



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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*Coming to a Theater (and Other Venues) Near You:*

### **State Agencies Target Students with “Graduation Matters” Message**

As holiday moviegoers settle in with their popcorn and drinks this week and next, many will see an unusual message during the traditional ads and previews. At 36 Missouri theaters across the state, the previews also will include a “Graduation Matters” message, directed at young people and featuring Missouri high school and college students.

Produced by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the 30-second ??? public service announcement also will be airing on radio and television stations from Nov. 23 to Dec. 27. The announcements are one outgrowth of a multi-agency effort to reach the public with practical information about academic and career preparation.

School districts and education groups across the state have started to adopt the “Graduation Matters” slogan as a vehicle for encouraging young people to finish high school – and set their sights on opportunities after high school. State education officials hope the public service announcement will add momentum to that campaign.

“There has been tremendously positive response among educators and civic leaders to the ‘Graduation Matters’ theme, and we hope to reach a key audience through the new public service announcements,” said Michele Clark, a communications specialist at DESE and coordinator of the project.

The goal of the multi-agency workgroup is to provide education and career planning information to students and potential students, she said. The agencies are using a mix of media – newspapers, radio, TV, DVDs, restaurant bag stuffers and social media sites – to provide resources for students, parents, employers and others. The project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Known as the Missouri Connections Public Outreach Partnership, the interagency workgroup includes the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; the Department of Higher Education; Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development and Missouri Economic Research and Information Center; Missouri Center for Career Education; and the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

“Our ultimate goal is to help Missourians prepare themselves with the goals, education and skills they need to be competitive and prosperous throughout their careers,” Clark said. “Part of that effort involves convincing some young people of the critical importance of staying in school, graduating and preparing for what comes after high school.”

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More information is available at [http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/missouri\\_connections\\_news\\_room.htm](http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/missouri_connections_news_room.htm).

*The Missouri Connections Public Outreach Partnership workgroup represents a collaboration of state agencies concerned with education and workforce development who are helping inform and build awareness among the public, particularly students and potential students, of targeted careers, educational and industry trends, and workforce development priorities. Workgroup members represent the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Department of Higher Education; Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development and Missouri Economic Research & Information Center; Missouri Center for Career Education; and Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Freelance writer is Anita Neal Harrison.*