

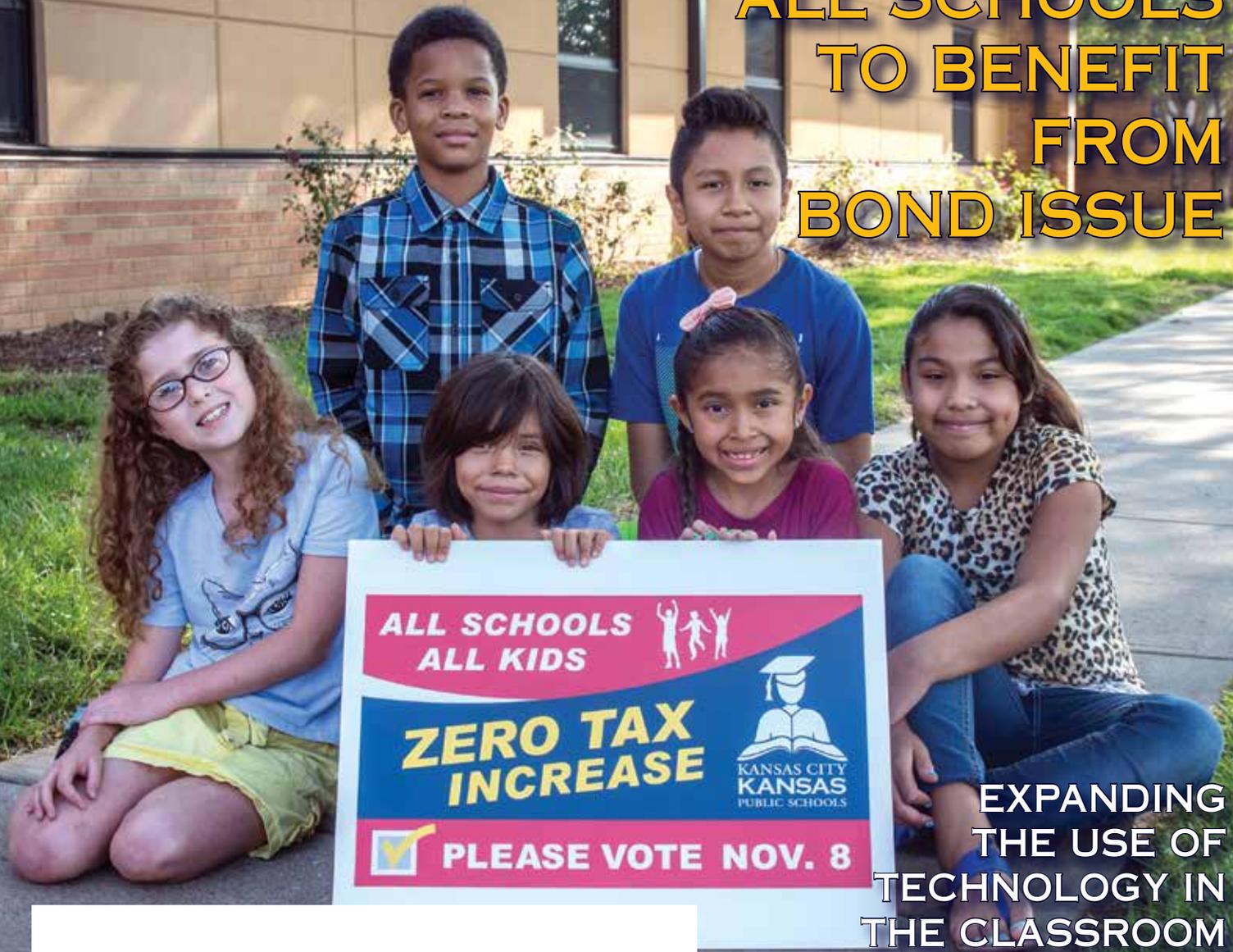


# EDUCATION CONNECTION

NEWS FROM THE KANSAS CITY, KANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FALL 2016

