DISTRICT CONTINUES TO MOVE FORWARD DESPITE LEAN BUDGET

SUMNER ACADEMY RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

NEW SCHLAGLE STADIUM AND BUS PARKING FACILITY COMPLETED
MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

“The sky is the limit – seize the sky”

I recently had a once in a lifetime opportunity to fly with the Blue Angels. The experience, and their motto - “The sky is the limit – seize the sky” - has me thinking about how critical it is to instill in our students the strength to not let perceived limitations, or other people’s actions, determine what we might achieve. Flying with the Blue Angels forced me to muster my courage, set aside my fears, and “seize” an opportunity that few are fortunate to experience.

Courage is a word we often associate with individuals who put everything on the line to serve, protect, or overcome difficult life circumstances. Achieving all we want out of life also takes courage. Courage is required to stay the course, when it might be easier to abandon our dreams. In our current political climate, courage is what our community must have, to ensure that investing in our children’s education remains the top priority for our state.

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Our school district is at the center of the debate about school funding in Kansas, the fight to preserve access to high quality public education for every Kansan. We could choose to stand aside, as facts and figures are manipulated to justify a decreased investment in our schools. But standing silently would not serve our students or our community well, would it? After all, isn’t education, a quality education, the gatekeeper to the American dream?

I can certainly understand why the public may be confused about the state of funding for schools in Kansas. We hear that schools have received significant increases in funding. The truth is that the increase in funding attributed to schools is in fact additional funding to stabilize the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System. No additional funding has been allocated to support our students or to operate any school district in Kansas.

One absolute fact we can rely on is that our students must have access to the best education to compete in today’s world. As a result of our commitment, we established our vision to become one of the top 10 school districts in nation. We established one goal, “that each student will exit high school prepared for college and careers in a global society.” We went even further and defined “prepared for college and careers” as graduating Diploma+ (a high school diploma plus one year of college or a technical/industry credential, or a 21 on the ACT). We have the courage to be among the best school districts in the nation by making this level of investment in each and every student.

So we must also have the courage to speak out for the needs of our students and their schools. Our students’ futures depend on our willingness to serve as their voice, even if we are uncomfortable taking such a strong stance. Perhaps through our willingness to seize the opportunity to advocate, we will inspire each and every one of our students to follow the motto of the Blue Angels and realize “the sky is the limit – seize the sky.”
Superintendent’s Message

Five Strategic Priorities Guide the Work of the Board of Education

2015-2016 District Calendar (Second Quarter)

New Schlage Stadium and Bus Parking Facility Completed

Construction Begins on New Frank Rushton Building

District Continues to Move Forward Despite Lean Budget

2015 Reasons to Believe Alumni Honor Roll Members

Summer Academy Receives National Award

Virtual School Option Offered Through 500 Reach

Changes in School Meals Mean New and Healthier Options, Increased Participation

Photos from the Classroom

IN THIS ISSUE

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FIVE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES GUIDE THE WORK OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Labor Day has come and gone, and by the time you read this, the leaves will have begun to turn, and the air will be full of the chill of autumn. The school year is well under way, and we are almost done with the first quarter.

Just as the new school year is moving quickly, our new board members, Dr. Valdenia Winn and Mrs. Irene Caudillo, have rapidly taken to their new roles. Both have attended orientation, new board member classes, and special meetings such as the KASB Financial Summit and the Legislative Summit, and they are actively participating in our regularly scheduled board meetings.

Unfortunately, we have had to make substantial financial adjustments because of budget cuts from the state of Kansas, but we continue to move forward to make this a quality school year for our students. We believe education is a civil right for all students. Every child has the right to receive a quality educational experience, and the board and staff are working tirelessly to make this a reality for each student.

Our Board of Education has set five Strategic Priorities that guide our work. Our first priority is to provide Safe and Respectful Learning Environments for all our students and staff. We are working to ensure that everyone has access to quality learning and working environments which foster a responsible, caring climate and culture congruent with the district’s values and expectations.

