GIRLS IGNITE SPARKS INTEREST IN ENGINEERING

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Superintendent’s Message

Parent Educator Receives National Award
2016 Reasons to Believe Alumni Honor Roll

KCKPS Sets Legislative Goals for 2017

Girls Ignite Sparks Interest in Engineering

Holiday Card Artist

Career Academies to Help Prepare Students for Their Futures

What Should Be In the New School Finance Formula?

Watch for the Two New Mobile Libraries Coming to You! Reenrollment

2016-2017 District Calendar (Third Quarter)

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needs, so our Board of Education determined we needed to engage the community to develop a plan. Our Community Vision Committee was formed, and over a six-month period, studied and made recommendations to the board. The Vision Committee assisted the district administration in prioritizing the scope of work for the bond, with the goal of completing all projects within a five-year period. The facilities plan, which was approved by our community during the bond referendum, will have a tremendous impact, and will do so with the same tax rate we pay today for school facilities, (with 43% of every dollar to be paid by state school facilities funds that the district has been approved to receive.)

Timeline and Economic Impact

Over the next six months the district will be working with our architects, engineers, and construction team to outline the timeline and refine the specific work that will be done in each school. You can stay abreast of our progress on our webpage, bond.kckps.org. Over the course of the construction, the bond project will add an estimated $307 million to the Kansas City economy, support 933 jobs each year during construction (with $105 million in salaries), and create an estimated $27.3 million in local taxable sales and spending, generating $718,628 in taxes for the city and county. Thank you KCK! Now, “it’s up to us” to continue to move our community forward.

Facilities Plan Crafted with Significant Input from the Community

We began developing our facilities plan with a comprehensive facilities assessment. The report found $500 million in deferred maintenance school facilities. The bond will allow us to make improvements to every school building; build four new schools to replace aging facilities; enhance our safety and security measures; provide kitchens in six schools that currently do not have them; provide career exploration spaces in the middle and high schools; and provide playgrounds to nine schools that lack playground equipment.

Passage of the bond at 79% is a strong message that our community believes in the progress we are making in our schools, and is willing to invest in quality schools for all of our students. These fiscal resources will assist the district to provide the type of education our kids need in the 21st century, in order to be prepared for their futures.

"Passage of the bond at 79% is a strong message that our community believes in the progress we are making in our schools, and is willing to invest in quality schools for all of our students."

Check out Dr. Cynthia Lane’s blog, “It’s Up to Us” at blog.kckps.org
Twelve outstanding alumni were inducted into the Reasons to Believe Alumni Honor Roll on November 17, 2016. Reasons to Believe was launched in 2002 to recognize the success and achievements of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools through its alumni.

Members of the 2016 Alumni Honor Roll are (back row, from left) David J. Berry, Sumner High Class of 1968; Marcus D. Gladdis, Sumner Academy of Arts and Science Class of 2005; Cecil D. Christwell, F.L. Schlagle High Class of 1994; Steve Bender, Washington High Class of 1979; Nancy Hale, Wyandotte High Class of 1978; Tyrone A. Garner, Wyandotte High Class of 1987; (front row, from left) Dr. Jeanette Pitts, Washington High Class of 1980; Shirley Christian, Rosedale Junior/Senior High Class of 1956; Wanda Collins (mother of honoree Bernice E. Collins, Washington High Class of 1975); Ana M. Valdez, J. C. Harmon High Class of 1983; Timothy L. Dupree, Wyandotte High Class of 1994; Dr. Adolphus Clarence Lacey, Wyandotte High Class of 1988.

Lauren Ware, parent educator specialist with Parents as Teachers (PAT), was named National Parent Educator of the Year. This honor was presented October 17, 2016 in St. Louis, Missouri at the Parents as Teachers International Conference.

Ware has been a part of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS) family since 2011. She is a graduate of Sumner Academy of Arts and Science and loves working in Kansas City, Kansas because it is her way of giving back to the community that raised her. “I believe the Parents as Teachers program enables parents to positively interact with their young children and gives them the confidence needed to support their children’s life-long learning,” said Ware.

According to parentsasteachers.org, “Parents as Teachers is an international, non-profit organization that promotes optimal early development, learning and health of young children by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers. We advance the delivery of high quality services for families through a comprehensive system of supports and innovative solutions.”

