STUDENTS SOLVE REAL-WORLD PROBLEM WITH LOCAL ENGINEERING PARTNER

PLANNING FOR BOND PROJECTS IN FULL SWING

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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 Newspapers. 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 www.kckps.org/index.php/community-information.

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2017 KCKPS GRADUATION DATES

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<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>TIME</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bridges/Wyandotte Academy</td>
<td>Wed., May 17</td>
<td>KCKCC TEC Bldg</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. L. Schlagle High School</td>
<td>Thurs., May 18</td>
<td>Memorial Hall</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fairfax Learning Center</td>
<td>Fri., May 19</td>
<td>KCKCC TEC Bldg</td>
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<td>Wyandotte High School</td>
<td>Sat., May 20</td>
<td>Wyandotte HS</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington High School</td>
<td>Mon., May 22</td>
<td>Memorial Hall</td>
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<td>J. C. Harmon High School</td>
<td>Tues., May 23</td>
<td>Memorial Hall</td>
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<td>Sumner Academy of Arts and</td>
<td>Wed., May 24</td>
<td>Memorial Hall</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
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Did you know that Kansas City is home to one of the five largest concentrations of architecture, engineering, and technology employment in the United States?

The Kansas City region is also home to significant life sciences research, the world’s largest concentration of animal health assets, and has significant opportunities in life sciences in general. Did you know that our region is a premier center for logistics and transportation, and that KCK is a leader in advanced manufacturing? Opportunities surround our children, and the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS) is committed to excellence by preparing each of our students for the high-pay, high-demand jobs in our global society (KC and beyond).

How we teach, and the connection of day-to-day instruction with real world experiences, is also vital to the future success of our students. To ensure students have educational experiences closely aligned to their career aspirations, KCKPS is implementing College and Career Academies (see box, right) in each of our five high schools. A college and career academy is a small, supportive learning environment with a career theme. We chose our Academy themes by establishing strong partnerships with leaders in business and industry across the metropolitan area, include CEOs of major industries, Chambers of Commerce, and the Wyandotte Economic Development Council. The Academies are:

- Human and Public Services
- Health Sciences (human, plant and animal)
- Business and Finance
- Architecture, Engineering, and Construction
- Information Technology
- Advanced Manufacturing, Transportation, and Logistics
- International Baccalaureate Program (Full IB, and IB Career)

Beginning with the class of 2021 (students completing 8th grade this year), the freshman year of high school will focus on exploration of careers within each of the Academy themes. Exploration includes hands-on experiences both in school, and on-site at various industries. As the students move into their sophomore year, they will select an Academy that will support them in making explicit connections between their academic subject and its application to the career field. All students will continue to have access to fine arts and physical education programs, which we call “global experiences,” to ensure they continue to develop as well-rounded – and I will add talented and inspired – citizens.

We have been encouraging our students to take college classes, to participate in the full International Baccalaureate Program, or to complete an industry recognized credential, prior to high school graduation. For the class of 2021, we are moving from encouraging to expecting, as we recognize that being competitive in today’s world requires more. As more and more of our KCKPS students graduate with their high school diploma, and important endorsements aligned to their college and career aspirations (Diploma+), employers will look to KCK for the talent needed in the high demand industries. Implementing the Academy model ensures a strong alignment with the skills (academic and employability skills) needed to be prepared. Diploma+ AND the Academy model give our students the essential skills they need to succeed in tomorrow’s world. More information can be found at www.kckps.org/diplomaplus.
In November, 2016, the Kansas City, Kansas community voted, with a 79% approval rate, to pass a zero-tax increase bond referendum that will benefit each child in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools. This $235 Million bond will touch each school building in the district, and is another critical step toward graduating each student Diploma+, prepared for college and careers in a global society.

Construction projects will be completed over a five-year period, and will include safety and security upgrades to all buildings, replacement of four outdated schools, the repurposing of two buildings, new playgrounds and kitchens for buildings that need them, and the completion of critical maintenance projects.

“We have built or renovated 14 facilities over the past seven years, using existing funds,” said Dr. Cynthia Lane, superintendent. “This bond will allow us to continue to make improvements to our facilities, in order to support our students in graduating high school prepared for college and careers. We are pleased that we can do this without raising taxes.”

