STUDENTS WHO INSPIRE EXCELLENCE

KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE IN A CHANGING WORLD

SPOTLIGHT ON TWO NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS
At Kansas City Kansas Community College,
“Making Life Better” is more than just a slogan. Since 1923, it’s been a tradition.
Welcome to a new school year, and to our first edition of Education Connection.

This quarterly news-magazine is designed to inform our community about the activities and accomplishments of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools, as we strive to become one of the top 10 school districts in the nation. We are pleased to have many local businesses and agencies providing advertisements to make this newsmagazine possible.

The Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools is a uniquely diverse school district of 20,200 students, who speak 65 different languages, and are served by 3,300 employees in a community that prioritizes education as the most important community asset. We have established strong partnerships with businesses and community agencies to reach our singular goal that each student will exit high school prepared for college and careers in a global society, and at every level, performance is on-track and on-time for success.

Striving to provide the best education in our nation means closely examining what is working, what needs to be improved, and setting meaningful targets for our students and schools. It also means aligning our work at all levels in the system, so that all of us are working toward the same goal. This is why three years ago, we began implementing a new curriculum from preschool through graduation, specifically designed to ensure our students graduate ready for college and/or technical careers. Our work begins with our youngest children. This past school year, we had 600 families involved in Parents as Teachers, where their infants and toddlers received wonderful early learning experiences, as the parents received assistance in supporting the development of their children. More than 900 three- and four-year-old children are enrolled in our preschool programs, learning the skills they need to be ready for kindergarten.

Across the district, literacy is a primary focus of our work. We ended last school year with 70 percent of our kindergarten students reading on grade level. Our elementary students are learning and growing as well, with 55 percent meeting their growth goals in reading, 65 percent in math, and 66 percent in science. Our progress continues at the middle school level. Seventy-eight percent of all 8th graders successfully completed high school level Algebra/Geometry, and 43 percent of these same students are already scoring college ready on the ACT-EXPLORE college readiness exam.

All five high schools provide early college and technical college courses. More than 35 percent of our students graduate with college credit hours successfully completed (these are paid for by district community partners, and some students have completed as many as 36 hours). We require early college visits for all students; all students participate in career and technical education courses, which for some result in nationally recognized certification; internships in business and industry are strongly encouraged; and nearly 100 students graduated as Kansas Scholars. Every freshman, sophomore, and junior participated in the ACT college readiness exam (KCKPS is one of three districts in Kansas to use the ACT as its measure of success.) Finally, Sumner Academy of Arts and Science has once again been ranked by national publications as the number one high school in Kansas and 64th best in the nation.

As with all things worth doing, there are challenges. We are working closely with families to ensure that all students are literate citizens, high school students graduate on time (currently 70% graduate on time and 2.1 percent drop out); and our average ACT scores must improve. But we are certainly moving in a very positive direction.

We encourage you to stay connected with the district by reading Education Connection, tuning in to KCKPS TV-18 which is our district television network on Time Warner Cable, “friending” the district on Facebook, following us on Twitter, checking the website often, subscribing to my blog, “It Up to Us,” and attending school activities and functions.

The district will continue on a path of great success as we live our mission: “Inspiring Excellence: Every Grown-up, Every Child, Every Day.”

Dr. Cynthia Lane  
Superintendent of Schools
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Sign Up for Text Alerts

Parents, students and community members who want to receive important information about the district via text messaging can sign up for the district’s Text Alert Messaging System. This information includes emergency information, school closings and more.

Signing up is easy. Access the link through the homepage of the district’s website, www.kckps.org (click on “sign up for text alerts”). Register as a new user and provide your phone or pager number. Be sure to complete all the information.
First Day of School
There are two official start days for the 2013-2014 school year for students in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools. Monday, August 12 will be the first full day of classes for K-5, plus 6th grade students at all middle schools and 9th grade students at Washington, Wyandotte, Schlage 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 12. There will be a full day of classes for students at all grade levels on Tuesday, August 13. (Northwest Middle and New Stanley Elementary schools follow a different school year schedule.)

Enrollment Information
Most middle and senior high students pre-enrolled for classes last spring, but those students new to the district, including elementary, 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 period set in August at the Central Office and Training Center, 2010 N. 59th St. Dates and times are as follows:

- Monday, August 5, 1 to 6 p.m.
- Tuesday, August 6, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Wednesday, August 7, 2 to 6 p.m.
- Thursday, August 8, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Friday, August 9, 10 a.m. to 2 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 2013-2014 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 developed a Parent and Student Handbook to serve as a communications resource for families.
The new 102-page 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.
His Devotion to Music Shows

Wyandotte Student Selected for All-State and All-District Band

He hasn’t taken a private music lesson in his life, but many might think otherwise. For Chris Arce, music is just a part of him and that shines through.