All of the district’s work is focused on student achievement, and the Board believes in setting High Expectations for Student Achievement, as outlined in the District Continuous Improvement Plan. These include providing each student with a strong academic foundation, anchored by strong literacy skills, opportunities for learning beyond the classroom, and an extended day/year for students who are not on-track.

To reach these high expectations, we must have a High Performing Workforce. This means having highly-effective teachers in every classroom, along with highly-effective leaders and support staff in schools and departments. All staff must receive quality on-going professional learning aligned to the district’s goals, and we have high expectations for performance.

The work of reaching our goal of graduating each student prepared for college and careers in a global society is a challenging one, and it is not a goal we can achieve alone. Strong schools exist in strong communities, and we place a priority on Positive Community Relations and Partnerships. These partnerships require strong parent and community awareness and engagement, and collective responsibility for student success among business, industry and service organizations, parents, and the school district.

Finally, in order to be successful, it is critical that the Board be Good Stewards of Resources and Financial Accountability. We do this through sound fiscal planning and management, and a commitment to financial accountability to the public.

Our aim is to maintain local tax assessments at the lowest level possible without compromising our goal, and we work to leverage private resources to supplement local, state and federal funding. This work includes an ongoing commitment to advocating for the provision of suitable financial aid for all students in Kansas.

We are committed to strong Board governance of the district. We do this by working collectively as a Board. Individual Board members have no authority except when they are meeting as a Board of Education. The Board of Education is a collective body, and by statute, can only act when a quorum is assembled in a legally constituted and properly noticed meeting. If you have a specific issue or concern, please reach out to the district office for assistance. If you wish to address the Board directly, please contact Susan Westfahl, the Board of Education Clerk, in order to be placed on the Board Agenda.

We encourage your support of and involvement in the district’s work. Together, we can become one of the top 10 school districts in the nation!

2015-2016 DISTRICT CALENDAR (SECOND QUARTER)

October
8  Last day of 1st quarter
9  .5 records prep / .5 inservice
13  Board of Education meeting
21  Early Release/Family Advocacy
22  Family Advocacy Day / No school for students
23  Teacher Non-Duty Day / No School
23  Furlough/Administrative Offices closed
27  Board of Education meeting

November
10  Board of Education meeting
14  Board of Education meeting
24  Board of Education meeting
25-27  Holiday/Administrative Offices closed

December
8  Board of Education meeting
17  Last day of 2nd quarter
18  .5 records prep / .5 inservice
21-31  Winter Break
23-25  Administrative Offices closed
30-31  Administrative Offices closed

January
1  Administrative Offices closed
1  Winter Break
4  Classes resume
12  Board of Education meeting
18  Holiday / Administrative Offices closed
26  Board of Education meeting

The full district calendar is accessible from the homepage of the website, www.kckps.org (click on “calendars”).

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Bus Parking Center
This new facility serves as a satellite location for the KCKPS Transportation Department. It includes accommodations for drivers and staff. District growth (including an increase in the number of early childhood students) had resulted in overcrowding at the KCKPS Transportation Department in terms of both employee and bus parking.

In September, the district completed construction on its new F.L. Schlagle High School Stadium and Bus Parking complex. Located on a 17-acre site on Meadowlark Lane between State Avenue and Parallel Parkway, the new complex meets the needs of the district’s growing student population.

As with all district facilities and building upgrades, the new complex was paid for with capital outlay funds. These are funds that are used only for existing facilities, improvement of grounds, construction of facilities, additions to facilities, remodeling of facilities or for the purchase or lease of equipment. Capital outlay funds cannot be used for staff salaries, instruction, classroom materials, etc. It is with careful planning and intentional saving of these funds that the district was able to fund this project.

Construction began on this complex in the summer of 2014.

“"We see this new complex as a long-term investment that will impact all of our students... Because it is new, it will save us money in general maintenance costs in the long run. Most importantly, we are continuing to provide our students with safe, quality facilities to allow them to learn, grow, and develop.””

