

SPOTLIGHT

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS'

VOL. 7, NO. 1 • KANSAS CITY, KANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS • 625 MINNESOTA AVE. • KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66101

'Second Chance' program succeeds

After just one semester, the school district is seeing positive results from its new Second Chance Program.

The program gives middle and high school students a "second chance" to learn the basics of reading, including comprehension, retention and vocabulary building. Beginning in January, Second Chance classes were instituted at the district's four comprehensive high schools and Fairfax Learning Center.

Dr. Greg Netzer, director of instructional development, said students enrolled in the classes are those the district has identified as "low performing" readers. They are students who have scored below grade level on state assessments, and those who struggle with reading on a daily basis.

"By giving them the chance to select their own books, and have free time for reading on topics they enjoy, along the way we have created the opportunity for them to say, 'reading isn't so bad after all!'"

Dr. Greg Netzer,
Director of Instructional Development

Netzer said that once classes began, staff began to see a pattern with these students. "What we found is that it wasn't so much that these students couldn't read, but that they didn't like to read and so didn't," he said. In addition to basic reading strategies, Second Chance offers motivational strategies to spark students' interest.

Students sometimes work in pairs focusing on vocabulary, other times they are asked to read aloud to the class, or are simply provided with free reading time. They also are allowed to pick books and reading units on topics that interest them. Subjects included Hispanic and Latino literature and the study of black holes and space travel. They also focused on world figures and celebrities such as Nelson Mandela, Muhammad Ali or Duke Ellington. The units included a short video narration that complemented the subject so students got a preview of what they were reading.

Students involved in the program were tested at the end of the school year to gauge their level of improvement in reading. Feedback from both students and staff show that Second Chance is working. "Many of these kids did not have a positive disposition toward reading (when the program began) and teachers have reported back to us that during the year that changed," Netzer said. "By giving them the chance to select their own books, and have free time for reading on topics they enjoy, along the way we have created the opportunity for them to say, 'reading isn't so bad after all.'"

Last semester, 230 students were enrolled in Second Chance classes, and 26 staff members were trained to work in the program (15 as teachers). These numbers could increase this fall as more students are identified.

An outside consultant has been working with staff to implement program elements and to provide necessary support.

Program results in good behavior

Being unruly in school is "uncool" at Central Middle School. Teachers and students alike are spreading this message as part of the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) program.

Instituted in the fall of 1998 by graduate students from the University of Kansas' Department of Special Education, PBS is a well-researched, value-based approach to addressing challenging situations. It is a program that has been successfully implemented in other schools across the country.

Shelly Beech, assistant principal at Central, said the program has three main components: one-on-one relationships with students, classroom support and school-wide projects.

The first step in building the program for the KU students was to work with a

handful of students who seemed to have the most problems in class. These were students who continually disrupted class, fought with fellow classmates or simply slept through lessons.

"There are lots of reasons why kids do what they do. You just have to try to figure that out," Beech said. "Some behavior problems at school stem from problems at home."

One such example is a student who was sleeping through his classes on a regular basis. The KU students worked with him and his family and found out that this student lived with his mother who worked nights and wasn't there to make sure he got to bed early. He also didn't have a bed. They discussed the situation with his mother and worked with local charity groups to secure a bed for the student.

The KU students visit classrooms to observe behavior and help teachers to work behavior strategies into the lessons. One such strategy was to actually teach students what proper behavior is, in the classroom and in the hallway.

One of the most successful components of the program, one that's the most intriguing to students, according to Beech, is the positive behavior reward system.

It consists of giving "tickets" to students who exhibit positive behavior based on the Five Steps to Success: be responsible, respectful, ready to learn, cooperative and safe.

Anytime a staff member witnesses a student behaving in one of these five manners, the student receives a ticket. The ticket is placed into a drawing for prizes. Prizes are

See BEHAVIOR, page 2

New committee studies link between teaching, learning

As the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools continue school reform efforts, a group of teachers and administrators have been researching ways to improve literacy.

The Teaching and Learning Committee, established in cooperation with the KCK National Education Association (NEA), has been charged with identifying and determining effective teaching and learning practices for the classroom.

"The focus of the Teaching and Learning Committee is to work to improve teaching and learning for all our students in all our schools," said **Steve Gering**, executive director for instruction. "We won't be satisfied until every student in KCK is learning at a very high level."

The committee of 24 teachers and administrators has been meeting on a regular basis to review articles on teacher instruction, research

programs in other school districts and to brainstorm and share ideas.