This incoming senior at Wyandotte High School is one of the top tuba players in the state of Kansas. He was chosen for the All-District Band during his junior year, and the 2013 Kansas All-State Band. In fact, he was the only student in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools to be a part of the select All-State Band.

The tuba is not exactly a portable instrument, but Arce doesn’t mind, even though he walks home from school most days. Some days he rolls the instrument behind him during his 45-minute walk, and other days, he carries it over his shoulder.

He’s part of the Wyandotte Marching Band. And he also plays the trombone in the Wyandotte Jazz Band.

He plans to major in music, and someday teach band at the high school level. And he is well on his way. He’s already been offered scholarships to three colleges.

“I can express myself by playing,” Arce said. “Playing with the band makes me feel good.”

F.L. Schlagle Senior Selected for National Scholarship

F.L. Schlagle High School student Bobbi Ja-Nay Lowery was named a Gates Millennium Scholar this spring.

This national program, funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was established to provide outstanding low-income minority students with an opportunity to complete an undergraduate college education in any discipline area of interest. Additionally, it finances any subsequent graduate degrees that Lowery wants to pursue in the disciplines of education, engineering, library science, mathematics, public health or science.

According to the Gates Foundation, “more than 54,000 students applied this year making this year’s the largest and most competitive group of candidates in the program’s history.”

Lowery was one of only 1,000 students selected this year and was the first Schlagle student to receive the award.

She plans to attend the University of Missouri-Kansas City this fall where she will study nursing.
Student Turns His Passion Into An Award-Winning Business Plan

Dimonic Roden-McKinzy has been cutting hair since he was 12 years old, and now he has turned that skill into an award-winning business idea.

The incoming senior at Wyandotte High School won third place at the second annual Innovation Summit at Kansas City Kansas Community College this spring for his “McKrispy Mobile Cuts” business proposal. It is a mobile barber business that takes Roden-McKinzy on location to cut and style hair.

He developed the idea in his business management class led by teacher Tiffany Jasper. Students in the class were required to create business plans for prospective businesses. What made his business unique was the fact that it was mobile, and there was a reason for that.

“I have not been able to have my own shop because of my age, and because I’m still in school,” Roden-McKinzy said.

But the mobility added a different aspect to his business, and gave him that extra winning edge.

He developed his passion for hair cutting at a young age by watching his Dad, who likes to cut hair, and his uncle, who owns his own barbershop.

Roden-McKinzy cuts both men’s and women’s hair, although he specializes in men’s cuts.

He received a $300 prize for his win and plans to use it to expand his clientele through marketing. So what does he charge for a cut and style? $15 for adults and $12 for children (ages 12 and under) – and that includes travel costs!

He hopes to open his own chain of barbershops after graduating from college with a business degree.

New Downtown Banner Project Features 122 Reasons to Believe Honorees

The faces of dozens of the successful alumni from the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools will be adorning lampposts in the downtown area of Kansas City, Kansas. They are the 122 Reasons to Believe Alumni Honor Roll inductees.

Reasons to Believe is an alumni recognition program that showcases the high caliber of graduates the district produces. These alumni are selected to be honored at a special celebration in November, bringing to light their successes to inspire students, staff and the community, instilling their “reasons to believe” in a KCKPS education.

In light of the 10th anniversary of the program, the Downtown Shareholders partnered with the school district for the community banner project. The banners include each alum’s graduation year, alma mater and year of induction into the Reasons to Believe program. They will hang for approximately one year in the downtown area (east and west from 18th Street to 5th Street, and north and south from Washington Boulevard to Sandusky Avenue).

The banners will serve as a daily dose of inspiration for the entire community.
Students at Mark Twain and Hazel Grove elementary schools will return in August to brand new classrooms in newly constructed buildings.

During the past year, construction has been ongoing on the two new school buildings, which will provide more updated features, and more total square footage and classroom space to accommodate growing student populations. Both buildings have been paid for from capital outlay funds, which are 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. There was no tax increase to community members.

**MARK TWAIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

The new two-story Mark Twain Elementary building was constructed with a design to complement the historic Wyandotte High School, which is located just across the street. One major change from the former structure is the front entrance, which now faces east.

