

EDUCATION CONNECTION



NEWS FROM THE KANSAS CITY, KANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SUMMER 2014

KCKPS TAKES THE LEAD ON HEAD START SERVICES

BACK TO SCHOOL INFORMATION

NEW MCKINLEY TO OPEN;
STADIUM PROJECTS IN THE WORKS

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MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Dr. Cynthia Lane
Superintendent of Schools

We begin the 2014-15 school year riding the tide of a very successful 2013-2014 school year.

Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS) graduated record numbers of students who successfully completed college credits, technical certifications, and

earned millions of dollars in scholarships. Unprecedented numbers of graduates committed to post-secondary education. Sumner Academy of Arts and Science and Wyandotte High School both finished the year with 90% of their graduating classes accepted into colleges and universities. F.L. Schlagle and Wyandotte high schools each had a graduate who received the "Gates Millennium Scholarship." This prestigious scholarship, which completely pays for college and graduate school, is given to only 1,000 students from among 52,000 applicants received from across the United States. J.C. Harmon High School's student-lead organization 20/20 Leadership realized success with the new "Harmon-Hub" walking/running trail. Washington High School's ROTC program grew to more than 350 members, demonstrating strong leadership and commitment to serve our community and country. We honored 226 students in grades two through twelve from across the district as members of the "Superintendent's Honor Roll." These extraordinary students achieved excellence in academics and citizenship throughout the school year. Our middle school students finished the year with the highest course passing rates of the last five years. Our eighth graders accelerated their performance in algebra/geometry, a course which predicts future success in college. Our preschool and elementary students worked hard to strengthen their literacy, problem-solving, and writing skills, showing strong growth in all academic areas.

Kansas Supreme Court Decision

During the spring, we celebrated the decision of the Kansas Supreme Court, which affirmed the constitutional right to education for every child. The Court ordered our state leaders to make "suitable provision" for financing public education for all students. As a result of the court decision, the district will gain \$16,439 in additional operating funds, and \$3 million to use for capital improvements (buildings, maintenance, and long-term equipment purchases.)

It is wonderful to report that a direct outcome of the Supreme Court's decision is that our Board of Education has

the opportunity to lower local property taxes! We anticipate the reduction to be 10.5 mills, or \$120 on a property assessed at \$100,000 of value. This summer, the Gannon v State lawsuit will return to the district court, which still needs to decide how "adequate" funding levels for schools should be established.

Diploma+ Initiative

As we look forward to a new school year, we anticipate continued growth in student enrollment. We are expanding opportunities for our students through our Diploma+ initiative. Diploma+ is our plan to support each student to realize the goal of graduating prepared for college and careers. Our innovative Board has set forth the plan, where each student will graduate from high school with:

- At least one year of college credit completed, and/or
- A technical or nationally recognized industry certification(s), and/or
- At least a 21 on the college entrance exam, the ACT.

Students will graduate with their high school diploma, plus (hence Diploma+) additional credentials that will open the doors to their futures.

Setting High Expectations

Supporting our students to meet these high expectations begins with strong early childhood programs. We have assumed the lead role for the Head Start program in Wyandotte County, and will provide nearly 2,000 children with high-quality early childhood programs throughout the community. We are continuing our focus on literacy by creating opportunities for all students to read at least 20 minutes per day, and to write, and write, and write, in all subjects. Rigorous math and science courses are in place from kindergarten through high school. We are expanding opportunities for students in fine arts, music, and athletics. Beginning this year, middle school students will participate in college campus and industry visits. College-going experiences will continue to be offered to all of our high school students, including career interviews, internship experiences, and college and technical education classes. Students from each of our high schools are encouraged to participate in our newly expanded bioscience initiative, healthcare pathways academies, and soon to be expanded engineering and technology academies.