Most recently, the committee identified three broad areas of teaching and learning in the district: Professional Learning, Community, Classroom Environment and Instruction.

The committee's next step is the formation of a Teaching and Learning Academy which will serve as an informational and instructional workshop to communicate theories and methods to selected staff who will share this information with other staff in their schools.

The committee has been described as the "missing link" in the district's Five-Year District Improvement Plan. The timing of its formation fits nicely with the district's progress to date, Gering said. Lower student/adult ratios,

See NEW, page 2



Cheryl Rainey (left in left photo), principal at Welborn Elementary School, and Sonya Willis (left in right photo), assistant principal at Northwest Science and Technology Magnet Middle School, interviewed prospective teachers at the district's Job Fair last month. More than 50 applicants were



interviewed for teaching vacancies at the "first-ever" fair held at the Reardon Civic Center. Teaching and non-teaching positions are available with the school district. To view a listing of job vacancies, visit our web site at www.kckps.k12.ks.us.

First day of class – Wednesday, August 23



Community, schools move closer together

Strengthening the connection between the community and its schools is the focus of a project that is beginning to build momentum.

Study Circles, small groups of people meeting to discuss the important issue of this community's schools, were active this spring in three elementary school areas — Hawthorne, Whittier and Grant.

"Society has changed in the way it does business and school districts, as well as other community agencies, are changing too," said **Irene Caudillo**, chairperson of the project and executive director of Youth Opportunities Unlimited. "Study Circles are a method to use to improve two-way communications between the community and its schools."

Caudillo said people interested in the Study Circles project were trained to lead the small group discussions. Each group was approximately 10 to 15 people represent-

ing parents, area residents, and local business and community agencies that work in the school's neighborhood.

Organizing committees for each school came up with a slightly different way of doing Study Circles.

For example, at Whittier there was a large kick-off at the school with a program in both English and Spanish. Grant held a small community meeting and asked each person to come back the next week with five friends or neighbors.

During April, nine different groups at the three schools met four times each. More than 100 people participated in the small discussion groups.

Caudillo said in May an "action forum" was held where all the Study Circle participants were invited to share and develop future plans.

"The plans looked at how they could help create stronger connections between schools, parents and

the community," Caudillo said. "Study Circles at two schools plan to continue meeting to develop their ideas for how they will partner with the schools and engage others in their efforts."

A coalition of representatives from the school district, United Way, YWCA, Heart of America Family Service, Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Unified Government, and the Kauffman Foundation were instrumental in initiating the Study Circle program. Their work will continue by continuing the Study Circles next school year and expanding them into five more school areas.

"I hope to see Study Circles at every school in our district," said **Dr. Ray Daniels**, superintendent of schools. "The goal is to create a culture in the community that supports a give-and-take process for involving community members in determining what is of value to them in their public schools as well as involving them in decision making."

Meal form to arrive in mail

Watch your mail for a 2000-2001 Family Meal Benefit Application. These applications, which provide qualified students with free and/or reduced school breakfasts and lunches, are being mailed to each household in the district by the Nutritional Services Department.

All families are encouraged to complete the application and return it to the district by the Sept. 20 deadline. Completion of the information in a timely fashion will guarantee that all students who are eligible to receive free or reduced meals will continue to receive them.

Of equal importance is the funding the district receives based on the number of free or reduced meals calculated. Based on the most current statistics, for every student in need, the district receives nearly \$9,000 from the government for special education programs.

If you do not receive an application, please contact your child's school or call Nutritional Services at 913-627-3900.

Uniforms help in improvement

John Rios will be the first to tell you that school uniforms aren't the only reason why Argentine Middle School has seen positive results in student behavior; however, the school's principal will also tell you that uniforms are a significant factor in that improvement.

According to Rios, during the past school year at Argentine:

- Short term suspensions decreased 43 percent
- Long term suspensions decreased 85 percent
- Classroom disruptions decreased 25 percent
- Average daily attendance increased from 88 percent last school year to 94 percent

Rios also said students scored the highest grade point average in the past seven years.

Students at Argentine began wearing uniforms last fall.

Students at Eisenhower and Central middle schools will join them this fall.

Mill levy to decrease

The fiscal year 2001 school district budget will be before the Board of Education for approval on Tuesday, August 8. Although the state mill levy will be reduced again this year, the good news is that the school district's overall mill levy will also be reduced.

The proposed mill levy will be reduced 2.4 mills for the coming fiscal year. For school purposes, the owner of a \$50,000 home will see a reduction of \$7.39 to support the public schools.

