

August 13, 2007

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Communications Office

Community Connections



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The following article was printed in the August 10, 2007 edition of the *Kansas City, Kansan*

Convocation marks start of school year

By Jill Shackelford, KCKPS Superintendent

The temperature might be in the 90s this week, but in the Kansas City, Kan., Public Schools District, summer is officially over. Principals have been back at work for three weeks, teachers came back this week, and school begins next week. For a lot of us, there is the excitement and anticipation of the new school year, combined with the wish that the summer could have lasted just a little bit longer.

On Wednesday, the District held its annual Convocation for all staff. We held the event at Memorial Hall downtown, and the entire staff of the district was present, from the Board of Education, to teachers and principals, secretaries, custodians, campus officers, bus drivers... all of the more than 3,000 employees of KCKPS. In addition, we had some special guests, including Mayor Joe Reardon, the new Kansas Commissioner of Education, Alexa Posny, three state Board of Education members (including our representative, Janet Waugh) present and former members of the state legislature, and Unified Government commissioners.



Convocation is a very special event in KCKPS. Not every school district does a convocation any more, but it is something that I always look forward to. It gives us a chance to celebrate, and it gives me an opportunity to share with everyone the direction that the district is headed for the coming year. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you a little of what I said at Convocation this year.

I began by sharing with the staff just how honored I feel to be the superintendent in Kansas City, Kansas. This is a community, and a state, that cares deeply about its children, and I am privileged to be able to be in this leadership role. One of the things I love is being able to get out and connect with our students. They are so open, so genuine, and they say the most precious things. One boy looked at me and said: "You're the superintendent? I thought you'd be a guy!"

Another group of kids, whom I was taking in a limousine to the Legends to see a movie, as a reward for being the top Summer Readers in the district, insisted that I stick my head out of the moon roof and dance, just like they did. I wasn't real sure that it was the most dignified thing I could do, but it was for our kids, so I did it.

We do a lot of things in KCKPS because we believe in kids, and that was our theme for the convocation: Belief. Believe in our students, believe in ourselves, and believe in KCKPS.

To demonstrate what happens when we believe in our students, we played a video that told the story of one of our high school kids, who was struggling in math, and attending summer school to try and catch up. Several staff members talked about what it meant to believe in this student, and what they did to support his learning. Most powerfully, his mother talked about the difference that she saw in her son, and what it meant to her to see the staff rally around her son, believe in him, and help him to believe in himself. (If you are interested in seeing this video, we will be posting it on our website, along with other material from Convocation, in the next few days, at www.kckps.org.)

Believe in our students, believe in ourselves. We know that, in order to reach our 2010 goals of 85% meeting

the standard in reading and 75% in math, we are going to have to continue to improve how we do our jobs, whether we are teachers, nutritional services staff, or the superintendent. We believe that the way to do that is to strengthen our ability to work and learn together. To do this, we have to believe in each other, and in our capacity to do what needs to be done to reach every child, and to teach them what they need to know in order to graduate "ready for college."

At our Convocation, we honored all of our "Star Teachers," teachers from each school who were chosen as outstanding by their principal. We also highlighted the two teachers, Jamelle M. Brown and Martha Whaley Hemer, who were chosen to represent the district in the state Teacher of the Year competition. Both of them became the teachers they are, because they worked with, and learned from, other teachers who taught with them.

Believe in our students, believe in ourselves, believe in KCKPS. A decade ago, this district was struggling, and our achievement was low. As a district, and as a community, we acknowledged this, began our First Things First reform, and ten years into the reform, we are now a district that gets national recognition for its reform efforts. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation calls First Things First "... One of the most significant reforms in urban education today." Every year, hundreds of visitors come to KCK from other school districts, to learn from us how to improve achievement in their schools.

This is a good school district, and we are on our way to becoming a great school district. We are not satisfied; we are working every day to improve, and to find ways to reach every child. But we should be proud of what we have been able to do, and I believe that you should be proud as well. This is a district that this community can believe in. KCKPS is a major reason why KCK is a great place for children to grow up.

look forward to sharing more stories with you this year about KCKPS, the work we are doing, and the progress we are making in achieving excellence. And I hope that you will join me in believing in our students, our staff, and the Kansas City, Kan., Public Schools.

Science Kit Delivery and Ordering

SIP
MEMO

08/13/07

to: Elementary Teachers, Secretaries and Custodians
from: Jennifer Prock, Elementary Science Clerk
subject: Science Kit Delivery and Ordering
date: August 13, 2007



Order forms for science kits that can be ordered from the Elementary Science Dept. have been sent to the various elementary schools. If you did not receive an order form and would like to place an order, please contact Jennifer at 913-627-2409 or e-mail jeprock@kckps.org immediately so you can be added to the delivery list.