## ALL SCHOOLS TO BENEFIT FROM BOND ISSUE



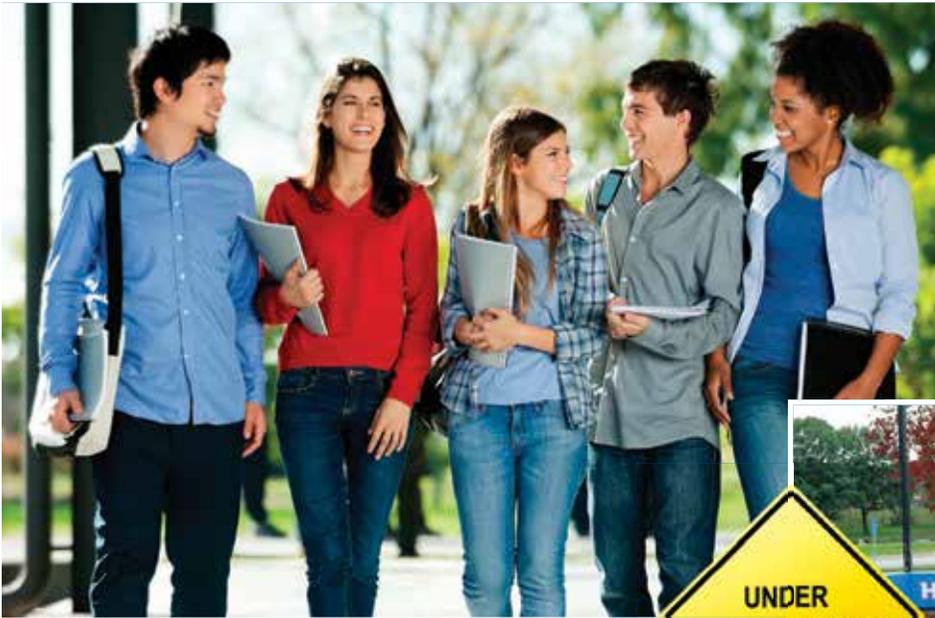
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## COMMUNICATION RESOURCES

Website: [kckps.org](http://kckps.org)

Facebook:

[KansasCityKansasPublicSchools](https://www.facebook.com/KansasCityKansasPublicSchools)

Twitter: [Twitter.com/kckschools](https://twitter.com/kckschools)

Superintendent's Blog, "It's Up to Us."

[Blog.kckps.org](http://Blog.kckps.org)

KCKPS-TV:

**Channel 18** (on Time Warner Cable)

**Channel 145** (on Google Fiber)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/KCKPSTV](http://www.youtube.com/KCKPSTV)

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**Dr. Cynthia Lane**  
Superintendent of Schools

## 21st Century Learning Environments

The Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education has made the decision to place a zero tax increase bond referendum on the November 8 ballot, in order to continue the work of creating school facilities that support the needs of our 21st century learners. I want to spend a few moments telling you how we came to that decision, and what the

passage of this referendum will mean for our kids, and our community.

## Classrooms of Yesterday

First, I want to invite you to look back to your school experiences. What most prepared you for your future? Perhaps, like me, some of your most impactful experiences took place outside the school day; what we called “extracurricular.” Some of the most valuable lessons I learned were during recess, and later in my schooling, through participation in various clubs and activities. Band, orchestra, debate, forensics, and athletics were all great influences. I learned about collaboration, teamwork, leadership, and developed skills to work alongside others to accomplish a common goal.

Looking back, the focus in the classroom was not on collaboration and teamwork; instead, the focus was on individual accountability. Students were expected to sit in desks, neatly organized in rows. Talking in class, even if it was about the work, was forbidden, unless you were called upon by the teacher. Collaboration was not deemed important. In fact, I recall strong prohibitions on sharing work with other students. Sharing our work was considering “copying” and not thinking for ourselves. Memorization and recall were frequently required to prepare for the regimen of tests that were what school was all about.

## Today’s 21st Century Classrooms

Much has changed over this past half-century. Today, we expect our students to collaborate and share their work. Classroom projects are designed around team performance, and require the application of concepts, not the recalling of facts. Technology tools are essential to learning. If you need to recall a discrete fact, “Google it!” Trying to hold all of the information in your mind is not as important as intellectual openness, inquisitiveness, analysis, reasoning, argumentation (oral and written), use of evidence or proof, accuracy, and problem solving.

## Citizen Input for a Facilities Improvement Plan

The question becomes, what types of 21st century learning environments are necessary to nurture the skills our students must acquire to be competitive in today’s world? Over the last few years, the district has focused on answering this question. Eight years ago, we engaged a group of community volunteers to assist in the development of a facilities improvement plan. This plan resulted in KCKPS building and renovating 14 district and school facilities since 2007. We accomplished this feat with strategic planning, and a commitment to not increase the property taxes that support district capital projects.