Since the passage of the bond, staff members from the district, along with lead partner JE Dunn construction, have been hard at work planning out the construction schedule, which will include more than 80 different projects. The complexities of the bond project, coupled with the scale of it, mean that it has to be carefully planned out and scheduled.

The first shovels will hit the ground in May, 2017. Nine elementary schools are scheduled for playground upgrades, including:

- Caruthers
- Claude Huyck
- Eugene Ware
- Grant
- John Fiske
- Lindbergh
- ME Pearson

- Stony Point South
- Whittier

These playgrounds will all be complete by Fall, 2017. Other projects scheduled for summer, 2017 include a total replacement of the electrical system at New Chelsea elementary, new secure entrances at four early childhood centers, plumbing and HVAC work at J.C. Harmon, F. L. Schlagle and Sumner Academy of Arts and Science, and the replumbing of Sumner and Wyandotte High Schools.

To learn more about the bond projects and how they will affect individual schools, visit the Bond website at: bond.kckps.org.
Kansas City, Kansas has a long history of being a welcoming community, and over the decades, waves of immigrants have descended on the city, creating a rich and diverse cultural legacy that continues to flourish today. From the African Americans who settled in the Quindaro area in the mid-nineteenth century, to waves of immigrants from Eastern European countries in the decades around the dawn of the 20th Century, to today’s immigrants, who come from Mexico, Central and South America, Southeast Asia and North Africa, Kansas City, Kansas has always been a home for immigrants.

At the Kansas City, Kansas Public Library (KCKPL), staff work hard to support immigrants, as they adjust to life in their new community. From translated documents and multilingual collections to cultural programs and English as a Second Language classes, KCKPL works hard to support the needs of KCK’s various immigrant communities.

“This can be a challenge, as often immigrants do not come from a place where public libraries either exist or are part of the community fabric like they are here,” said David Hanson, assistant director of KCKPL. “It is critical to make connections with these new residents, and that requires us to be willing to reach out, to have the patience to listen, and to commit to serving the needs of this significant and growing population.”

In Wyandotte County, 15% of the nearly 160,000 residents are foreign-born, more than twice the percentage for Kansas as a whole (6.8%) and above the national rate of 13.9%. To serve these new residents, the library offers a variety of services.

**ESL Programs**

The Main, South and West Wyandotte branches offer English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to help residents learn English.

**Additional Services**

Additional services of particular interest to immigrants include computer instruction, Spanish language programs for all ages (including story times, craft times, movies and more), cultural programs (including an upcoming author event with a Burmese-American author) and mobile library and outreach services, which are available at organizations that serve immigrants and refugees, and help them to access services and collections.

“It is critical that library services be available for all residents in our community,” said Hanson. “We have noticed that immigrant populations are eager to take advantage of the services we have available. We are looking to expand our library offerings in the future, to provide additional training for staff on meeting the needs of immigrant populations, and to recruit and hire a diverse staff.”

**Translated documents**

All informational library publications are available in Spanish. Applications and new patron information are also available in Burmese and Nepali. Summer reading materials are available in Burmese. A few other publications (such as the Know Your Rights documents) are available in a variety of languages.

**Multilingual Collection**

KCKPL has a significant Spanish collection of books and AV materials, including literacy and language instruction materials. The South Branch Library has a world languages collection featuring materials in multiple languages.

**Mango Language Learning and Other Databases**

KCKPL provides access to Mango, a guided language learning product that offers instruction in more than 80 different languages. In addition, Britannica, World Book and Learning Express database are available in Spanish.

**NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR REASONS TO BELIEVE ALUMNI HONOR ROLL**

Nominations are open for the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools’ (KCKPS) 2017 Reasons to Believe Alumni Honor Roll, part of a coordinated plan to spotlight alumni successes to encourage and inspire today’s students.

KCKPS established the Reasons to Believe program in 2002 to generate pride and celebrate the progress being made throughout the district. The Alumni Honor Roll annually showcases the high caliber of graduates that the district produces and brings a select group of them together with staff, students, community members, colleagues and key leaders for a night of honors in November.

