

Earlier this year, the Coordinating Board for Higher Education directed the MDHE staff to undertake a comprehensive review of the student financial aid programs administered by the department. During the spring, a task force developed a policy framework for the state student assistance programs administered by the MDHE, which was adopted by the Coordinating Board in June. Since that time, the State Student Financial Aid Committee has been working to review our existing programs and propose changes to strengthen the programs, ensure they are aligned with state goals (including the policy framework), and ensure they work together as much as possible. Information about that work is available from our website at <https://dhe.mo.gov/ppc/grants/stateaidreview.php>.

Attached to this report is a draft set of recommendations developed by MDHE staff and the committee. While the draft encourages the MDHE to create a single umbrella for all of these programs, the proposal also envisions several distinct components within that larger program. The attempt is to better integrate the programs while also maintaining the historic recognitions of the various components and the targeting of specific populations of students. To be clear, it does not propose moving to a single funding stream for all of these programs. Also attached is a draft outline of what the program changes might look like based on the draft recommendations.

As we continue to refine the recommendations, we want to seek your feedback and input as we continue to move these recommendations forward. The current plan is to take a set of recommendations to the Coordinating Board at its December meeting so we need your input now. All comments are welcome but we are particularly interested in how well you think the recommendations maintain consistency with the policy framework developed by the task force.

Please review these documents and provide us with your comments and suggestions by Friday, November 16. This will allow us to organize your comments, along with the others we will receive from the broader education community, for review by the committee at its next meeting on November 20th.

Thank you for your assistance with this important project and please feel free to contact me at leroy.wade@dhe.mo.gov or Kelli Reed at kelli.reed@dhe.mo.gov if you have questions or need any additional information.