Implementation of the 2007 facilities plan has been a tremendous success. But by 2015, it was time to update it. We engaged experts in the fields of engineering, architecture, and construction to analyze our school facilities. Once again, to answer this question, we organized a group of community volunteers to serve as the Community Vision Committee. The committee examined information provided by a team of the experts (including architects, engineers and school planners), and assisted the district in developing a long-range facilities plan. What has become clear is that it is becoming more and more difficult for some of our facilities (which average the age of 57 years) to meet the learning needs of our students.

## Bond Work Will Prepare Our Students for College and Careers

We have devoted a large section of this edition of *Education Connection* to sharing what the Board of Education and I believe are critical next steps to support the continuous improvement of KCKPS. The improvements we will be able to make through passage of this bond issue will give our students the opportunity to learn in the highest quality settings to prepare them for college and careers in a global society. The scope of the work includes:

- New building construction at four locations
- Upgrades to safety and security, kitchen renovations, playgrounds, and maintenance
- 21st century learning spaces to support our College and Career Academies at every high school, and career exploration labs at our middle schools

We can make all of these improvements with a zero-tax increase bond issue, which means that there will be no increase in taxes for KCK residents.

## Schools are the Heart of Our Community

One of the reasons I feel so honored to serve KCK as superintendent is that our schools are the heart of our community. As we have worked together to improve our school facilities, we have already realized increased property values; we are attracting and retaining new residents and businesses; our skilled graduates are enhancing our quality workforce; and we are all benefiting from access to quality of life amenities. This plan gives us yet another opportunity to move our children and community forward.

Thank you for your continued support. *It’s Up to Us.*

# GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A BASIC RIGHT AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY



Dr. Evelyn Hill  
Board of Education President

American Education Week is November 13-19. This year's theme, which could not be more fitting, is "Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility."

Across our country there is a resurgence to appreciate and value public schools because of what they provide for all children. Many who are now adults, enjoyed the benefits of a public education and thrive successfully giving back to their communities in many ways.

The theme this year is very compelling and challenging. Even in the great state of Kansas, many public schools have been under attack financially because of political influence that is against public schools. We must keep our eyes on the prize of a quality education for all students, which is a "basic right." It is our responsibility to make sure our kids are afforded the opportunity to learn in a public school environment that prepares them for life as adults. We cannot afford to idly sit by and allow naysayers to stop the progress of our public schools.

It is certainly a basic right in America for kids to be educated. It is a right that kids learn to read and write. It is a right that all kids flourish in educational environments regardless of income, race, religion or creeds. We are to protect the rights of children by making sure we vote for quality representatives who embrace quality public education.

This coming November, we will have an opportunity to vote.

The Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools will have a **ZERO-TAX-INCREASE** bond initiative on the ballot. This **ZERO-TAX-INCREASE** bond will benefit all of our schools. The average age of the buildings in our district is 57 years old. This bond initiative will provide an opportunity for **ALL** of our schools to receive improvements, such as renovations, security updates, 21st century learning spaces, kitchen updates and maintenance and repair. It also includes the construction of four new school buildings. Please go to the polls and vote.

Public schools offer significant benefits to the students who attend every day. Here are five benefits to public education.

- 1) The **cost** of public education can't be beat.
- 2) Public schools provide **access** to education for every child in a community. *The Huffington Post* notes that by law, public schools cannot turn students away based on academic performance, income level or disability.

- 3) Because public schools admit all children in the community, children are **exposed** to others from different cultures or income levels.
- 4) By law, public schools are also required to provide certain **services** to students. These include transportation to and from school, reduced-price lunch, and a staff of special education teachers and learning specialists to support student achievement.
- 5) Public schools offer a variety of **academic opportunities** like advanced classes and courses in specialized subjects like technology, arts, international baccalaureate and advanced placement classes.

Please remember, together we have the responsibility to protect the rights of children receiving a quality education in our public schools. Thank you for contacting your friends and relatives and encouraging them to **vote**.