Nominees must:
- Be graduates of a KCKPS high school
- Be successful in their chosen business, profession or life work
- Be a person of integrity and stature that KCKPS would take pride in recognizing
- Have demonstrated the importance of their education from KCKPS

The nomination forms can be downloaded from the KCKPS website, www.kckps.org/recognition/alumni or call (913) 279-2242 to request one. The deadline for returning nominations is Monday, June 19, 2017.
Across the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools, industry partners and schools are working together to create new opportunities for students to experience the real world of business. This year, Argentine Middle School partnered up with a local engineering firm, Alfred Benesch and Company (Benesch), to foster a love of engineering and mathematics for a special group of students. This group of 55 eighth graders is the first group of students to participate in a pilot program called the Argentine Integrated Math and Engineering Program (AIMEP). The goal of AIMEP is to provide students with a real-world experience in engineering, and to reinforce skills that directly relate to and are necessary for success in college and careers in a global society.

During the first semester of the 2016-17 school year, teachers David Bean, Micah Lewis and Argentine Middle School principal Jereme Brueggemann worked with engineers from Benesch to create a project that aligns math standards and curriculum to the real-world, allowing students to gain this valuable experience in a professional setting.

Bean and Lewis created a list of important math standards which were covered during the first semester of the school year. From this list, they created examples of each standard and sent it to the engineers at Benesch. The engineers then used these examples as a framework to create a problem for the students to solve.

Before they were given the problem, the students formed groups of four or five and were each assigned a role, including a leader, a spokesperson, a facilitator/encourager and a technology person. After their groups were formed, the problem was revealed in stages. In the first stage, students were given a picture of an empty plot of land. The students did not know that this plot of land was a real property that Benesch had previously developed.

Students studied the photo and were required to find the area of the property in acres. In order to achieve this step, they had to convert the property area from square miles. Once the acreage was found, the groups were instructed to create a neighborhood based on 1/3 acre plots. “At this point the students had to rely on each other to solve problems and create working ideas,” said Bean.

Once each group figured out the property area, direction from their teachers ended, and they moved on to the next stage on their own. Students were now responsible for figuring out what direction they wanted to take their neighborhoods.

“At first, it was hard to figure out what we wanted to have in our neighborhood,” said Vernice Alvarado, eighth grade student at Argentine Middle. “Then we thought about what our dream neighborhood would look like. That’s how we decided what features to add.”

Each group included features such as schools, community centers, recreational buildings and areas, one or two parks, water fountains, streets, intersections and gas stations. They had two days to create and sketch this design using Google Drawings.
Once their designs were finalized, each group worked with Benesch engineers to learn how to calculate peak flow. This calculation was vital to the groups because it allowed them to develop sewer systems that would function properly. In order to make sure they were planning their sewer systems accurately, each group used Google Sheets to calculate the costs of development. Some of these costs included moving dirt, labor costs, sewer pipe materials and manholes. Cost and data analysis are just two of the core skills students used during this project. Other core skills they utilized included proportional thinking, number sense, fractional exponents and linear reasoning.

Next, the groups began the stage of designing the layout of their street systems. They quickly realized it was more budget friendly if they planned their street system along the same layout as their sewer system. This allowed them to easily make any necessary repairs to the sewer system. Once their streets were designed, they laid out the placement of their houses and other neighborhood features.

During the final stage of the project, each group presented their neighborhood development to the Benesch engineers. These presentations showed that in addition to developing solid core skills, students honed several soft skills including teamwork, compromise, work-place behavior, critical thinking and problem solving.

“When we worked on our project, I learned that you may disagree with someone on your team, but you can always find a way to bring your ideas together to solve a problem,” said Bryan Sanchez, eighth grade student at Argentine Middle. “Once we figured out how to combine our ideas, our final project had a better solution than we would have created by ourselves.”

After the presentations concluded, the Benesch engineers gave each group some remarks and had a chance to ask them questions.

“I was impressed with all of the different skills the students demonstrated during their time with us,” said Stephen Roth, Senior Project Manager at Benesch. “They surprised me with their insightful ability to ask questions that we as professionals ask on a daily basis.”

This pilot of the Argentine Integrated Math and Engineering Program (AIMEP) has been counted as a great success. The next group of students has started their projects and will be presenting them at the end of this semester. The AIMEP is a great example of KCK schools working with industry partners to provide students with applicable, real-world experiences that lead to successful career pursuits.

To see these students in action, visit www.youtube.com/kckpstv.
The Spring, 2017 session of the Kansas Legislature will have a tremendous impact on the future of public education in Kansas. The decisions made by the Legislature with regard to balancing the state budget, restoring sensible tax policy, responding to the Supreme Court decision on school finance adequacy and investing in the future will impact Kansas for generations to come.