The building is a total of 45,920 square feet, and can accommodate up to 322 students. It has two classrooms at each grade level large enough to house 23 to 28 students. Each classroom has its own sink and ample storage. Each has wireless access points, Apple TV and a classroom iPad for teachers and students for instructional use. The kindergarten classrooms include a restroom. There are also two “swing classrooms” designed to accommodate class size shifts.

Other features of the new building include:
- SPED/ESL/Reading classrooms
- 3.2 miles of data cable
- Media library
- Computer lab
- Multipurpose room
- Music/music storage room
- Art room (with storage and kiln room)
- Kitchen

Mark Twain students had been attending school at the former Central Elementary School building during the 2012-2013 school year so their existing building could be razed and the new Mark Twain building constructed in its place.
The new Hazel Grove Elementary building is a two-story facility that was designed to carry forth the history of the former building and site. The site where the school stands was a former hazelnut grove, and thus the name. The new building’s façade is imbedded with hazelnut trees, and the one remaining living tree on the grounds was preserved.

The total square footage of the new building is 70,394 and it can accommodate up to 550 students. It has four classrooms at each grade level and three swing classrooms to accommodate class size shifts. Each classroom can accommodate between 23 and 28 students and has its own sink and ample storage. Each has wireless access points, Apple TV and a classroom iPad for teachers and students for instructional use. The kindergarten classrooms include a restroom.

Other features of the new building include:
- SPED/ESL/Reading classrooms
- 5.5 miles of data cable
- Media library
- Computer lab
- Multipurpose room
- Music/music storage room
- Art room (with storage and a kiln room)
- Kitchen
- Gymnasium

The new Hazel Grove building sits just southeast of the original main building, and is on the site of the former baseball field. Due to continued growth in the student population over the years, two more buildings had been added to the campus: one housed the gym and cafeteria, and the other housed grades K-1. The two west buildings have been razed, and the east building will house a preschool program.

NEW MCKINLEY ELEMENTARY BUILDING IN THE WORKS

At its May 28 meeting, the KCK Board of Education approved construction documents for a new McKinley Elementary School at 1301 Armstrong. The total project cost will be $11,700,000. This project is also being paid for from capital outlay funds; there will be no tax increase to community members.

It will be a single story building designed to house 350 students, with the intention of capturing future growth in the area. The approximate square footage will be 42,000.
Every day during the school year, more than 23,500 students and staff learn and work in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS). Ensuring that they are able to spend their days in a safe and orderly environment has always been a top priority for the superintendent and the Board of Education. However, recent events in Newtown, Connecticut and Moore, Oklahoma have prompted school districts across the country to reassess their emergency preparations, and to reemphasize and reinforce the measures that are already in place.

In KCKPS, district officials are taking a number of different steps to reinforce safety procedures, and to communicate them to students, staff and the general public. Some of these efforts are already in place, and others will come into effect over the next several years. They include the adoption of a Standard Response Protocol for critical incidents, the installation of additional security measures in schools and other buildings, and a process to enhance the skills and training of security staff in buildings.

I Love U Guys
While schools are statistically the safest place where kids spend significant time, the sheer amount of time that kids spend there makes it important that schools be as safe as humanly possible. Severe weather events, fires, accidents, intruders and other threats to student safety are all possible scenarios for which school personnel must be prepared.

School districts across the country have learned that the best way to be prepared for a wide variety of possible emergency situations is by putting in place a small number of standard responses that signal to staff and students what to do in an emergency situation. This fall, KCKPS is implementing a new Standard Response Protocol (SRP) system, which was developed by the I Love U Guys Foundation. The protocol system includes four different responses: “Lock Out,” “Lockdown,” “Evacuate,” and “Shelter In Place.”

The SRP will help increase safety in several different ways. First, it will insure that staff, students and first responders all use a common language in response to an emergency situation. For teachers, it becomes a simpler process to train and drill. And parents can easily understand the practices and reinforce the protocol.

**Strengthening Our Security Measures**
In addition to implementing the Standard Response Protocol, the district has taken a number of additional steps to make sure that all buildings are safe. These include reinforcing existing security policies: All staff are required to wear their ID badges in buildings; doors of all buildings are to remain locked, and visitors are asked to identify themselves before being permitted entry; staff can see front doors with video cameras, which are being repaired and upgraded; and metal detectors are being used in all secondary schools.

KCKPS has also taken the initial steps in what will be a multi-year journey: The transition of the district’s campus officers, who are responsible for safety and security in the district’s middle and high schools, to being fully trained law enforcement officers, with the resources and knowledge necessary to respond to any kind of potential emergency. Law enforcement training in Kansas requires more than 500 hours of instruction, and includes a broad variety of subjects, including juvenile law and justice, ethics and discretion, first aid, communications, and much more. The training is extremely rigorous, and takes place over a three-month period.