The public libraries mill levy will see a slight increase of .25 mills to 6.86

Silver City teachers receive grants

Silver City Elementary teachers **Brenda DeNoon** and **Lynell Sadeghi** have received a 2000 Excellence in Teaching Grant from the Learning Exchange, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce and *The Kansas City Star*.

Their proposal, "Shining S.T.A.R.R.S. (Students That are Reading and Reporting Success)" was among 16 projects selected

to receive funding.

Shining Stars is a writing project that will lead DeNoon and Sadeghi's second and third grade classes, respectively, to understand the field of journalism in their community through job shadowing at *The Kansas City Kansan*, and inviting guest speakers such as reporters and editors to their school. Ultimately the students

will try their hand at interviewing and writing, and will publish their own newspaper.

"Our thought is what you learn through pleasure you never forget," said DeNoon. "The program will help to enhance their writing and speaking abilities, and will teach them how important their education is to their careers."

The grant's monetary total is \$3,000.

Behavior

Continued from page 1 given out daily — one for each grade level.

"Kids like to be rewarded," Beech said. "Even the littlest reward for a kid can make a big impact."

Overall the impact can be seen in the statistics. Office referrals have gone from 3,568 to 2,639 over the past year. Short term suspensions have gone from 834 to 292, and in-

school suspensions dropped from 1,382 to 1,140.

"Kids are going to do something wrong, but if you're focusing on the good things, too, you're going to see more of that behavior," Beech stressed.

Funding for the program has come through grants from the United States Department of Education and the Institute for Disability

and Educational Research. Though grant funding ended with the 1999-2000 school year, Beech says the program will continue at some level this fall with the help of staff.

"We're not perfect, but we're making such an impact," she said. "The staff has really bought into this program. It has been very positive for everyone."

The program will expand to Argentine Middle School this fall.

Involvement seen as key

In order to be involved in your children's lives, you have to be involved in their school. **Linda Pendleton** knows this from experience.

The mother of three grown sons has a long history of involvement in the KCK schools. From PTA president to Booster Club president, Pendleton always spent time with her children and supported their interests through her participation in school organizations and events.

This involvement continues today with Pendleton's position as vice president of the KCK Board of Education. Through this position, she is serving all children and families in the community.

"I got involved with the Board because I care about what happens to kids here in KCK," said the four-year Board member and lifelong resident.

Her dedication to the district and to the educational process shows not only by her title, but also by her actions. She and Board President **Gloria Willis** have made a concerted effort to get to know all teachers and students, and to see first-hand how teaching and learning are progressing. They have done this by visiting every school in the district.

"It's been a very informal process where we just drop by for a visit, but we go there to show we support them," Pendleton said.

Pendleton said she feels proud to be part of a Board that is "very hands on." "We don't just sit back and talk

about things, we go out and take a look at them," she explained.

She said one of the Board's biggest contributions to the district during her term has been its openness to receiving input from staff.

"The teachers are the people with hands-on contact with the students each day," Pendleton said. "They are the ones who can tell us what we need to change to benefit those students."

Besides active involvement in the district through the Board and various volunteer positions, Pendleton's background includes employment with the district. She served as a secretary in Personnel for four years, as a school secretary for nearly three years and as secretary to the Director of Pupil Personnel for two years. Today, she works as supervisor of personnel records at the KCK Community College.

Just as her past and present have been centered around education, Pendleton hopes her future will be also. When her four-year Board term ends next spring, she plans to run for re-election.

"We have some really good schools, good students and good staff, and I'm proud to be a part of that," she said.



Linda Pendleton

can tell us what we need to change to benefit those students."



Washington students show much improvement

More than one-third of the students at Washington High School were recognized for making significant strides in reading comprehension.

The students, totaling 417, received rewards at a May 22 ceremony at the school for improving their reading by one to three grade levels.

The program was the final incentive in the school's Literacy Power Hour that students attend every other day to get instruction in reading comprehension. Students were tested in September to learn where they fall in reading literacy. Then in January the students set goals to work toward. The results and rewards included:

- 289 students increased their reading by at least three grade levels, or maintained or achieved grade level, and were rewarded with a pizza party
- 57 students increased their reading by two grade levels and receive a Blockbuster movie certificate
- 71 students increased their reading by one grade level and received a Burger King gift certificate

According to **Cathy Daly**, literacy coach, during Power Hour the class ratio is 15 students of one instructor. They are directed through the reading process with tips on how to "attack" difficult vocabulary and ways to increase comprehension, such as using a highlighter to mark important phrases or sections.