Ware views her role in PAT as a provider of hope and support for parents and caregivers. She actively strengthens and nurtures the parent/child relationship through age-appropriate activities.

She was one of three individuals honored nationally as a Parent Educator of the Year. “My hope is after families have completed our PAT program they are more consistent in their parenting, able to maintain positive relationships within their families and they are more involved in their child’s education,” said Ware.

Visit www.kckps.org/parentsasteachers to learn more.

Do you know a “Reason to Believe”? Nomination forms for the 2017 Reasons to Believe Alumni Honor Roll are available on the KCKPS website at www.kckps.org/index.php/reasons-to-believe.
The Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS) has a goal of graduating each student prepared for college and careers in a global society. Each year, the Board of Education adopts a legislative platform which seeks to ensure that the Kansas Legislature works to provide the conditions necessary for all students in KCKPS (and across the state of Kansas) to be successful. To accomplish this goal, the district asks the Legislature to:

1. Provide a fair and equitable school funding formula that meets the constitutional test for adequacy, and is distributed in an equitable manner, by:
   a. Fulfilling the constitutional requirement for the State of Kansas to provide “... suitable provision for finance of the educational interests of the state.” Funding must be sufficient to provide all students with a quality education which prepares them for college and careers in a global society. It also must be accomplished in a manner which rejects any attempt to place more of the burden for funding education on local taxpayers, thereby widening the education gap between wealthy communities and the rest of Kansas. In addition, the new formula must provide a mechanism for keeping pace with rising costs, as indicated by changes in the consumer price index.
   b. Ensuring that school funding in Kansas continues to be directly related to what it actually costs to educate specific students, so that districts can continue to receive the funds they need to meet the needs of the students they serve. This includes advocating that at-risk funding continues to be based on family income.
   c. Ensuring that any increase in the Local Option budget is equalized at 100% without proration.
   d. Fully-funding full-day Kindergarten, and proving additional funding for early childhood education.

2. Oppose the use of public dollars and tax credits to fund private schools, and support the requirement that any school that receives public funds must meet state and federal accountability standards and provide programs/services required of public schools. Also, maintain the constitutional requirement that public schools be operated by locally elected boards of education.

The district also advocates for a fair and responsible tax policy which provides sufficient revenue to allow the state to meet its constitutional obligations, and to invest in a sustainable future for all Kansas residents. In order to do this, the legislature must revisit 2012 tax changes, and restore the traditional three-legged stool of Kansas tax policy, which included a balance of sales, income and property taxes. In revisiting tax policies, it will be important that the legislature:

3. Ensure that any response to the current fiscal crisis does not negatively affect the solvency of the KPERS system.
4. Resist all attempts to take established revenues away from local governments in order to balance the state budget. Specifically, changes in state tax policy should not occur at the expense of local governments by shifting responsibilities and fiscal obligations from the state to cities and counties, K-12 education or higher education.

Finally, support continuing to have non-partisan school board elections.
GIRLS IGNITE SPARKS INTEREST IN ENGINEERING

Have you ever seen the spark of learning happen? Many people think of this as a “light bulb” moment. Creating this spark is exactly the purpose of Girls Ignite.

Girls Ignite is a program that started in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS) in 2013. Each year, KCKPS holds advisory meetings with industry partners to understand what is most important for students to learn and experience in those industries. Girls Ignite was created by industry advisors, along with KCKPS staff.

“Girls Ignite is a program to spark interest for eighth grade girls in the field of engineering,” said Rachel Macek, Career and Technical Education (CTE) Academic Integration Facilitator. “We want to encourage girls to sign up for engineering classes in high school.”

The Girls Ignite program happens twice each school year, once in the fall and once in spring. Each event consists of six stations which are hosted by industry professionals. These stations give students hands-on experiences in electrical, mechanical, chemical and civil engineering.

At the electrical engineering station, girls were asked “What do you know about electrical engineering?” Dr. Erik Timpson, Principal Electrical Engineer at Honeywell’s National Security Campus let the girls share their answers, and then added: “Electrical engineering is basically using math and science to help people with electrical things”.

He asked the girls to name electrical things that have helped them. They suggested an alarm clock, a washer and dryer, an oven and a cell phone. Dr. Timpson explained that each of these items uses electricity and has a circuit board.