-Dr. Kelli Mather, chief financial officer

F.L. Schlagle High School Stadium
This stadium provides Schlagle students with their first multi-purpose football/soccer/track complex. In addition to athletic events, it will be used for performing arts programs. Sports and performing arts programs are directly tied to the classroom and support the academic performance of students by helping them to be engaged in positive activities. In addition to academic scholarships, the stadium and home field experience opens avenues for the potential of future athletic/performing arts scholarship opportunities as well.

Overall features of the stadium include:
- Synthetic All-Weather Turf Field
- Track
- Locker Rooms
- Concessions
- Bleachers/ Stadium Seating
- Press Box
- Scoreboard
- Lighting
- Ticket Booth
- Parking

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON NEW FRANK RUSHTON BUILDING

The foundation has been poured and construction is under way on the new Frank Rushton Elementary School building. The new structure sits opposite the current Frank Rushton on the school grounds at 2605 W. 43rd Ave.

The school will be two stories and will span 61,000 square feet. It will accommodate up to 500 students. Features will include:
- 22 grade level classrooms
- Art room
- Music room
- Multi-purpose room
- Gymnasium
- Media Center
- Outdoor amphitheater

The new building is scheduled to open in the fall of 2016.
Across the state of Kansas, school districts continue to suffer the impact of inadequate funding from the legislature, at the same time as expectations for what students must know and be able to do continue to rise. The Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS) has been forced to cut more than $56 million from its budget over the past six years. Meanwhile, the district is seeing more than 2,500 new students, and has significantly raised the standards those students are expected to meet.

The decision by Governor Sam Brownback seeks to force the legislature to provide additional costs for schools that have applied to the Extraordinary Needs Fund, which was created in the Block Grants bill that instituted the spending freeze on school funding. The district applied to the Extraneous Needs Fund for additional money to serve the average enrollment increase of approximately 500 students that the district has experienced over the past five years. Superintendent Dr. Cynthia Lane testified before the Kansas Supreme Court about the additional costs to the district of serving those students, and requested an additional $2 million (less than the actual cost of serving those new students). Unfortunately, the district only received $407,000 from the Fund, less than $1,000 per student.

KCKPS continues to participate in the Cannon v. State of Kansas school funding lawsuit, which is currently before the Kansas Supreme Court. Arguments before the court are set for November 6, with the possibility of a decision on at least part of the lawsuit by late spring of 2016. The Cannon lawsuit seeks to force the legislature to provide adequate funding for public schools in Kansas, as required by Article 6 of the Kansas state constitution.

Meanwhile, despite these challenges, the district continues to move forward on its work to graduate each student prepared for college and careers in a global society. This year’s 7th graders will be the first class expected to graduate “Diploma +”, with a high school diploma, along with at least one of the following:

• One year of college completed
• A technical degree or credential
• At least a 21 on the ACT College Readiness Exam

In KCKPS, focus on college and career preparation begins in preschool and elementary school. In middle school, students have begun the process of career exploration, going on visits to colleges and a variety of different workplace sites. In high school, students take college classes, technical education classes, and participate in deeper workplace experiences.

Superintendent Lane and the Board of Education are resolute in their commitment to the work of Diploma +, which will prepare each child for college and careers, and will work to ensure that each student in Kansas has the opportunity to reach their potential and pursue their path to the American Dream.

Summer Academy of Arts and Science was recognized this summer as a 2015 National Award and Recipient in the ACT’s third College and Career Readiness Campaign. It was one of four national award winners honored for their contributions to education and economic progress.

Summer was chosen as exemplary in the category of “college and career transition.” This recognition is given to a high school that demonstrates dedication in preparing students for success after high school, serving students from diverse and underserved backgrounds, and helping students progress toward ACT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks.

In April of this year, Summer received notice that it had been named a national semifinalist in the ACT campaign. It was one of 15 semifinalists chosen from among 30 participating states. ACT then chose one national exemplar for each of its four categories. Summer was honored at an awards gala in Washington, D.C. in June.

The goal of the campaign is to bring attention to the hard work and exceptional achievements of four different groups: education leaders, teachers, top employers and students. The initial semifinalists were selected for four award categories: student readiness (for students), college and career transition (for high schools), world preparedness (for community colleges), and work place success (for employers). Each of these categories represents a critical juncture in the college and career readiness continuum.