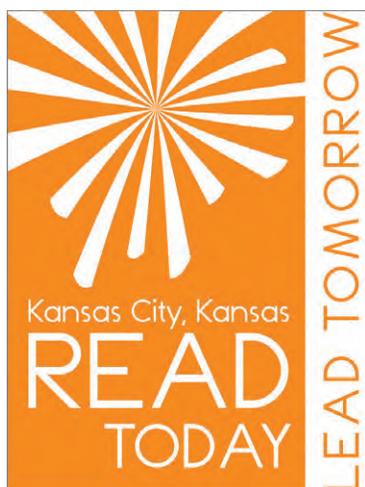
It's an exciting time to be in KCKPS. It's also critical to be reminded that the successes we are experiencing rely on strong partnerships with parents, families, business and industry, and our community. We have momentum, and are confident that by surrounding our kids with messages of high expectations, they will continue to achieve. We are on a path to great success, as we live our mission: "Inspiring Excellence: Every Grownup, Every Child, Every Day." We encourage you to stay connected and involved.

Check out Dr. Cynthia Lane's
blog, "It's Up to Us" at
blog.kckps.org

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READ TODAY, LEAD TOMORROW



Across Kansas City, Kansas, community members, educators and parents are working together to promote literacy as a civil right, and to support the literacy development of young people, through the *Read Today, Lead Tomorrow* initiative.

Education Connection is a quarterly newsmagazine of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS). Editorial copy and photography are created by the KCKPS Communications Department and produced by NPG Printing. To receive a copy of the magazine, call (913) 279-2242. A Spanish translation of the stories included in *Education Connection* is available on the district's website at <http://kckps.cloudaccess.net/community/education-connection.html>.

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Use the QR
code to learn
more about the
initiative!

BACK TO SCHOOL INFORMATION



First Day of School

There are two official start days for the 2014-2015 school year for students in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools. Monday, August 11 will be the first full day of classes for K-5, plus 6th grade students at all middle schools (except Northwest) and 9th grade students at Washington, Wyandotte, Schlagle and Harmon high schools. At Sumner Academy of Arts and Science, 8th grade plus students new to Sumner Academy will begin classes on Monday, August 11. There will be a full day of classes for students at all grade levels on Tuesday, August 12.

New Stanley Elementary and Northwest Middle School follow a different school schedule. The first day of classes for New Stanley students is Monday, July 28, with an early dismissal. At Northwest Middle School, 6th grade students begin classes on Thursday, July 31. The first day for all students at Northwest will be Friday, August 1.

PreK students begin classes on Monday, August 11 with a Family Advocacy Day.

Enrollment Information

Elementary students new to the district should contact the school they will attend for information about enrollment. High school and middle school students who are new must enroll during the New Student Enrollment at the Central Office and Training Center, 2010 N. 59th St., on one of the following dates/times:

- **Thursday, July 31, 1 to 6 p.m.**
- **Friday, August 1, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**
- **Monday, August 4, 1 to 6 p.m.**
- **Tuesday, August 5, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**
- **Wednesday, August 6, 2 to 6 p.m.**

Immunizations

The Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools follows state regulations regarding immunizations for students. All students **MUST** comply with these regulations to attend school.

All students returning to school for the 2014-2015 school year must be current on their immunizations.

Parents of returning students who are in need of additional immunizations before the fall, have been notified by letter. Please make plans to have your children immunized before the new school year begins.

Details about immunizations are posted on the district's website at www.kckps.org under "Departments" and "Student Health."

Parent and Student Handbook

The Student Services Department of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools has updated the Parent and Student Handbook to serve as a communications resource for families.

The handbook includes enrollment information, information about student health and safety, district policies, student support programs and services, and much more.

The handbook will be provided to all families at the beginning of the school year.

2014-2015 DISTRICT CALENDAR (FIRST QUARTER)

August

- 1, 4 New Teacher Inservice
- 5, 6, 7 Inservice
- 6 Convocation
- 8 Classroom preparation
- 11 First day of school (K-5, 6, 9)
- 12 Full day of school - all students
- 12 Board of Education Meeting
- 26 Board of Education Meeting

September

- 1 Holiday/Admin. offices closed
- 9 Board of Education Meeting
- 22 Student Count Day
- 23 Board of Education Meeting

October

- 9 Last day of 1st quarter
- 10 ½ records prep / ½ inservice
- 14 Board of Education Meeting
- 22 Early Release / Family Advocacy
- 23 Family Advocacy Day/No school for students
- 24 Teacher Non-Duty Day/No School
- 28 Board of Education Meeting

The full district calendar is accessible from the homepage of the website, www.kckps.org (click on "calendars").