Perhaps the most enticing factor for students during Power Hour was an incentive program that carried them throughout the year. Periodically, the students were rewarded with some sort of celebration such as a doughnuts and milk/juice party, or a certificate of achievement for reading a certain number of books.

One creative incentive was a "field trip" to an elderly community center where students read to senior adults.

"We felt that if we could provide incentives, we could build a community that loves to read," Daly explained.

Along with instruction and reading assignments, students were encouraged to read for enjoyment and fun. Approximately 100 fictional and fun books were pulled for each grade level and were accessible to students.

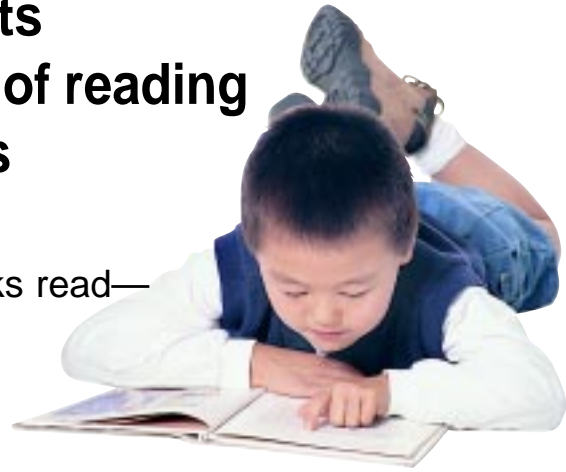
"One of our guiding principles has been that if you give kids books they **can** read and **want** to read, then they **will** read," Daly reinforced. Once they begin a reading routine, their reading skills automatically improve.

The program also has changed students' attitudes about reading, according to Daly. Students have more respect for reading now and they're not embarrassed to be seen reading a book during down time.

"Our whole staff has taken a more active role in learning the characteristics of what makes good readers," Daly said. "It's never too late to learn to read, and it's never too late to improve your reading comprehension."

District students approach goal of reading 1 million books

'Just Read' summary for cumulative books read—
is **903,276**

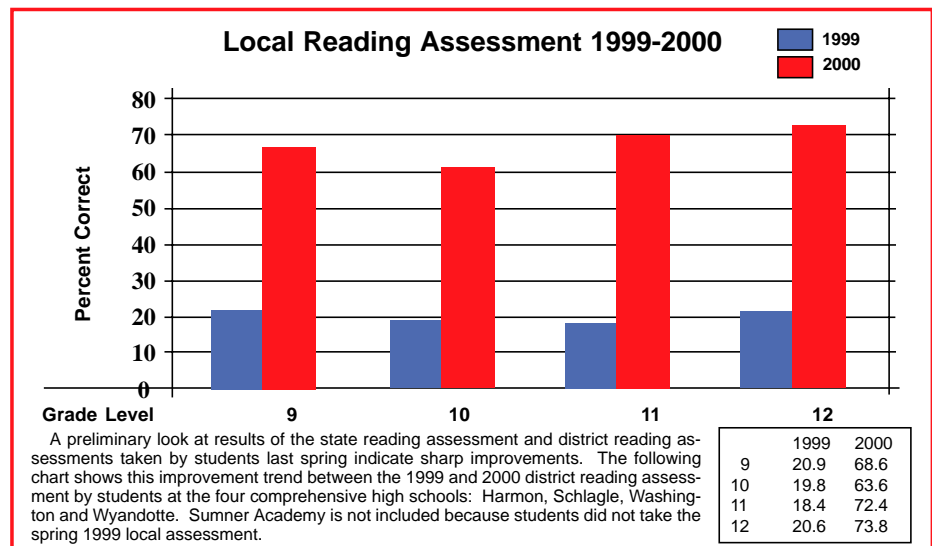


Elementary School	Total Books Read	Average # Per Student
Banneker	16,240	33.6
Bethel	13,616	50.4
Chelsea	12,215	30.9
Claude Huyck	25,566	88.2
Douglass	17,910	73.1
Emerson	19,052	63.9
Eugene Ware	5,750	19.4
Frances Willard	39,595	110.0
Frank Rushton	44,042	96.0
Grant	9,525	27.5
Hawthorne	33,079	89.4
Hazel Grove	82,267	166.5
J.F. Kennedy	18,527	38.0
John Fiske	13,861	38.2
Lindbergh	15,591	65.0
M.E. Pearson	45,992	66.0
Mark Twain	37,264	202.5
New Stanley	33,209	94.3
Noble Prentiss	12,147	41.0
Parker	7,000	46.1
Quindaro	12,182	29.9
Silver City	10,341	57.8
Stony Point North	25,224	66.7
Stony Point South	34,410	88.5
T.A. Edison	11,236	54.3
W.A. White	36,638	134.7
Welborn	44,334	85.9
White Church	19,735	67.1
Whittier	61,923	83.1