## 2016 REASONS TO BELIEVE HONOREES ANNOUNCED JOIN US TO CELEBRATE THEM ON NOVEMBER 17

The Kansas City, Kansas community is invited to hear about the achievements and life work of 12 outstanding alumni from the KCK Public Schools at the district's 2016 *Reasons to Believe* Celebration. The event will take place at 7 p.m. Thursday, November 17 at the KCKPS Central Office and Training Center, 2010 N. 59th Street. The celebration is free and open to the public.

*Reasons to Believe* was established in 2002 to generate pride and celebrate the progress being made throughout the district. Through the program, nominations are sought for outstanding alumni to be inducted into the *Reasons to Believe* Alumni Honor Roll. These alumni serve as role

models whose deeds, words and images are shared to inspire and encourage today's students. The nominations are reviewed by a *Reasons to Believe* Steering Committee and 12 are chosen to honor at the annual celebration.

Members of the 2016 *Reasons to Believe* Alumni Honor Roll are:

- **Steve Bender**, realtor/entrepreneur/philanthropist, Washington High School Class of 1979
- **David Berry**, machinist/coach/community volunteer, Sumner High School Class of 1968
- **Shirley Christian**, journalist/author, Rosedale Junior/Senior High School Class of 1956

- **Cecil Christwell**, educator/athletic director, F.L. Schlagle High School Class of 1994
- **Bernice Collins**, wardrobe assistant for Cirque du Soleil (former Ringling Brothers clown), Washington High School Class of 1975
- **Timothy Dupree**, district court judge, Wyandotte High School Class of 1994
- **Tyrone Garner**, deputy chief of police, Wyandotte High School Class of 1987
- **Marcus Gladdis**, program manager for Cerner, Sumner Academy of Arts and Science Class of 2005
- **Nancy Hale**, assistant principal/coach, Wyandotte High School Class of 1978

- **Adolphus Lacey**, clergyman/educator, Wyandotte High School Class of 1988
- **Dr. Jeanette Pitts**, dermatologist, Washington High School Class of 1980
- **Ana Valdez**, admissions director at Donnelly College, J.C. Harmon High School Class of 1983

For more information about the *Reasons to Believe* program, contact Tammy Dodderidge, tammy.dodderidge@kckps.org.

To review past honor roll classes or to learn more about the program, go to [www.kckps.org/recognition/alumni](http://www.kckps.org/recognition/alumni).

# SCHOOL FUNDING REMAINS A CRITICAL ISSUE ACROSS KANSAS



After a dramatic summer, in which Kansas Governor Sam Brownback had to convene a special session of the legislature in order to avoid the closure of all Kansas schools, one might be tempted to hope for a calm fall season with regard to school funding issues. Instead, with a hearing at the Kansas Supreme Court on school funding adequacy, the need for the legislature to write a new funding formula during the legislative session, and elections coming up in November, this is a critical time to pay attention to what's happening in Kansas concerning school finance.

## Supreme Court Hearing on Adequacy

On September 21, 2016, the Kansas Supreme Court held a hearing on the adequacy portion of the school funding case. For the past six years, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools has been one of the lead plaintiffs in the school funding lawsuit against the state of Kansas. The lawsuit was successful at the district court level,

and the Supreme Court divided it into two issues: equity (how money is distributed to different school districts) and adequacy (is there enough funding for public schools in Kansas). In May, the Court ordered the legislature to provide funding to resolve the equity portion of the case, and the legislature complied during the special session.

If, as expected, the Supreme Court rules that school funding in Kansas is not adequate, the legislature will face a major challenge in finding the funds to respond to the court's decision. It took a special session to find the \$38 million to respond to the equity part of the case, and providing adequate funding in Kansas might cost an additional \$500 million or more. This will be extremely difficult, due to the on-going revenue challenges faced by the state of Kansas, caused by the tax cuts pushed through by Governor Brownback. Those tax cuts have erased a \$1 billion state surplus, and required repeated cuts to state programs and services, just to end the budget year with a positive balance. A ruling on the adequacy portion of the case is expected sometime this winter.

## Upcoming Elections Will Have a Huge Impact on Public Education

While during election campaigns, it can sometimes be difficult to hear candidates saying anything about education, this year, if the primary elections in August were any indication, education promises to be at the top of the agenda for state elections in Kansas on November 8. During the primaries, a large number of candidates who campaigned in support of public schools won their races. Education is again expect-

ed to play a central role in the November elections for state offices (House and Senate), particularly because the legislature is expected to write a new school finance formula during the 2017 legislative session (*see below*). You are urged to learn what the positions of candidates are around education, and to support those candidates whose positions most closely match yours.