KCKPS TAKES THE LEAD ON HEAD START SERVICES



In June, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools a five year, \$6.7 million per year grant to coordinate Head Start services for children and families in Wyandotte County.

The grant, called Successful Beginnings, will take effect this school year and will expand the district's existing early childhood program by a total of 878 students. With these additional students, KCKPS will now serve approximately 1,800 children ages three to five throughout the entire county.

Head Start is a federal program that promotes the school readiness of children ages three to five from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development. As the federal grant recipient, KCKPS is the lead agency in a community partnership that includes churches, social service agencies, day care providers and public agencies.

"We are thrilled to receive news of this grant award," said Dr. Cynthia Lane, superintendent of schools. "Research clearly supports investments in supporting brain development in children's earliest years, and we are strongly committed to developing the highest quality Head Start program in the country."

KCKPS submitted the grant in October 2013, and since then has been working hard to prepare for the possibility of receiving the grant. More than 100 staff have been hired, including early childhood teachers, teaching assistants, family service workers and site managers.

All classes will be led by certified and licensed teachers, and the curriculum will follow the Kansas Early Learning Standards. In addition to three to five-year-olds, KCKPS serves children and their families beginning at birth with its Infant/Toddler and Parents as Teachers programs.

"We have the opportunity to get to know our families and children from a very early age, and we can provide them with the types of early services they need to be prepared to enter school."

*-Kim Shaw,
interim early childhood
district coach of
implementation*

FOR WYANDOTTE COUNTY

The goal is to provide services to families in areas such as health and safety, parenting, and child development, and to increase their awareness of community resources available to them.

“Having all of these early childhood programs under one umbrella organization creates a streamlined process for families,” said Kim Shaw, interim early childhood district coach of implementation. “We have the opportunity

to get to know our families and children from a very early age, and we can provide them with the types of early services they need to be prepared to enter school.”

KCKPS has a goal of ensuring that children enter their public school years, which formally begin at kindergarten, ready to learn and thrive. Children who have early childhood education experiences have better self-awareness skills, are able to com-

municate, have worked on gross motor and social skills, and have been exposed to early literacy and math skills and other academic learning.

KCKPS held several early childhood enrollment sessions this summer. A waiting list will be created when all slots are filled. For more information on enrollment or the programs available, call 551-3200 or visit www.kckps.org.



COMMUNICATION RESOURCES

Website

www.kckps.org

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kckschools**

Superintendent's
Blog,

“It's Up to Us.”

Blog.kckps.org

KCKPS TV

**Channel 18 or
98.18 on Time**

**Warner Cable
(in Wyandotte**

County)

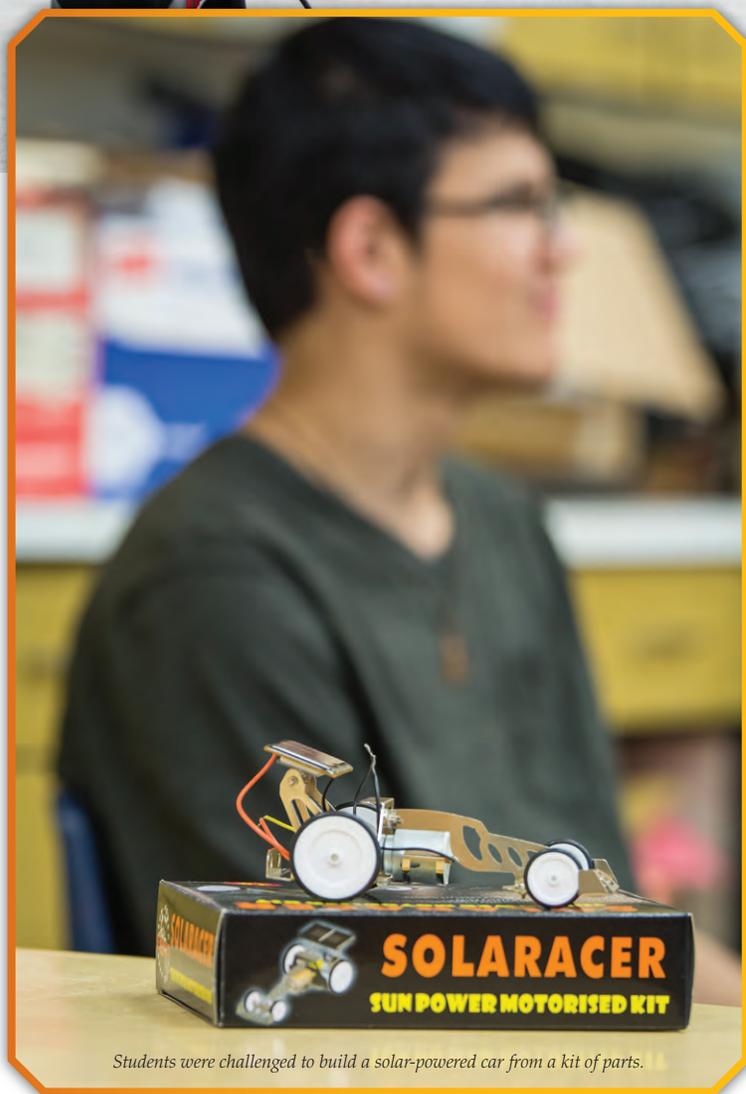
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SUMMER ENGINEERING ACADEMY STUDENTS GAIN HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE IN