Middle School	Total Books Read	Average # Per Student
Argentine	17,462	31.2
Arrowhead	17,057	35.6
Central	22,338	32.9
Coronado	11,874	27.1
Eisenhower	18,531	28.7
Northwest	15,501	28.5
Rosedale	9,586	19.6
West	8,346	20.0

High School	Total Books Read	Average # Per Student
Fairfax	596	2.3
Harmon	6,059	6.1
Schlagle	4,223	4.1
Sumner Academy	5,744	6.4
Washington	4,959	4.5
Wyandotte	2,529	2.4

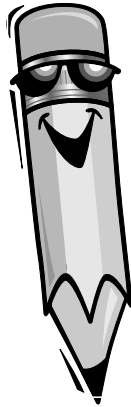
All Schools	Books Read
Elementary School Avg.	72.5
Middle School Avg.	28.4
High School Avg.	4.5
Total	903,276





**Kansas City, Kansas
School District
2000-2001
CALENDAR**

- AUGUST**
23 First day of school
- SEPTEMBER**
4 Holiday; Administrative offices closed
12 Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m.*
26 Board of Education Meeting*
- OCTOBER**
10 Board of Education Meeting at Rosedale Middle School*
24 Last day of first 9 weeks Board of Education Meeting*
- NOVEMBER**
1 Parent-Teacher Conferences
14 Board of Education Meeting at Chelsea Elementary*
23-24 Holiday; Administrative offices closed
27 Board of Education Meeting*
- DECEMBER**
12 Board of Education Meeting*
21-31 Winter break
25-26 Administrative offices closed
- JANUARY**
1-2 Winter Break
1-2 Administrative offices closed
9 Board of Education Meeting*
9 Last day of 2nd 9 weeks
15 Holiday; Administrative offices closed
23 Board of Education Meeting*
- FEBRUARY**
13 Board of Education Meeting at Welborn Elementary*
14 Parent-Teacher conferences
19 Holiday; Administrative offices closed
27 Board of Education Meeting*
- MARCH**
13 Last day of 3rd 9 weeks
13 Board of Education Meeting at Washington High School*
19-23 Spring break
28 Board of Education Meeting*
- APRIL**
10 Board of Education Meeting*
24 Board of Education Meeting*
- MAY**
8 Board of Education Meeting*
22 Board of Education Meeting*
28 Holiday; Administrative offices closed
30 Last day of school
- * All meetings begin at 7 p.m.



First day of school for KCK students, Aug. 23

The new school year for students in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools will begin on Wednesday, August 23 with full-day classes. Lunch will be served the first day, but schools will wait until Tuesday, August 24 to begin serving breakfast.

Most middle and senior high school students pre-enrolled for classes last spring, but those students new to the district, including elementary, should contact the school they will attend for information concerning enrollment. Questions concerning the school your child will attend should be directed to the district's Student, Parent and Community Services Office, 551-3200.

The KCK Public Schools do not charge enrollment fees or textbook rental fees. Stu-

dents may be required to pay for items used for individual projects in woodworking, arts, etc. Students will be charged for lost or damaged textbooks and supplies.

If you are entering the school district for the first time, please bring the following items with you at the time of enrollment:

- ✓ A birth certificate for each child enrolling in kindergarten or grade one — a birth certificate or other proof of age for all other students.

- ✓ A Kansas certificate of immunization for each child.

- ✓ A physical exam/health assessment for each child nine years old or younger. Those coming from another school in Kansas must present a copy of the physical/health assessment when enrolling in the KCK district.

- ✓ A report card from the sending school or authorization for school transcripts. Children must be five years of age on or before Thursday, August 31 to enter kindergarten. A child enrolling in first grade who did not attend kindergarten must be six years of age on or before August 31.



Administrative changes for 2000-2001

The following administrative changes for 2000-2001 have been announced as of our date for publication.