Each girl then got the chance to build a circuit. On the table were several individual electrical pieces that, when correctly put together, would create an electrical circuit and either ignite a light bulb or create a sound. “Showing the girls how to create a circuit is simple but important,” said Timpson. “It requires them to use the method of trial and error. This creates critical thinking skills and promotes teamwork.”

Eighth grade student Kaiya Johnson agreed with Dr. Timpson that the trial and error method is critical not only to engineering but to life as well. Johnson said, “In the past I wanted to become a cosmetologist or a lawyer, but after going to Girls Ignite I might want to become a computer programmer.”

One of the stations at Girls Ignite featured two programmable robots called “Nao”, pronounced “Now”. At this station, students were shown a demonstration of the types of things Nao could be programmed to do. Those included standing up, sitting down and dancing to a variety of popular songs. Once
the students experienced the preprogrammed Nao, they were able to move down the table to see how he was programmed.

This second part of the station feature a second Nao robot which was connected to a computer. Industry partners who hosted this station demonstrated for the girls how they used computer coding to program every tiny move Nao made.

Grant Lewis, one of the Girls Ignite coordinators, is an Engineering Technical Specialist with Honeywell. He is also a graduate of Wyandotte High School, class of 1996. Lewis believes that Girls Ignite is not only a way to show that anyone can be an engineer, but also a venue for girls to connect with industry professionals on a deeper level.

“In addition to learning about the different types of engineering, the girls are learning soft skills,” said Lewis. “These include critical thinking, problem solving, having confidence in making decisions and the ability to work in groups.”

Girls Ignite is one of many programs in KCKPS designed to create a spark of learning in students. As Kaiya Johnson noted, “Girls Ignite has shown me that engineering is not just for boys. Girls can do it too, as long as they are willing to put in the effort.”

The artwork of eleventh grade student DeAja Wesley, of Sumner Academy of Arts and Science, was recently seen by patrons and community leaders across Wyandotte County and throughout the metro area. It was used on the district’s 2016 holiday card. DeAja was recognized by the Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education for her outstanding artwork.
Many years ago, high schools were expected to prepare students for college OR for work. Most schools had both a “college track” and a “vocation-al track.” Today, students in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS) are expected to exit high school Diploma+, prepared for college AND careers in a global society. Part of the work of making this happen involves the implementation of career academies in each of the district high schools.

Career academies combine academic and job-related courses into a curriculum that lets students apply what they are learning within a specific occupational field, while also taking courses to satisfy college entrance requirements. Through a supportive and personalized learning environment, built off the learnings from the district’s First Things First reform effort, students will have the chance to experience deep learning in their academies, in a field that matches their career interests and talents.

To put the career academy structure in place, the district has worked with leaders from business and education from across the Kansas City Metro area. In fact, the specific career academies being developed came from extensive work and consultation with groups in the Metro area who are working to strengthen the region’s economic competitiveness and vitality.

The specific career academies selected for KCKPS high schools are focused in areas where jobs are expected to increase in the metro area within the coming years. (See sidebar).

“We want to prepare our students to be successful participants in the future economy of the KC Metro area,” said superintendent Dr. Cynthia Lane. “This means working with business and industry representatives to understand where jobs are expected to grow in the next 20 years, and designing the Academies programs that will enable students to fill those jobs.”

To put the career academies in place, the district has convened a steering committee of partners from industry and higher education, which will meet quarterly to provide advice and guidance on the academies, as well as on the specific industry pathways that fit under each academy. Additional representatives from these schools and companies will serve on advisory boards which will guide the development of the curriculum and related in-school and out-of-school experiences for each academy.

The academies are expected to be implemented during the 2017-2018 school year.
In 2014, the Kansas Legislature passed the Block Grants bill, which eliminated the school funding formula. That bill will expire at the end of June, 2017, and the legislature will be required to create a new funding formula before the block grants expire. In September, Governor Sam Brownback requested input from across the state on what a new formula should contain. The school finance formula, which serves as the basis for how education funding is distributed in Kansas, determines whether education in Kansas is adequately and equitably funded, and whether each student has access to a high quality education that prepares them for college and careers in a global society.

