



Reorganization Plans Announced; Executive Director Positions Added

By *Dr. Jill Shackelford*,
Superintendent of Schools

One of my primary responsibilities as superintendent is to organize the process of setting goals for the system, and to make sure that we are on track to meet those goals. Last year, we set the 2010 Goals: All students will achieve 85% proficiency in reading and 75% proficiency in math, enter first grade ready to learn, and exit 12th grade ready for college.

Over the past several months, I have been working with the Cabinet to refine and strengthen the district's organization and strategy, in order to make sure that we are on track to meet those goals. I have told you before that I believe we have moved (strengthened the academic achievement of) the students who are easiest to move. As we continue to improve, the work gets more and more difficult.

Over the next two and a half years, one of our primary strategies to reach our 2010 Goals is the close monitoring and support of instruction. This will be the primary responsibility

of the executive director (ED) position. In order to strengthen the capacity of EDs to monitor and support instruction, I have decided not to hire another Deputy Superintendent. Rather, I am adding a fifth executive director position, renaming them "Executive Directors of Instruction," and changing how their work is organized.

Moving forward, we will have an executive director of instruction assigned to each of our existing clusters, who will supervise the K-8 buildings in their cluster. Those positions will be filled as follows: **Jim Antos** - Schlagle Cluster, **Marcy Clay** - Harmon Cluster, **Neadia Riley** - Washington Cluster, and **Dr. Eva Tucker Nevels** - Wyandotte Cluster. The fifth executive director of instruction position will be responsible for high schools. **Dr. Mary Viveros** has been hired to fill the high school ED position.

I envision the five executive directors of instruction as organizing the system's support of the work of principals, instructional coaches and teachers

to improve instruction. Their responsibilities will include: supervision of principals and instructional coaches, leadership development for principals and instructional coaches, support for continuing the transformation of our small learning community structure into professional learning communities, and the on-going monitoring of instruction. They will spend 80 percent of their time in schools, working directly with teachers, principals and instructional coaches.

I am also creating two additional positions: an Executive Director of Elementary Teaching for Learning who will be responsible for pre-k to 6th grade, and an Executive Director for Secondary Teaching for Learning, who will be responsible for grades 7-12. These two positions will be responsible for all work around standards, benchmarks, curricular materials and professional development. **Jayson Strickland** will fill the preK-6 position, and **Susan Engelmann** will fill the 7-12 position.

All of the executive directors
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Teacher of the Year Finalists Named

Susan E. Taylor, kindergarten teacher at Claude Huyck Elementary School, and **Cheryl McCabe**, English/forensics teacher at F.L. Schlagle High School, have been selected as the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools' finalists for the 2009 Kansas Teacher of the Year Award.

Through the program, all district principals are asked to nominate one outstanding teacher in their school for the recognition. The district-wide list of "star teachers" is then reviewed by a committee which selects one elementary and one secondary teacher nomination to send on to the Kansas Teacher of the Year program. (All Star Teachers will be recognized at a district program scheduled for Wednesday, April 30.)

Taylor has been at Claude Huyck since 1992 and has been with KCKPS since 1986.

"She has the courage to be strong enough to lead

- Susan Taylor from Claude Huyck
- Cheryl McCabe from Schlagle

her students to reach higher levels of learning. She has the integrity to gain the respect and admiration of her colleagues and administrator," Principal **Vicki Smothers** said of Taylor,

"As a teacher, I see my job in the classroom as a most important role in preparing each and every child for life – a role that requires both a love of learning and of children," Taylor said.

McCabe has been a teacher at Schlagle for more than 25 years. Her principal, **Doug Bolden**, describes her as "a role model and a blueprint on how to be a model teacher."

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2008 *Reasons to Believe* Honor Roll Announced

Their career achievements and community contributions are inspiring. They are products of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools and they are being celebrated.

