



## Board Works to Address Facilities Needs in the District

For the past year, members of the district's Community Advisory Facilities Committee (CAFC) have been involved with studying the facilities needs of the district. At a Special Board of Education meeting in November, the CAFC presented a report on the results of their work to the Board for their consideration. In completing its work, the CAFC used information gathered in the Facility Utilization study conducted by the architects ACI Frangkiser Hutchens, Inc., along with a District growth and boundary study completed by RSP and Associates.

The Facility Utilization study identified a number of facilities issues that the district needed to address. For example, as staff in elementary schools are well

aware, district elementary schools are short of space. According to the study, with the exception of one school, all elementary schools are oversubscribed. In addition, the mobile units located at Sumner Academy of Arts and Science are inadequate and in poor condition.

The CAFC has considered information from the two studies and recommended a "phased" construction plan, which would address the most challenged facilities first. This approach would allow the district to leverage current and projected Capital Outlay revenues without the need for a new tax levy. At the Board of Education meeting on Tuesday Jan. 8, the Board approved the hiring of ACI Frangkiser Hutchens Architects to provide a current cost analysis

of the projects, develop specific timelines, project estimates, and preliminary construction plans.

Phase 1 of the Facilities Plan would address some of the most challenged elementary schools, where overcrowding and inadequate facilities are hampering teaching and learning. Improvements would include new additions at Frances Willard, Mark Twain, Douglass and Silver City elementary schools, and Sumner Academy of Arts and Science. The administration will report back to the Board of Education on or before March 11, 2008 with specific plans for moving forward to address facilities issues.

In other business, the Board of Education:

- Recognized Students of the  
*(Continued on back)*

### Communications Office Receives KanSPRA Awards

The Communications Office has received two awards in the 2006-2007 publications contest sponsored by the Kansas Association of School Boards and Kansas School Public Relations Association (KanSPRA).

The department received an Award of Excellence (the top award) in the School Calendar division for the 2007-2008 *Reasons to Believe* calendar, and an Award of Merit in the Web Site division for the district's website.

The annual contest provides recognition and feedback for outstanding communications programs in Kansas schools, but also serves as a model for what schools should be doing to effectively communicate with their publics.

### Sumner Academy Ranked Among 'America's Best High Schools'

Sumner Academy of Arts and Science was the only high school in Wyandotte County to receive the prestigious bronze medal ranking in a recent report sponsored by *U.S. News and World Report*.

*U.S. News and World Report*, in conjunction with School Evaluation Services (a subsidiary of Standard and Poor's), conducted its first ever ranking of America's Best High Schools. This study, of the more than 18,000 public high schools in the United States, was a three-step process that considered state reading and math test scores, demographics, and student achievement in Advanced Placement (college level) courses.

The top 100 high schools were awarded gold medals and the next 405 won silver medals. Another 1,086 schools were awarded bronze medals.

Other area schools receiving awards in this study were Blue Valley North High School in Overland Park, Kan., which received a silver medal, and Lincoln Prep High School in Kansas City, Mo., and Lee's Summit North High School in Missouri, which received bronze medals.

# Nominations Open for *Reasons to Believe*

Nominations are open for the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools' (KCKPS) 2008 *Reasons to Believe* Alumni Honor Roll, part of a coordinated plan to spotlight alumni successes to encourage and inspire today's students.

"We want to recognize school district alumni and tell their success stories because we believe they hold tremendous power in painting a picture of opportunity for our students," said **Dr. Jill Shackelford**, superintendent

of schools. "Many people have graduated from our district and proceeded to do great things, some as straight-forward as managing their own businesses or giving back to their community, others going on to set new standards in society."

*Reasons to Believe* was initiated in 2002 to generate pride and celebrate the progress being made in the school district. Each year 12 alumni are selected to be honored at a special program.

"The *Reasons to Believe*



recipients are examples of the high caliber of students who have graduated from our district and gone on to achieve success because of their education and commitment," said Shackelford. "In addition to serving as role models for

our students, we believe the *Reasons to Believe* Alumni Honor Roll will underscore the key role that teachers, school administrators, and community and business leaders often play in helping students achieve success."

Nomination forms can be downloaded from the KCKPS website, [www.kckps.org](http://www.kckps.org) (click on "Community") or call (913) 279-2311 to request one.

The deadline for returning nominations is Thursday, January 31, 2008.

## Three Radio Stations Added to System

Three radio stations have been added to the district's notification system which reports when schools are being closed due to inclement weather. They are:

- KPRS 103.3 FM
- LaGranD 1350 AM
- La Playa 1480AM

A complete list of television and radio stations in the network can be viewed on the district website at [www.kckps.org/departments/public\\_info/closing.html](http://www.kckps.org/departments/public_info/closing.html).

## Basketball Game to Air on Metro Sports



Metro Sports will be televising the Friday, January 11 Varsity Boys' Basketball Game between Wyandotte and Harmon high schools, hosted by Wyandotte. The game will air live at 7 p.m. on Time Warner Cable channel 30. It will be aired again at 11 p.m. on January 11, and at 6:30 a.m. on January 12.

## Pre-Retirement Planning Seminar

KCKPS will be conducting a pre-retirement planning seminar at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, January 29. The meeting will be held in room 245 at the Education Center.

The seminar is designed for anyone considering retirement in the next several years, and will provide valuable information needed for you to start planning your retirement.

District personnel will be available to discuss a variety of topics, including KPERS retirement, health insurance for retirees, etc., as they relate specifically to USD 500. Pre-registration is not required.

## Board Approves Plan

(Continued from front)

- Month for January: Solema Garcia, from Quindaro Elementary School; Viviana Rojas, from Central Middle School; Xochitl Saldivar, from J.C. Harmon High School; and Claudia Hernandez, a parent from the On Track Family Literacy Program.
- Approved a Memorandum of Understanding to guide the operation of the Maurice R. Holman charter school.
- Tabled a proposal to change board policy on eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities. The Board asked the administration to continue to work on the eligibility policy, and to bring a revised policy back to the Board at their first meeting in April.

## Students Selected for KMEA Choir

Four students from Sumner Academy of Arts and Science auditioned and made the Kansas Music Educators Association All-State Festival Choir. They are: Melanie Gardner, Mario Johnson, Brendan Kerr, and Manuel Requenes. They were selected out of thousands of students who auditioned from across the state for a place in the 200-voice choir. The group will perform at the Kansas Music Educators Association Convention in Wichita on March 1, 2008. They are students of **Becky Thomas**, vocal music teacher at Sumner.

## Student of Month Nominations Needed

Do you know an outstanding student who deserves recognition? Nominate that student for Student of the Month.

Nomination forms are available on the district web site, or from **Gerri Skaggs** in the Communications Office, (913) 279-2242. Completed forms can be mailed through inner office mail, or faxed to (913) 279-2085.

Students at all grade levels, pre-school through high school, are eligible.



## STAFF NOTEBOOK

is a weekly publication for employees of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools. Submissions are welcome and should be directed to:

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