Kansas has endured years of financial crisis, with revenues consistently coming in below projections. This crisis was caused when Governor Sam Brownback pushed through massive tax cuts in 2012, which quickly left the state government without the resources to pay its bills. After repeatedly missing revenue projections, the state, rather than making changes to tax policy and recovering lost income, repeatedly lowered revenue projections.

This loss of revenue has had negative impacts on all essential state services, including highways, medical care, and pension obligations. However, perhaps the largest impact has been on public schools. Since 2015, school districts have had to operate under a spending freeze, because of the elimination of the school finance formula and the institution of “Block Grant” funding. The impact of this spending freeze, along with years of spending reductions that came during the “Great Recession,” means that Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) is lower now than it was in 2009.

The lack of adequate and equitable funding for public schools caused a coalition of school districts (including KCKPS) to sue the state in 2010, and in February, the Kansas Supreme Court ruled that school funding in Kansas was unconstitutional, because it did not provide adequate funding to meet the needs of Kansas students. While estimates vary, it is believed that the state will need to come up with between $350 million and $800 million annually to satisfy the requirements of the Constitution.

The Supreme Court has said that the Legislature must come up with a plan to provide adequate funding for schools in Kansas by June 30, 2017. So, what will need to happen between now and then? First, the Legislature will need to reverse the disastrous tax cuts of 2012, and restore a sound and balanced tax policy. The tax changes of 2012 reduced taxes on high-income earners, eliminated taxes completely on certain classes of business, and shifted the tax burden toward lower-income taxpayers through an increase in the sales tax. To restore fiscal sanity, these changes will need to be reversed.

The legislature must also pass a new school finance formula. The finance formula determines how money will be distributed to school districts in order to support public schools, which serve more than 460,000 students across the state. The previous funding formula, which was considered a model formula for other states, gave school districts money based on the specific students that district served. A district that served large numbers of students who lived in poverty, were learning English as a second language, or received special education services, received additional money in order to meet the needs of those students. The Legislature must come up with a new school finance formula by June 30, 2017, or funding for schools will end on July 1, 2017.

It will be extremely important that members of the public pay attention to developments in Topeka. Decisions that are made this Spring will have significant impact on students in Kansas City, and across the state. To keep up to date with the latest legislative developments, visit the KCKPS Legislative page - www.kckps.org/index.php/legislative-information - where you will find the district’s legislative platform, along with information about your legislators, including contact information. Also, don’t forget to follow the district on Facebook and Twitter.
Each year, the Beyond the Classroom student art exhibit features works from more than 175 KCKPS students in grades K-12, including watercolor paintings, drawings, three-dimensional art and photography. The art is displayed at the Central Office and Training Center for one month, and then is delivered to area businesses, where it will be on display for one year.
The KCK School Foundation for Excellence is hosting its 27th annual Scholarship Golf Tournament on Wednesday, June 14, 2017 at the Sunflower Hills Golf Course in Bonner Springs, Kansas.

The Tournament Planning Committee is looking for local businesses and individuals who would like to participate via donation or sponsorship. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor or would like your business to become a sponsor, please contact Susan Westfahl, (913) 279-2235.

Sign up to donate or sponsor today!
- Corporate Sponsorship - $10,000 for eight players
- Platinum Sponsorship - $5,000 for eight players
- Gold Sponsorship - $3,000 for four players
- Silver Sponsorship - $2,000 for four players
- Hole Sponsorship - $350
- Cart Sponsorship - $75

There will be two flights available for play:
**Morning Flight (limited to 24 teams)**
- Registration and continental breakfast at 6:30 a.m.
- Shotgun start at 7:30 a.m.
- Lunch and awards program at 1 p.m. at the George Meyn Center

**Afternoon Flight (limited to 24 teams)**
- Registration and lunch at 12:30 p.m.
- Shotgun start at 1 p.m.
- Dinner and awards program at 6 p.m. at the George Meyn Center

Since 1991, the Foundation has sponsored this annual fundraiser to benefit students. Proceeds from this year’s event will provide scholarships to high school seniors and support district literacy programs. Businesses and community members can enjoy a day on the golf course while supporting students in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools.
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For Details:
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