The KCK School Foundation for Excellence has announced the 2008 *Reasons to Believe* Alumni Honor Roll. This select group of 12 alumni will be recognized during the 2008 *Reasons to Believe* Gala set for Friday, May 9 at the Reardon Convention Center, 500 Minnesota Ave. The event will begin with a Silent Auction and Social Hour at 5:30 p.m. Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. followed by the recognition program and music and dancing.

KCKPS established the *Reasons to Believe* program in 2002 to generate pride and celebrate the progress being made throughout the district. As part of the program, nominations are sought for the *Reasons to Believe* Alumni Honor Roll which spotlights successful alumni to



encourage and inspire today's students. This year, the district received 60 nominations. The nominations were reviewed by a panel of judges that included members of the KCKPS administration, Board of Education, students and business leaders.

The Alumni Honor Roll annually showcases the high caliber of graduates that the district produces and brings a select group of them together with staff, students, community members, colleagues and key leaders for a night of honors.

Tickets for the *Reasons to Believe* Gala are available for \$55 per person, or \$100 per couple. Tables of 10 are available for \$500. For ticket information call **Keith Jones**, (913) 279-2091.

— Reorganization

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will report directly to me. One way to understand the difference between the two different ED positions is to think of the Executive Director of Teaching For Learning position as being responsible for the “what” of instruction – what is being taught, and how professional development is being provided to support the content - and the Executive Director of Instruction position as being responsible for “how” instruction is being carried out in the buildings.

The Board and I are fully aware that the real work of improving academic achievement happens in the schools, and this district has worked hard to avoid having too many central office administrators who could be in buildings, working directly with teachers and students. This new ED structure will give us five EDs who are in the buildings 80% of their time.

I believe we are in the second phase of First Things First. The structural changes are in place, and they have allowed us to make the remarkable growth in achievement. Now, we must dig deeper into teaching for learning. The close monitoring and support of instruction is what the system needs now to continue our progress, and I am confident that these changes will strengthen our capacity to reach our 2010 Goals.

Alumni Honor Roll

- **Michael P. Bautista**, Ph.D., Washington High School Class of 1970, associate vice president of learning and academic affairs and dean of the center for arts and sciences at Community College of Denver
- **Kim Bland**, Ph.D., Sumner Academy of Arts and Science Class of 1990, senior director of research and development at Proteon Therapeutics
- **Melissa A. Bynum**, Sumner Academy of Arts and Science Class of 1981, director of resource development for the American Red Cross, Wyandotte County Chapter
- **Earl P. Cole**, Sumner Academy of Arts and Science Class of 1989, entrepreneur/business owner/composer and winner of CBS' *Survivor Fiji*
- **Major Burnell E. Davis**, Sumner High School Class of 1966, director of campus officers for the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools
- **Gordon Docking**, Washington High School Class of 1973, broadcaster and healthcare CEO
- **Susan Docking**, Washington High School Class of 1973, teacher at Olathe East High School
- **Fernando J. Gaitan, Jr.**, Sumner High School Class of 1966, U.S. Chief Judge for the Western District of Missouri
- **Randall P. Kancel**, Wyandotte High School Class of 1971, Community Bank President for UMB Bank
- **Wendell E. Maddox, Jr.**, Sumner High School Class of 1965, President/CEO of United Way of Wyandotte County
- **John J. Mendez**, Argentine High School Class of 1961, adjunct professor at Donnelly College
- **Carmen Ramirez Mott**, Wyandotte High School Class of 1955, tutor/deaf interpreter/paraprofessional

— Teacher of the Year

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For the past 12 years, she has served as student council sponsor at Schlagle. She has coached the school's forensics squad for the past 19 years and helped 24 students become state champions.

“I learned many years ago that students will respond well if they believe that I truly care about them and have their best interest at heart,” McCabe said. “Therefore, I’ve worked very diligently to create a caring environment where true concern prevails.”

Regional finalists for the award will be announced in September and the Kansas

Teacher of the Year will be named in November.



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