On the last day of the academy, students launched the bottle rockets they created.



Students were challenged to build a solar-powered car from a kit of parts.

Across the country, educators, politicians and business leaders are all talking about the importance of STEM education (science, technology, engineering and math). For many, these fields represent the keys to the future economic health of the nation, and for children and young people, they represent a tremendous opportunity to create a secure future for themselves and their families.

In the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS), middle school students are getting an early opportunity to have a hands-on engineering experience by participating in the KCK Gateway Summer Academy at Central Middle School.

At the two-week academy, held in June, students worked in groups and were presented with challenging projects. According to Jodi Reno, a 6th/7th grade science teacher and robotics sponsor at Central and one of the Academy teachers, the purpose of the camp is to “promote the love of STEM and to encourage more students to go into those fields” by giving them hands-on experiences solving real-world problems.

One project presented to students involved taking a common set of materials and putting them together in the most efficient, or “best” way. Students took part in a competition to build a solar-powered car from a kit of parts. They were instructed to design it to go fast and far. The purpose was to teach students about the possibilities for using solar energy, which is a renewable resource, rather than burning fossil fuels.

Joey Braswell, 8th grader at Central, said the solar car experi-

SOLVING REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS



Students at the Engineering Academy were challenged to make “green” jewelry from discarded items. This student made earrings from paperclips and a Pringles can.



Students prepare their rockets for launch.

ence presented him with a number of design and mechanical challenges that needed to be met in order to win the competition. In addition to figuring out how to attach the solar panels and tighten the screws, there were challenges that required a lot of trial and error.

“We had to figure out how to angle the solar panel correctly, so that it captured the energy of the sun, and made the car travel the farthest,” Braswell said.

Working as a team to solve a design challenge proved to be a valuable experience for the students. Alejandro Aguilar, an 8th grader at Central, said that he enjoyed working together with the other students.

“We had problems figuring out certain things in the design, and it took teamwork to get the project done,” he said.

Another student, Julian Sepulveda, who was attending the academy for the second year, worked together with Aguilar on several projects, and said he liked the hands-on experience.

“I learned that you can make useful things with materials that you find every day,” he said. “I like finding a problem, and figuring out how to fix it by building something.”

One such project that students worked on involved making “green” jewelry for teens. This project was inspired by a comment from Superintendent Cynthia Lane. She thought students could participate in a project that was good for the environment, and one that would allow them to make items that wouldn’t cost money to create.

For this project, students were instructed that they could only use items that were otherwise going to be thrown away, and that they could not use any parts from actual jewelry. While many people might see these limitations as an obstacle, students in the academy took them on as a challenge. The winning group cut out designs from a discarded Pringles can, and used bent paper clips to fashion them into jewelry. Student Durga Subedi, who migrated to the United States from Nepal, made an ornament that is traditionally worn in the hair. She said that she was glad to get the chance to participate in the summer academy.

“I wanted to learn about building things, and this academy gave me that chance,” she said.

