

# Education News

Articles from Local Newspapers About or Affecting our District

May 16 – 31, 2009

## Table of Contents:

Budget requires additional cuts after legislature ends session (Wyandotte West 5/20) .....	2
Employees of the Month ... Students of the Month [photos] (Wyandotte West 5/21) .....	3
More vaccinations ordered for school children (Wyandotte West 5/21) .....	5
Wyandotte student changes his destiny [w/photo of Eric Jones] (Wyandotte West 5/21) .....	6
high five ... [photo of Noble Prentis students with firefighter] (Wyandotte West 5/22) .....	7
'Who am I' project continues this Thursday (Kansan 5/26) .....	8

## Budget requires additional cuts after legislature ends session

by Bob Evans

The Kansas Legislature ended its overtime session and cut more from school budgets than originally expected, but the Legislature did not change the local option budget and will allow schools to use that number for the next three school years for budgeting.

For Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools, the end result means an additional \$600,000 needs to be cut from the 2009-2010 budget. This, after the district already cut approximately 16 million. The good news is that deeper cuts do not need to be sustained, said Tom Petz, assistant director of human resources. Senate Bill 84 extended the tax authority for districts at a technically higher rate and helped statewide for school funding, said State Rep. Valdenia Winn, D-34th Dist.

“School funding had been reduced so much and will probably continue to be reduced.” Rep. Winn said. “Districts wanted to have a small cushion. I was interested in putting the sunset on this. Technically, this allows school districts to tax higher at that rate and school districts are OK with this. I felt the sunset on this give school districts a three-year cushion to plan and budget for this change in property taxes.”

The move to sustain the current LOB saved many jobs throughout the state. Traditionally, the LOB is tied to property taxes and as more houses are in foreclosure and property values drop, so, too would the LOB adjust downward, which would leave districts struggling more than already anticipated. That being the case, school districts across the state stood to lose significant funds that they use to form their annual budgets, said State Rep. Tom Burroughs, D-33rd Dist., recently.

As for Kansas City, Kansas, Public Schools, currently, only 15 teachers actually lost their jobs in the budget crisis and the district hopes to recall most or all of them by the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year, Petz, said. Originally, the district identified 103 positions to sever, but through attrition, retirement, resignations, that number was reduced to 15.

All staff not terminated by the May 15 deadline were assured teaching contracts for the next year. Also, Petz said, over the summer additional departures would allow the district to retain some of the 15 lost individuals. Mostly, he said, the non-tenured first-year teachers lost their jobs.

“It’s a shame when we find and hire good candidates and then have to lose them,” Petz said. “We recruited and hired good, solid teachers, and we hate to invest in them and then lose them. We hope we can recall most, if not all, of them.”

Petz indicated that some teachers relocate, change their minds, find new [employment](#) of the summer and that can open teaching positions not currently foreseen.

“The LOB remains untouched at this time,” said State Sen. David Haley, D-4th Dist. Sen. Haley credited State Sen. John Vratil, R-11th Dist., of Johnson County, with successfully negotiating the deal to leave the LOB in place.

According to Rep. Winn, a conservative wing of the Legislature could have seen this LOB measure as a tax increase, but that argument never came to fruition and the bill passed to the benefit of all Kansas school districts.

Wyandotte West – May 21, 2009



## **Employees of the Month...**

At their meeting on Tuesday, May 19, members of the Kansas City, Kansas, Board of Education honored Lee Herr, English as a Second Language aide at Welborn Elementary School, and Carol Whitehead, Eugene Ware Elementary School kindergarten teacher, as employees of the month for May 2009. (Submitted photo)



## **STUDENTS OF THE MONTH...**

Honored as students of the month of May in the Kansas City, Kansas, Public Schools were left to right Eileen Dominic, senior at Sumner Academy; Aylin Rodriguez, fourth-grade student at Emerson Elementary; and Stephanie Hernandez, eighth-grade student at Central Middle School. They were honored at the board meeting May 19. (Submitted photo)



## **Posthumous Honor...**

Honored posthumously was Matthias Hang. Matthias, a student at the Education Center Preschool, who was diagnosed in November with leukemia, died in March. His student of the month medal was accepted by his parents, Roxanne and Billie Hang. (Submitted photo)

Wyandotte West – May 21, 2009

## **More vaccinations ordered for school children**

**by Mary Rupert**

Because of chickenpox outbreaks in Kansas last year, the state is requiring more chickenpox vaccinations for school-age children, according to local health officials.

“This year there are quite a few changes for the 2009-2010 school year,” said Melanie Vogts, nurse supervisor for child health at the Unified Government Public Health Department.

She asked parents to bring children in early for their shots, and not wait until right before school starts. The vaccine requirements come from the state Department of Health and Environment, she said.

Vogts said KDHE cited disease outbreaks in the state as a reason to step up the phasing in of the new vaccine requirements. While all the vaccines have been recommended for some time, they have not been required for school entrance until now, according to Vogts.

Instead of one dose of the chickenpox, or varicella, vaccine, students in kindergarten will need two, she said. Plus, students in sixth through ninth grade will need another dose of chickenpox vaccine.