The first science kit delivery will begin on Tuesday, August 21 and end on Thursday, August 23. Shop workers will deliver the kits to each school office. The science kits will have the teacher's name on the lid and some kits may have a "grow light" included. Your cooperation in seeing that each teacher sent a kit receives the kit once it arrives at the building is appreciated. Your cooperation and assistance helps make this program successful. Thank you!

Tutor Fair

Through No Child Left Behind funding, ten organizations are seeking tutors in the buildings listed on the right. Hours and salaries vary. Most tutoring takes place right after school.

Banneker	Math & Reading
Douglass	Reading
Grant	Reading
New Chelsea	Reading
Northwest	Math & Reading
Whittier	Reading

Come to the Education Center from 4:30 to 6:00 and speak with the different organizations to get information and sign up.

August 21

WANTED: Wellness Ambassadors

We are looking for energetic, positive, and fun people to join the Fit500 wellness team, as a Wellness Ambassador. As an ambassador you will be given the tools to assist your building on the path to better health. You will work directly with the Wellness Coordinator and will be given all materials needed to fulfill your role. This is a fun, and motivating way for you to take charge of your own health, while assisting others to do the same. If interested or for more information contact Kate Foster, Wellness Coordinator at 913.279.2030 or email at wellness@kckps.org. Our goal is to have an ambassador from every school represented.

SIP
MEMO

08/13/07

*Master Calendar and
School Activities Calendar*

to: All Staff
from: Teresa Boose, Web Manager
subject: Master Calendar and School Activities Calendar
date: August 13, 2007



Click on the following link to go to the desired online calendar.

Master Calendar: <http://www.kckps.org/calendars/master/phpEventCalendar/index.php>
[Today – August 20 events are attached]

School Activities Calendar: <http://www.kckps.org/calendars/activities/phpEventCalendar/index.php>

If you would like to be able to update either of these calendars yourself, please let me know and I will set up the login information for you. Otherwise, please let me know if you wish to post/change/delete events for either of these calendars.

August 13, 2007

Monday

Centralized HS Enrollment (Engelmann)

10:00AM - 7:00PM

Posted by: Teresa Boose

Also on this day:

Cabinet Meeting [more...]

12:00PM - 3:30PM

Cabinet visits schools in morning
(Shackelford)

Posted by: Teresa Boose

Pre-K FAS Day

Posted by: Teresa Boose

First Day of School [more...]

Grades K-5, 6, 9, Sumner - Grade 8

Posted by: Teresa Boose

August 14, 2007

Tuesday

Centralized HS Enrollment (Engelmann)

10:00AM - 7:00PM

Posted by: Teresa Boose

Also on this day:

Board of Education Meeting [more...]

5:30PM -

625 Minnesota Avenue
3rd Floor Board Room

Posted by: Teresa Boose

Pre-K First Day of School

Posted by: Teresa Boose

First Day of School [more...]

Grades 7-8, 10-12, Sumner Gr 9-12

Posted by: Teresa Boose

August 15, 2007

Wednesday

Centralized HS Enrollment (Engelmann)

10:00AM - 7:00PM

Posted by: Teresa Boose

Also on this day:

Early Release [more...]

Students will be dismissed two hours early every Wednesday for teacher staff development except where noted.

Posted by: Teresa Boose

August 16, 2007

Thursday

Centralized HS Enrollment (Engelmann)

10:00AM - 4:30PM

Posted by: Teresa Boose

Also on this day:

Laptop Parent Helper Meeting (Gering)

5:30PM - 7:00PM

Room #245-ED Center

Posted by: Pat Ellis

August 17, 2007

Friday

Centralized HS Enrollment (Engelmann)

10:00AM - 2:00PM

Posted by: Teresa Boose

Also on this day:

Elem. IC Meeting @ Ed Center [more...]

(Clay/Strickland)

Posted by: Teresa Boose

August 20, 2007

Monday

Cabinet Meeting

12:00PM - 3:30PM

Posted by: Teresa Boose

Also on this day:

IDP Representatives Training [more...]

3:00PM - 5:00PM

625 Minnesota Avenue, 3rd floor Board Room

Training will be done in half hour sessions starting at 3:00pm

Representatives will be given information concerning license renewal, individual development plans, professional development inservice procedures and training to enter data "online".

Contact Tanya Davis (627-2421) with the time you will be able to attend.
[excerpt from 7/30 PIP]

Posted by: Teresa Boose