Many of the district’s current campus officers will choose to undergo law enforcement training, and it will take the district several years to rotate all interested staff through training, while maintaining a complete security staff in secondary buildings. Once the transition is complete, KCKPS will join most other large school districts in Kansas in maintaining its own police force.

The Board and administration of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools are committed to maintaining a safe and orderly environment for all students and staff. Through implementation of the Standard Response Protocol, the upgrade and reinforcement of basic security procedures, and the transition of campus officers to law enforcement officers, the district is fully committed to the goal of keeping all students and staff safe.
Warm and inviting places to read with a variety of new, highly engaging books describe the new classroom libraries that have been created in every elementary classroom in the district. This project took place in late spring.

“These new libraries give our students access to quality literature at their grade level, right in their classroom,” said Molly Struzzo, lead teacher leader. “And they have been very well received by the students.”

The classroom libraries project came out of the literacy audit conducted by the district in 2012. For the elementary level, the results of the audit included recommendations that students be engaged in authentic reading activities independently. The audit further stated that the “volume of reading is critical to the literacy achievement of students.”

Each library contains a balance of fiction and nonfiction books from a variety of genres, text types and formats, at multiple reading levels. The libraries include a set of classroom procedures for choosing and returning books; anchor charts and reader strategies; and bright displays and comfortable spaces that invite students in.

Students will be reading every day during protected time, and will demonstrate their learning through journaling, reading logs, and book talks. They also will be allowed to check out classroom library books and take them home to read alone or with a parent.

The elementary level is the starting place for students to build a strong literacy foundation that must support their continuous learning at middle and high school. Research states that extensive reading is the key to the development of reading proficiency.

“Our goal is to create independent readers,” Struzzo said.
At its May 14 meeting, the Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education approved a memorandum of understanding with Donnelly College to support the Gateway to College program. This is a national model that addresses the needs of students who are older and struggling to remain engaged in school. It can also serve the needs of students who have already dropped out of high school.

Students will attend classes at Donnelly and transition from their developmental classes to college-credit classes. These classes will also fulfill their high school graduation credits. The program is beginning this school year.

To qualify, students must:
- Be between the ages of 16 and 20
- Have a reading level of 8th grade or above
- Be behind on their credits for high school graduation
- Be interested in earning a high school diploma
- Be interested in going to college

Gateway to College is a program that helps students to prepare for college, receive a high school diploma, and earn some college credit at no charge.

Find out more at http://www.donnelly.edu/gateway or by calling Juan M Rangel Jr., director, Gateway to College at (913) 621-8715 or email him at jrangel@donnelly.edu.
Scenes from the 2013 Elementary Music Festival
TUNE INTO KCKPS TV-18

Did you know that the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools has its own television network? KCKPS TV-18 was established in 2011 as a 24-hour news source of programs and initiatives of the district. The network can be viewed by Time Warner Cable subscribers in Wyandotte County, or through the district’s website, http://kckps.org/communications/channel18.php (or from the home page, click on “Channel 18” on the side menu.)

Programs run regularly on the half hour and include taped Board of Education meetings, student of the month recognitions, employee of the month recognitions, bi-weekly updates of happenings in the schools, special events such as the Superintendent’s Honor Roll, Star Teacher Celebration and Are You Faster Than a 5th Grader race, plus much more. In between videos, there are list-ings of library programs, student and staff recognitions, school concerts and plays, the Board of Education meeting calendar, district calendar, school lunch and breakfast menus and more.

Most programming begins between 5 and 6 a.m. and runs through 10 or 11 p.m. each day. Watch for a “program schedule” to run at the top of the hour and half past the hour which will include upcoming programming for the day.

SUMNER ACADEMY RECEIVES #1 RANKING IN KANSAS

This spring, Sumner Academy of Arts and Science was ranked the “best high school” in Kansas, and the “most challenging high school” in the state.

These rankings were announced by two renowned ratings programs that measure how well high schools prepare students for college, and student performance on Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate tests and state-mandated assessments, among other elements.

U.S. News and World Report, as part of its 2013 Best High Schools rating system, gave Sumner a number one spot in the state. Other local schools in the top five were Blue Valley North at number two, Shawnee Mission East at number three, Blue Valley at number four and Blue Valley West at number five. Sumner has a 99 percent graduation rate and 69 percent of its graduates go on to attend four-year colleges. On a regional level, the Post ranked Sumner #19 in the Midwest.

If you would like to advertise in Education Connection please call Sandy Nelson – 816-616-4301
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