While some of the students said that participating in the academy was a fun way to spend part of their summer, for others, the academy was a springboard into their future career.

“I like doing hand-on activities. When I grow up, I want to be an engineer,” Braswell said. “I wasn’t sure before the academy, but now I am. I like finding a problem, and figuring out how to fix it by building something.”

Over the summer months, students in KCKPS also participated in a biosciences academy, another engineering academy, and a teaching academy. These three academies were hosted by Kansas City, Kansas Community College.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

NEW MCKINLEY TO OPEN; STADIUM PROJECTS IN THE WORKS



One major construction project is coming to a close and others are under way as the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools continues to construct and update facilities to accommodate student growth and student needs. All of these projects were funded with capital outlay funds. Capital outlay funds are funds designated to be used for existing facilities, improvement of grounds, construction of facilities, additions to facilities, remodeling of facilities, or for the purchase or lease of equipment. Residents have incurred no tax increases to fund the projects.

New McKinley Elementary School

Students and staff at McKinley Elementary School will start the 2014-15 school year in a new building. Over the past year, a new McKinley Elementary School has been constructed at 1301 Armstrong. The building replaces the original McKinley at 611 N. 14th St. Overcrowding and projected growth in the area of the school prompted the construction of the new building.

Some of the features of the new one-story building include 15 classrooms (including three kindergarten classrooms), a multipurpose room, media center, computer lab, music room and art room. At 42,035 square feet it can accommodate up to 350 students.

F.L. Schlagle Stadium and Transportation Parking

Construction is beginning on a sports stadium for F.L. Schlagle High School. It will be located off of Meadowlark Lane just south of the high school.

The stadium will be a 1,500-seat complex and will include a track and all-weather turf soccer and football field. Construction will be completed before the 2015-16 school year.

The same property will house parking for the Transportation Department. District growth has resulted in the need for more buses. The current site of the Transportation Department has limited parking and no room for expansion. New parking lots will be laid on this land to accommodate up to 100 buses, and there will be additional spaces for employee parking.

Turf Field at Wyandotte High School

Over the summer months, a new all-weather turf field has been installed at Wyandotte High School's Roy Edwards Stadium. The new AstroTurf synthetic surface has taken six weeks to install. Turf fields are much more durable than grass, require lower maintenance costs and offer increased playability for teams.

This is the second all-weather turf field in the district. J.C. Harmon's Art Lawrence Stadium received a turf field in the fall of 2013.



NEW INITIATIVE PREPARES STUDENTS FOR CAREERS IN BIOSCIENCE



Beginning this fall, high school students in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools will have the opportunity to practice science skills while gaining exposure to careers in the field through the district's new bioscience initiative.

A total of 24 students representing a number of the district's high schools are enrolled in bioscience classes, which will initially be housed at KCK Community College (KCKCC). Students will attend classes four days a week, and will earn a

total of nine college credits upon completion of the coursework. Preparing students for college while helping them earn college credit before they graduate from high school is one of the district's goals through the Diploma+ program.

The bioscience initiative will offer students a blend of classes in college biology and advanced laboratory work, while exposing them to professionals in the field through guest lecturers, job shadows, internships, field trips and mentoring programs. A number of local companies are serving as partners by bringing their staff into the classroom and allowing on-site visits.

Jeff McFarlane, an 11-year science teacher at J.C. Harmon High School, will be the instructor. McFarlane has been offering biotech classes at Harmon for a number of years and they have grown to capacity. He also oversees the PREP-KC Bioscience Academy.

The biotech program at Harmon has been at capacity for a number of years, so kids are definitely interested in this field.

**-Jeff McFarlane,
J.C. Harmon High
School science teacher**

"The biotech program at Harmon has been at capacity for a number of years, so kids are definitely interested in this field," McFarlane said. "Most of them come into the class interested in becoming doctors or nurses, but a lot of them are not aware of the number of other career opportunities available to them in the science field."

Animal health care, food sciences, forensic science, clinical trials – these are just a few of the bioscience fields that exist.