Principal assignments include **Flora Anderson**, principal at Kennedy from principal at

Douglass; **Marcella Clay**, principal at Douglass from principal at Washington Elementary in Sedalia, MO; **Cheryl Rainey**, principal at Welborn from principal at Roosevelt.

Syd Renwick, assistant princi-

pal at Harmon from counselor at Washington; **Bob Bayer**, assistant principal at Wyandotte from teacher at Wyandotte.

District administrators in new assignments include **Detra Bachus**, coordinator of parent and community programs from principal at Fairfax Learning Center; **James Clevenger**, director of federal programs and grants from business specialist and school improvement facilitator; **Jill Cobb**, instructional research analyst from teacher at Schlagle; **Larry Englebrick**, executive director of instruction support from executive director of school improvement; **Gene Fite**, coordinator of math and science from science specialist/NSF grant manager; **Maec Leech**, coordinator of social studies/foreign language from supervisor of social studies; **Greg Netzer**, director of instruction development from consultant; **Jean Ney**, coordinator of fine arts/PE/music from music specialist; **Faye Young**, director of elementary personnel from principal at Welborn; **Joe Vander Velde**, director of special education from assistant director of special education.

Immunizations important for beginning school

All students in the KCK Public Schools are required to have up-to-date immunization records before starting school.

Elementary school students, new to the district, who are nine-years-old and younger will be required to have a physical examination, not more than 12 months old, on file before starting school.

Immunizations and physical examinations may be obtained from a number of sources, including a family physician and the Wyandotte County Health Department.

Telephone numbers change for all schools

Completion of improvements to the school district's telephone system has caused each school's telephone number to change. The switchboard telephone number for the Central Office remains 551-3200. The new numbers follow:

Schlagle High School	(913) 627-7500
Harmon High School	(913) 627-7050
Sumner Academy	(913) 627-7200
Washington High School	(913) 627-7800
Wyandotte High School	(913) 627-7650
Fairfax Learning Center	(913) 627-6700
Area Technical School	(913) 627-4100
Evening High School	(913) 627-7550
Argentine Middle School	(913) 627-6750
Arrowhead Middle School	(913) 627-6600
Central Middle School	(913) 627-6150
Coronado Middle School	(913) 627-6300
Eisenhower Middle School	(913) 627-6450
Northwest Middle School	(913) 627-4000
Rosedale Middle School	(913) 627-6900
West Middle School	(913) 627-6000
Banneker Elementary	(913) 627-4700
Bethel Elementary	(913) 627-3000
Chelsea Elementary	(913) 627-5000
Claude Huyck Elementary	(913) 627-4650
Douglass Elementary	(913) 627-5100
Emerson Elementary	(913) 627-5900
Eugene Ware Elementary	(913) 627-5950
Frances Willard Elementary	(913) 627-6100
Frank Rushton Elementary	(913) 627-3050
Grant Elementary	(913) 627-4300

Hawthorne Elementary	(913) 627-4750
Hazel Grove Elementary	(913) 627-7000
John Fiske Elementary	(913) 627-4850
John F. Kennedy Elementary	(913) 627-4950
Lindbergh Elementary	(913) 627-5150
Mark Twain Elementary	(913) 627-5200
M.E. Pearson Elementary	(913) 627-3150
New Stanley Elementary	(913) 627-3950
Noble Prentiss Elementary	(913) 627-5250
Quindaro Elementary	(913) 627-4400
Silver City Elementary	(913) 627-4550
Stony Point North Elementary	(913) 627-4500
Stony Point South Elementary	(913) 627-4600
T.A. Edison Elementary	(913) 627-4900
Welborn Elementary	(913) 627-4450
White Church Elementary	(913) 627-4250
Whittier Elementary	(913) 627-6400
W.A. White Elementary	(913) 627-6250
Bridges Program	(913) 627-7150
Integrating Arts Resource Center	(913) 627-6850
Lowell Early Childhood Center	(913) 551-3790
Morse Early Childhood Center	(913) 627-6550
Parents As Teachers	(913) 627-4350
Parker Early Childhood Center	(913) 627-4800
Prevention Services	(913) 627-4350
Professional Development Center	(913) 551-3645
Shop Office	(913) 627-3850
Transportation	(913) 627-3100
Vocational Training Workshop	(913) 722-7322
Wyandotte County Special Education Cooperative (IRMC)	(913) 627-5600
Nutritional Services	(913) 627-3900

VOLUME 7, NO. 1 AUGUST, 2000

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Published by the
Kansas City, Kansas
Public School District's
Public Information Office

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