The state also is requiring three doses of hepatitis B vaccine for students in sixth through ninth grades – something that wasn’t required last year, according to health officials.

Children who are 11 years old will require a diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis (Tdap) booster, according to health officials. The booster was not required last year. According to health officials, students born between Sept. 1, 1997, and Aug. 31, 1998, and who will be 11 before Sept. 1, 2009, will be required to have documentation of Tdap vaccine, if it has been more than two years since the previous dose. Students older than 12 who last had a shot 10 years ago also will require Tdap.

Vogts said that students who are uninsured, underinsured or on Medicaid may receive their vaccines at the health department walk-in clinic. The health department does not deny services based on the ability to pay and will work with parents, according to a spokesman.

Other children should receive vaccines from private physicians or health care providers, she said.

For more information about new vaccine requirements, contact the health department clinic at 913-573-6710, or for information about immunization services, call 913-573-8888.

## Wyandotte student changes his destiny

by Bettse Folsom

Eric Jones, 18, left a legacy at Wyandotte High School that other students may strive for years to achieve. Jones, who will graduate with honors from Wyandotte on May 21, has played many roles well at Wyandotte. “Eric is an athlete, a volunteer tutor, and a school leader,” said Jarius Jones, Wyandotte High School instructor. “In addition, he is an academic scholar.”

An area in which Eric has excelled has been working on a committee with teachers and other students to discuss issues within the school and low test results. They compare their test scores to Bonner Springs and Olathe school districts and have speculated that stressful home life situations in the immediate area may be a major component to low achievement in the classrooms.

Eric’s own life is an example of how a student might change his destiny.

“When I was younger, I was into the wrong crowd and doing wrong stuff,” Eric said. “My mother took me out of school, and I had to home school for awhile.”

He was not very motivated and found the work unchallenging. It also did not help his situation since he was basically working alone each day. He grew fed up with his lifestyle and the path he was going down.

“I grew up in the church and my life was contradicting what I believed,” Eric said. “I became convicted on how I wanted to turn my life around.”

Eric attended Faith Christian Academy for one year before transferring to Wyandotte High School. He grasped his English studies very quickly and the professors allowed him to test out of the class and move forward.

Since he was a child, Eric has been interested in the medical profession and specializing in cardiology. After a physician visited his class, he was able to job shadow at the University of Kansas Medical Center for six weeks in the summer. He also attended a human autopsy.

“I was able to stay a couple of weeks longer, and they allowed me to watch an autopsy,” Eric said. “At first the smell and the cracking sound of breaking the skull got to me.”

Eric’s eventual plans are to attend Drake University in Des Moines and study biochemistry and biology; however, after graduation from college and medical school, he wants to practice medicine in Kansas City.

“I advise other students to set goals and never give up on those goals. There is nothing you can’t achieve if you put your mind to it,” Eric said. “There is no success if you don’t overcome challenges.”



Wyandotte West – May 22, 2009



## high five . . .

Cadet Anthony Smith of the Kansas City, Kansas, Fire Department walks in full equipment among the students from Noble Prentis Elementary School May 21. This field trip to the fire department headquarters at 815 N. 6th was the final session in the six-week “Safe Haven Second Generation” program, where fire department representatives visited the kindergarten through second-grade classes to teach students how to dial 911 for emergencies, to stop-drop-roll, what to do in weather emergencies, and how to crawl safely from a burning building. (Photo by Bettse Folsom)

## 'Who am I' project continues this Thursday

By **SAM HARTLE**, Editor

**Kansas City Kansan**

Posted May 26, 2009 @ 09:41 AM

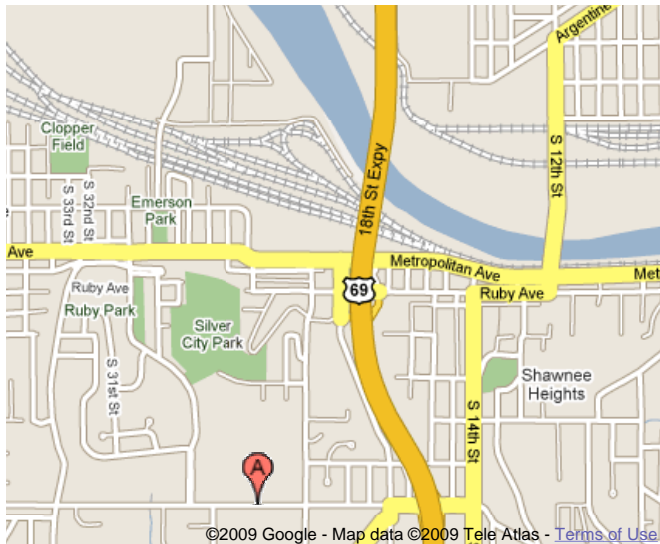
Last update May 26, 2009 @ 04:41 PM

Kansas City, Kan. — Students from J.C. Harmon High School will show more than 100 pieces of art from 7 to 8 p.m. this Thursday at the high school, 2400 Steele Road.

The project is part of the "Who am I" project led by local artist Steve Curtis.

For this project, students were asked to photograph things that were important to them in their daily lives.

In case you forgot how to get to Harmon, here's a map:



[View Larger Map](#)