

Hi. This is Dr. Jill Shackelford, Superintendent. I want to take just a few minutes, on this first day of American Education Week, to tell you again just how much I appreciate the hard work that you do every day on behalf of our children. I don't believe there could be a more dedicated group of education professionals anywhere, than we have right here in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS.)

Every day, you roll up your sleeves, and get after the work of educating all students to higher levels of achievement, and every year, our students get stronger and stronger. You already know that, for the first time, more than 60% of students are meeting the standard in both math and reading on the State Assessments. In addition, we have fewer schools on School Improvement this year, more schools making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and more schools (ten) reaching the Standard of Excellence than ever before. This is really remarkable, and it is our passion for our children and our ability to work together collaboratively that has allowed us to make this kind of progress.

Of course, we barely have time to recognize and celebrate the achievements of a particular school year before it is time to push towards the next goal. I know how hard you are working, and that you don't have a moment to slack off. The high expectations that we hold for ourselves, and for each other, mean that our work is often very stressful. It is important that we remember to look out for each other, to lean on each other, and to take care of each other.

Our goals are much too high, and the work far too challenging, to reach them by working alone. We will reach them together, supporting each other, and caring for each other. The person who works next to you may be having a bad day, or struggling to cope with things outside the job, and may need support from you to do her best work. Tomorrow, you may be the one in need of a helping hand.

These are particularly tough times for us in education. Budget cuts and the troubled economy are weighing heavily on all of us, and leaving us feeling uncertain about just what the future will hold. Still, you have reached deep into your pockets in support of the United Way, helping the district to raise more money than we ever thought we could this year. Thank you so much for all that you give, of your time, your talent and your treasure, on behalf of our students, and this community. The public schools are the glue that binds this society together, and you are at the heart of what makes public schools great.

Again, thanks for everything that you do, and thanks for believing in each other, in our students, and in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools. Have a great week!

Bye-bye!