## Creating a New Funding Formula

For the past two years, schools have suffered through a freeze in state funding. This freeze was caused by the elimination of the school funding formula, and the institution of two years of "Block Grants." Authorization for the Block Grants ends in June, 2017, so a new funding formula must be written by then. The legislature will be responsible for writing the new formula, but it is critical that members of the public make clear to the legislature what they want for schools and for children.

Governor Brownback has asked for public input on the formula by November 30. In order to support parents and community members in communicating their feelings on school funding to the governor, KCKPS has set up a web page on school funding at [www.kckps.org](http://www.kckps.org) (click on "Budget documents and school funding"). This page contains information on issues relating to school funding, links to additional information provided by external organizations, and a link to the e-mail address set up by the governor's office to take public input on school funding. Please take the time to learn about the issues, and to let your voice be heard. The future of public education in Kansas is at stake!

## 2016-2017 DISTRICT CALENDAR (SECOND QUARTER)

### November

8 Board of Education meeting  
22 Board of Education meeting  
23-25 Holiday/  
Administrative Offices closed

### December

13 Board of Education meeting

20 Last day of 2nd quarter  
21 .5 records prep/.5 inservice  
22-31 Winter break  
26-30 Administrative Offices closed

### January

2-3 Winter break continues  
4 Classes resume

10 Board of Education meeting  
16 Holiday/  
Administrative Offices closed  
24 Board of Education meeting

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

# ALL SCHOOLS TO BENEFIT FROM ZERO TAX INCREASE BOND ISSUE

## VOTE IS SLATED FOR NOVEMBER 8 BALLOT

On November 8, residents will have the opportunity to vote on a zero tax increase bond issue that will benefit the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS) and the KCK community.

The \$235 million bond issue will fund new school buildings, modern learning spaces, extensive repairs and renovations, and will touch every building and student in the district.

### Community Input and Vision

KCKPS engaged a Community Vision Committee, made up of a broad spectrum of parents, business leaders and community members, to examine a facilities study completed by district. The study identified the immediate and long-term needs of all school buildings, which average an age of 57 years. Through a series of meetings, the committee made recommendations to the Board of Education to address the needs. At its August 9 meeting, the KCK Board of Education approved a resolution authorizing and providing for the calling of a bond election that is a zero tax increase bond.

## Scope of Work

### What's in the Plan?

- Safety/security upgrades at all schools
- Two new middle schools
- Two new elementary schools
- High school College and Career Academy spaces
- Middle school career exploration spaces
- Kitchen construction and upgrades
- Enhanced elementary playgrounds
- Building remodels and renovations
- Maintenance, repair and replacement work (such as plumbing, roofing, heating/air conditioning, lighting)

### How Does This Benefit Our Community?

By improving our schools, our community will be able to:

- Attract and retain new residents and businesses
- Realize increases in property values
- Provide a better quality of life for all citizens
- Attract and keep a quality work force (including our own students)





## New School Buildings and Building Renovations

- Northwest Middle School will be razed and replaced with a new modern facility.
- Coronado Middle School will be razed and a new facility will be built to accommodate the population of students from both Coronado and West middle schools.
- Students from Bethel and White Church elementary schools will be combined for a large, state-of-the-art building on the White Church grounds.
- The two existing Welborn Elementary School buildings will be razed and one new building will be built to accommodate all students.
- The existing Bethel Elementary will be upgraded and transformed into an early childhood center.
- The existing West Middle School will be upgraded to accommodate students from William Allen White Elementary School and Parker Elementary School.

## Safety and Security Updates

Among the many facility upgrades included in the upcoming bond election, will be safety and security enhancements at all buildings. Many buildings will receive new, secure entrances adjacent to the office or reception areas as part of this upgrade. The secure entrances will limit direct access to the building. Other security enhancements will include new cameras, locks, intercoms, etc., based on needs.





### **Upgraded High School Classrooms to Meet 21st Century Learning Needs**

One area of emphasis will be the creation of 21st century learning spaces at all high schools. Spaces will be built to accommodate the new College and Career Academies that will be launched during the 2017-18 school year. The academies have been identified in collaboration with business leaders to ensure that KCKPS offers robust experiences, tied to the most in-demand career opportunities in the metropolitan area. Other upgrades will include two new and modern science labs per high school building, and faculty planning centers for team collaboration.