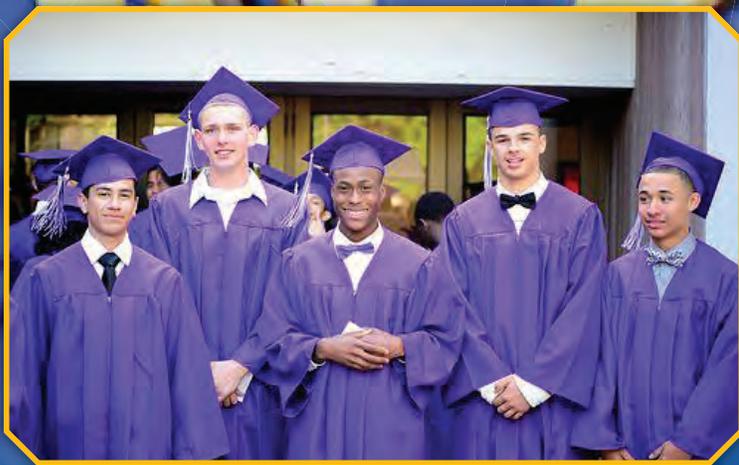
The field and number of jobs continue to grow. In fact, there are a number of Kansas City-based companies that have job opportunities in the bioscience field for qualified students.

While earning college credit for their classes, KCKPS students will be learning skills that can help train them for entry level jobs in the field. It will allow them to work part-time or summer jobs in their field, and gain extra experience to keep them interested and invested.

Along with allowing students to earn college credit, taking part in the bioscience initiative will prepare them to move on to college.

"Our students do their best when they blend or merge the transitions between levels, such as from high school into college" McFarlane said. "So when they start college classes early, they have exposure and a support system in place which helps them move to that next level in their educational journey."

Congratulations to Our Class of 2014!



TWO STUDENTS NAMED GATES MILLENNIUM SCHOLARS



Gates Millennium Scholars (from left) Lashiya Smith, F.L. Schlagle High School; and Natalie Walton, Wyandotte High School.



Two seniors in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools were named 2014 Gates Millennium Scholars. They are: Lashiya Smith, F.L. Schlagle High School; and Natalie Walton, Wyandotte High School.

The Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) Program selects 1,000 talented students each year to receive a good-through-graduation scholarship to use at any college or university of their choice.

Smith ranked third in her class with a 3.74 GPA. She was active in Schlagle's LINK Crew student mentoring program, the jazz band, choir and the National Honor Society. In the community, she has

been active in the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Kansas City and the Landmark International Church Kitchen. She plans to attend Emporia State University in the fall to major in special education and minor in music.

Walton ranked sixth in her class at Wyandotte with a 3.84 GPA. She was a member of the National Honor Society and the Kansas National Honor Society. In her community, she is a volunteer with the Youth Volunteer Corps and the Sheffield Family Life Center. She is a Kauffman Scholar and a Kauffman Ambassador. At Wyandotte she was active in the chamber

singers, the band, the cheerleading squad and the soccer team. She plans to attend Clark Atlanta University.

The Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) Program, funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was established in 1999 to provide outstanding African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian Pacific Islander American, and Hispanic American students with an opportunity to complete an undergraduate college education in any discipline area of interest.

BACK TO SCHOOL FAIR

The Annual Wyandotte County Back to School Fair will be held Saturday, August 9. Two locations will host the fair this year:

- Kansas City Kansas Community College, 7250 State Ave., 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- The Boys and Girls Club Wyandotte Unit, 1240 Troup, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

It is open to all families with students, who live in Wyandotte County (both public and private school students.) Parents must provide proof of residence to participate in the fair.

The purpose of the event is to provide a one-stop opportunity for families to prepare for the start of school. There will be immunizations and sports physicals available to the first 400 children (parents must bring a current immunization card or a pre-participation examination form for the physical). Other offerings include free haircuts for school-aged children, lunch, book bags with supplies and much more.

For exhibitor and sponsorship information or other questions, contact Arlana Coleman, chair, (913) 522-7526, ajoycole@att.net.



STUDENTS PLACE IN KC BIZFEST



Two J.C. Harmon High School students placed in this year's KC BizFest, sponsored by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The competition included developing and presenting a business plan. Both students received scholarships for their achievement. Congratulations to (from left) D'Angelo Hicks, 4th place winner (\$1,000 scholarship) and Josselyn Santos, 5th place (\$750 scholarship).

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