In response to Governor’s request, Superintendent Dr. Cynthia Lane and the Board of Education sent a list of core tenets that must be at the foundation of any school finance formula that will provide adequate and equitable education funding. Those tenets are:

1. Funding must be tied to what it actually costs to educate each student.
2. Students’ educational needs vary; therefore, the funding formula must be both flexible and adequate to meet the needs of all Kansas students.
3. The suitable provision of finance for educating all Kansas students is the responsibility of the state, and should not be based on the property wealth of a community. Equitable funding, derived from similar tax effort across all communities in Kansas, is essential.
4. Any formula must meet constitutional requirements for equity and adequacy. The equity requirements of the constitution require that local dollars be equalized across the state, so that children have equal educational opportunity with similar tax effort. Attention is needed to insure that local dollars are appropriately equalized.
5. Funding for early childhood programs is critical to ensure all children enter Kindergarten prepared.
6. Every Kansas student must have access to quality education which prepares them for college and careers in a global society.
7. The formula should recognize local control and provide funding of educational services; in addition, the Legislature and school districts need budgeting predictability.
8. Any funding formula that is both efficient and effective must directly tie funding to school districts to what it actually costs to educate students, as the previous formula did. As such, the previous formula was not deficient. Rather, it was not sufficiently funded, and for any new funding formula to be effective, it must be adequately funded.
9. Any new formula needs to provide a mechanism to recognize increasing costs. One means to do this is through a direct connection to increases in the Consumer Price Index.
10. Public funds should not be used to fund, or provide vouchers or tax credits for funding private schools.

As Superintendent Lane and the Board of Education said in their letter to Governor Brownback, “…[the new formula] will directly impact not just the 22,000 students educated in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools, but indeed the more than 460,000 students that are served in public schools across the state of Kansas. In addition, with education being the most important economic driver of our state, creating a school funding formula which is both equitable and adequate will have a profound impact on the future well-being of the almost three million people who call our great state home.”

“Kansas is a great state precisely because of our history as a state where opportunity is available to all regardless of race, ethnicity, family income or zip code. The new school finance formula must maintain and build upon this proud history.”

The 2017 legislative session, which begins on January 9, 2017, will be crucial to the future of the state of Kansas. Stay engaged, share your thoughts with your elected representatives, and check the district’s website, Facebook page and Twitter feed for up-to-date information about what is happening in Topeka.

Kansas is a great state precisely because of our history as a state where opportunity is available to all regardless of race, ethnicity, family income or zip code. The new school finance formula must maintain and build upon this proud history.
All students will be asked to pre-enroll for the upcoming (2017-2018) school year. This process will allow the district to gather an accurate count of how many students will be enrolled in the district next year, and which schools they will be attending. This information will allow the district to ensure that each classroom and building is fully staffed.

Current information for each child enrolled in the district will be sent to each family. Parents are asked to review the information on the forms, make any necessary corrections, and return it to school before February 16.

For students who will enter Kindergarten in August, parents are asked to attend Kindergarten Roundup at the school their child will attend. This year, Kindergarten Roundup will take place on April 20, 2017. Please call your school for more information about Kindergarten Roundup activities and schedule.

In October, 2014 the Kansas City, Kansas Public Library (KCKPL) introduced its first mobile library. KCKPL is proud to announce they have added two new mobile libraries to their fleet, furthering the library’s mission of connecting members of the community with information, tools, resources and welcoming spaces to enrich their lives.

The two new buses are fully equipped extensions of the library, designed to serve individuals who have a hard time reaching a library branch. The mobile libraries now stop at more than 60 locations throughout Wyandotte County.

Once the mobile library is on location, community members have access to all the services of a brick and mortar library branch. They can check out books, DVD movies and music on CDs. Additionally, each mobile library is equipped with on-board computers with an internet connection. This allows patrons to check email, social media and anything else they may need on-line. Patrons may also get a library card or update their current library account on the mobile libraries.

“The mobile libraries provide accessibility to services for members of the community who are unable to travel to one of the library’s branches,” said Kim Woolery, public relations specialist at KCKPL. “At the libraries, we are dedicated to doing everything we can to provide the best services to our patrons.”

To learn more about the mobile libraries, and to see a schedule of stops, please visit the library website, www.kckpl.org. Click on “About KCKPL” and choose “Mobile Library.”
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Requirements:
• 60 college credit hours
• Authorize a criminal background check

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

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