13 stopped after committee either by not being assigned to or voted out of oversight
- 18 bills made it to a floor calendar and some of those were debated
- 11 bills were voted out of the original chamber and crossed over to the other one to repeat the process; some debated and others not
- 9 bills were Truly Agreed to and Finally Passed and are awaiting the signature of the governor.

Supported Legislation Passed

- HB 2 (Smith) DESE Budget
- HB 3 (Smith) Higher Ed Budget
- HB 12 (Smith) Sec of State budget (Library funding)
- SB 45/90 (Gannon/McCreery) - extends postpartum care to 1 year for families using Missouri HealthNet

Opposed Legislation Passed

- SB 49 (Moon) Anti-transgender healthcare
- SB 39 (Rehder) Transgender athlete ban
- SB 35 (May) Scripture Based elective course

Some legislation was added as amendments to a bill that passed, HB 447 (Davidson):

- HB 106 (Barnes) Language equality for deaf/hard of hearing children (supported)
- SB 381 (Rehder) Family/Health education work group (opposed)

Other bills we monitored that did not cross the finish line.

◆ Support ◆ Oppose

Senate Bills

- ◆ SB 14 (Cierpiot) prohibiting changing of gender markers
- ◆ SB 4 (Koenig) Parents Bill of Rights/curriculum censorship
- ◆ SB 5 (Brattin) School choice/enrollment
- ◆ SB 360 (Eigel) Voucher expansion
- ◆ SB 419 (Koenig) “Do No Harm” anti DEI bill
- ◆ SB 134 (Moon) Don’t Say Gay
- ◆ SB 60 (Razer) adding LGBTQ+ as a protected class in MONA - received a hearing for the first time

House Bills

- ◆ HS/HB 419 (Hudson) Anti-transgender healthcare
- ◆ HB 183 (Burger) Transgender athlete ban
- ◆ HS/HCS/HB 253 (Pollit) Open Enrollment
- ◆ HBs 482 (Baker) and 627 (Christofanelli) Parents Bills of Rights
- ◆ HB 1175 (Christofanelli) expansion of auditor role
- ◆ HB 159 (Mackey) equity in discipline - made it out of oversight for the first time
- ◆ HB 1196 (Richey) anti-DEI
- ◆ HB 497 (Lewis) became an education omnibus
- ◆ HB 883 (Cupps) Family/Health education
- ◆ HCS/HB 494/498 (Baker) anti drag bill
- ◆ HJR 143 (Henderson) Initiative Petition Process -finally stopped at the 11th hour

Representative Quade highlighted other areas that saw great success. She noted

- advanced nurse practitioners’ regulations have changed in their favor
- pre-screenings for breast exams now have better coverage
- physical therapists will not have to require referrals for patient access
- tax credits are now available for adoptions
- entertainment/music tax credits will bring industries back to Missouri
- property tax reductions for senior citizens
- exemption for state income taxes on Social Security.

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- full credit for time served for pre-trial detention
 - improvement in police procedures
 - Blair's Law addresses celebratory gunfire
 - fully funded Foundation Formula
 - teachers' minimum salaries raised to \$38,000.
 - folks receiving state assistance through safety net programs like SNAP, etc, will be able to accept
 - more hours and small raises in hourly pay without jeopardizing benefits.

She also noted that while some wins were big, other wins were smaller, but a win is a win is a win! More Democratic priorities made it further than ever before in the process showing that the needle is moving consistently. The key is getting folks to run for office and then work like crazy to get them elected. Even if election seems like a bridge too far, every cycle we narrow the margin IS a win.

The Difference We Made:

First, we need to acknowledge that the Missouri Democratic Caucus worked tenaciously to hold the line throughout the session on a variety of bills and topics. The Senate Caucus filibustered by buying time for negotiating mitigation into the anti-transgender bills. They also worked to hold the line on HJR 143 and worked the process. House Democrats made some impassioned, reasoned pleas to stop some of the worst things, to mitigate, to slow walk as much as possible.

House Minority Leader Rep. Crystal Quade acknowledged that MoEEP has made a difference as well. They see us in the halls, and know we are contacting legislators in big numbers. Some of the things we supported that were passed, and some of the things that didn't cross the finish line were due to our efforts. There were 5,894 witness testimony submissions in person or online for bills we monitored. 4,679 of those witnesses aligned with the MoEEP position stated in our calls to action. MoEEP provided 1,595 contacts to representatives and senators based on the contactmoleg email address.