### **Remodeling of Kitchens, Creation of a New Kitchen Space**

Kitchen remodeling and upgrades were identified as crucial needs at seven school buildings. Six elementary schools will receive improvements and renovations. They include:

- New Stanley • Noble Prentis • Grant
- John Fiske • Eugene Ware • Douglass

One middle school, Rosedale Middle, will receive a new kitchen and cafeteria addition, which will replace an outdated third-floor kitchen and eating space. And when not in use for school meals, the new cafeteria will be used for educational purposes.

### **Middle Schools to Receive Career Exploration Space**

A key component of the proposed new bond issue is new space at the middle schools to enhance student opportunities to explore career options. The term “career exploration space” can best be described as an introduction to real world experiences in flexible and collaborative spaces to support the College and Career Academy placement in the high schools.

### **New Play and Exercise Spaces for Elementary Students**

Nine elementary schools will receive renovations to their school playgrounds as part of the bond issue. The playground improvements will be specific to the needs of each school, including new and safe play areas and equipment. The schools are:

- Eugene Ware • Grant • John Fiske • Lindbergh
- Stony Point South • Claude Huyck
- ME Pearson • Whittier • Caruthers



## What does a 'Zero Tax Increase Bond' mean? How can you raise \$235 million without raising taxes?

Thanks to sound fiscal management by the KCK Board of Education, KCKPS has paid off a large portion of the debt incurred with the previous bond (to air condition schools) ahead of schedule. This, in combination with record low interest rates and state aid for the bond issue, provides the district with the opportunity to purchase additional bonds at the same rate of repayment. (Under the current school finance formula, the state of Kansas will pay 43% of all principal and interest payments on the proposed bond issue.) Therefore, patrons will not see an increase in taxes, but rather an extension of the timeframe during which taxes are levied.

**ALL SCHOOLS  
ALL KIDS**



**ZERO TAX  
INCREASE**



**PLEASE VOTE NOV. 8**

### Timeline

Construction will happen in phases over the next five years. Details and updates will be provided on the KCKPS website and through future issues of *Education Connection*.

### Website

For more details on the bond issue, visit [kckps.org/PleaseVote](http://kckps.org/PleaseVote).

# EXPANDING THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM



1:1 FOR GRADES 4 THROUGH 8;  
2:1 FOR GRADES K THROUGH 3

Technology continues to be an invaluable tool in education. It provides online lessons, software for problem solving, and tutoring. It allows students immediate access to information from around the world, and connections with unlimited people and places.

It used to be that familiarity with using a computer (and technology in general) was helpful for students as they moved on to higher education and the job market. However, today it is not an option. Students must be highly proficient at many forms of technology in order to succeed in the future.

Nine years ago, the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools launched a one-to-one technology program that was virtually unheard of in the metro, and by many across the nation. It put laptop computers into the hands of every high school student. Students check their laptops out at the beginning of the school year, and they are theirs

to use until the end of the school year. Since that launch in 2007, KCKPS has continued to move forward in this realm, matching up students in the classroom with enough technology tools to make it an integral part of their daily routines.

This school year, KCKPS took another major step toward advancing the use of technology in the classroom for students K-8. Now there is a one-to-one initiative in place for students grades 4-8, and a two-to-one initiative for students grades K-3.

"Our long-term plan was to give all of our students access to a device in their classrooms and we are now at that place," said Joe Fives, director of Technology and Information Services. "Exposure to this kind of technology levels the playing field for our students and allows them to dive deeper into the learning."

At the lower elementary levels, iPads are being used in each classroom. For grades 4-8, students are using Chromebook laptops as a classroom tool. (The technology is only for use in the school building and does not go home with students.)

Fives said using the Chromebook laptops will also help 8th grade students make an easy transition to high school where they will check out a laptop for the entire year.

A total of 8,000 Chromebooks and 4,000 iPads were imaged and ready to go when students started the year.

"In 2007, we were seen as a leader in the metro area, and regionally, for our laptop initiative," Fives said. "And we're not settling. We know that changes in technology are happening rapidly, and we need to stay ahead of the curve to move our students forward so they will be ready for the careers of the future."

# First Day of School 2016-17

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