Voting alignment

During the 2022 election, MoEEP vetted all candidates through an equity lens. We used a survey and publicly available information, including past voting record to place candidates into 4 categories: Endorsed, Approved, Unclear and Anti-Equity. The voting records of the bills we tracked demonstrate that our process is highly accurate. A 100% or 0% voting record is rare for a variety of reasons. We look at bills exclusively through a DEI lens. Sometimes bills have things added to them after committee votes that give us pause. Sometimes our state leaders vote PRESENT as a statement, and those are calculated lower than a full SUPPORT and higher than OPPOSE. Also, our leaders have a varying number of votes in the calculus because of committee assignments. The data below reflects the average voting percentage of

legislators/senators in a particular category aligned with our organizational positions and values..

Note: The senate had no approved candidates; also, the senate had half of the senators who didn't have an election and are reflected as "leans." Rep. Bridget Walsh-Moore is the only candidate who aligned 100% with us. Senators Eigel and Ben Brown are the only 0% alignment.

ENDORSED: House 93%, Senate 81.5%

APPROVED: House 96%, Senate - N/A

UNCLEAR: House 36.1%, Senate 33.3%

ANTI-EQUITY: House: 13.4%, Senate 23.7

Senators with no election: Leans Equity: 83.2%, Leans Anti-Equity 19.9%, Unclear 29.7%

This demonstrates that our process is solid!

Special Projects Team

Leader—Ken Susman

This year, the Special Projects Team worked to revise the previous year’s process to more closely align with the one utilized for the 2022 Midterm Election scorecard, incorporating best practices discovered at that time. The results of this revised process are outlined below.

Time frame: November - April

- **November-mid-December:** working on setting up structures and procedures
- **Late-December-January:** reaching out to school districts to gather candidate names and contact information
- **January-early March:** reaching out to candidates, researching candidates, grading candidates, building scorecard data presentation
- **Early March - April 4:** endorsing candidates, sharing and boosting messages, working to get targeted voters to the polls

By the numbers

Total districts with MoEEP outreach: 559

- Responses received: 259
 - No election: 104
 - Candidate info received: 155
 - No response: 300

Total candidate emails collected: 736

- Surveys sent: 637 candidates
- Bounced or failed sends: 24
- Other: 75

Surveys returned:

- 84 candidates in 50 districts, 26 counties represented
- Final scores of candidates who participated:
 - Endorsed: 50
 - Pro-Equity: 12
 - Unclear: Ask!: 7
 - Anti-Equity: 13
 - Withdrawn/Other: 2
- Final scores of candidates who did NOT participate:
 - Pro-Equity: 39
 - Unclear: Ask!: 141

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- Anti-Equity: 32
 - Incomplete: 688 (explained below)
 - Withdrawn: 15

Many candidates were left unscored. We graded every candidate in every district where a candidate participated, but left many other districts untouched. This was a decision made to protect the time of both the volunteers and the candidates who participated. We still scored 294 candidates statewide, and were able to endorse nearly ⅓ of those candidates.

The results

- Statewide
 - Endorsed candidates won 58% of their races
 - Pro-equity candidates won 67% of their races
 - Anti-equity candidates won 39% of their races
- Where did our candidates struggle?
 - St. Charles County swung hard against equity in April 2023
 - Overall
 - Endorsed candidates: 2 out of 7 won (22%)
 - Pro-equity candidates: 1 out of 2 won (50%)
 - Anti-equity candidates: 8 out of 10 won (80%)
 - By district
 - St. Charles: of the three winners, one was Endorsed, one was Pro-Equity, and one was Anti-Equity. Both candidates who lost were Endorsed
 - Ft. Zumwalt: of the three winners, one was Endorsed, one was Anti-Equity, and one was Unclear. Two Anti-Equity candidates lost.
 - Francis Howell: all three Endorsed candidates lost, and all three Anti-Equity candidates won
 - Wentzville: all three Endorsed candidates lost, and all three Anti-Equity candidates won
 - When you exclude St. Charles from the final tally:
 - Endorsed candidates: 26 out of 39 candidates won (67%)
 - Pro-Equity candidates: 30 out of 44 candidates won (68%)
 - Anti-Equity candidates: 9 out of 34 candidates won (28%)

It is not possible to reasonably compare April 2023 to April 2022, due to different decisions made about who to score, specifically the fact that we only graded participants in 2022 and we graded all candidates within a district in 2023.

Financial Report for MOEEP-Action

This year, MOEEP-Action was renamed and financially set apart from MOEEP due to its 501(c)4 designation. This organization operates separately from our 501(c)3 both in activities and finances

Total Revenue: \$3,209.74

- These donations all came from donations

Total Expenditures: \$2,949.92

Total Expenditures