Summer was included in the High School category of the campaign, and was one of only four high schools semi-finalists recognized. ALL of Summer’s seniors are admitted to a post-secondary institution, and many are the first in their family to attend college. Each student participates in a minimum of two college visits by the time they graduate. All students take the ACT WorkKeys assessments, designed to measure their job readiness skills.

“Summer faculty routinely engage in vertically aligning ACT and National Baccalaureate across all grades and throughout all course curriculum. It is not uncommon for an 8th grade student to be exposed to ACT and IB language and vocabulary,” said Jonathan Richard, principal. “Heavy emphasis is placed on learning from internal assessments. Data is frequently analyzed which allows faculty and students to narrow in on areas of weakness and strength. We believe this focus, along with talented faculty and academically driven students, has strongly contributed to our student’s success.”

More details about the campaign and the awards are available at www.act.org/readinesscampaign.

The Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools has a new option for students seeking to earn their high school diploma: a virtual school. The district is working with Greenshine Virtual Learning Centers to provide a virtual school option for students who need it. The Board of Education approved the offering at its June 9 meeting.

Available through the 500 Reach alternative program, the Virtual School is designed to provide the flexibility of on-line access to courses that will allow a student to work toward the completion of their high school diploma. Face-to-face support from an on-site instructor is also provided. On-site support will be available at 500 Reach at a location across the district.

Virtual learning is becoming a viable option for a number of different students. These include students who are unable to attend a traditional school, or those who do not function well in that environment. It also works well for students who want to expand their educational options by taking a class not available at their school, or offered at a time that fits with their schedule. In addition, the virtual school is available to adults who wish to return to school to finish their high school diploma, and do so in a flexible way that fits with their work and family schedules and responsibilities.

Students attending 500 Reach are provided 24/7 access to their curriculum and instruction, as well as access to a tailored, individualized grade-level content-certified teachers. Courseswork in the virtual school is not tied to a traditional school calendar. Students are able to complete their curriculum for a particular course, and then move along to the next coursework selection, allowing them to accelerate or take extra time on individual learning units, based on their needs.

There is tuition at 500 Reach, and full-time students are provided a laptop computer. Virtual learners must meet the following requirements:

• Live within the boundaries of KCKPS if they are under the age of 19
• Have a high school diploma
• Demonstrate progress toward completion of agreed-upon number of credits required for graduation and meet state or local requirements if they are under the age of 19

Interested in learning more about 500 Reach? Contact 500 Reach at 913-627-4370 or octavio.estrada@kckps.org.
Walk into any school during breakfast or lunch, and one might quickly discover that school meals are changing. And they are changing for the better. Today’s school meals are healthier, more diverse, and are easily accessible to all students. These attributes, combined with new initiatives in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools this year, are predicted to increase overall participation in school meals. Because good nutrition and learning go hand in hand, this is great news for students.

**Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act**

In 2010, President Obama signed into law the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA). This legislation marked the most comprehensive change to the school nutrition environment in more than a generation. The HHFKA required the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to update school meal standards to reflect the most current dietary science. The timing of this legislation and USDA’s standards were critical to help combat the epidemic of childhood obesity as well as the urgent problem of childhood hunger.

**More of Some, Less of Others**

KCKPS has been meeting the HHFKA nutritional guidelines since before 2012 when they were mandated to be in place, and changes continue to be made to enhance the nutritional value and appeal of all school meals.

When looking at a school breakfast or lunch tray today, a noticeable number of fruits and vegetables should be seen (and when possible, the fruit will be fresh, such as an apple or a banana). What will not be seen are fried foods, foods with high fat contents (such as whole milk) or high sodium. All breads are whole grain, and all items are considered low in fat.

“I firmly believe, and so does my staff, that this is the right thing to do for kids,” said Josh Mathiasmeier, director of Nutritional Services. “We are hit the right thing to do for kids,” said Josh Mathiasmeier, director of Nutritional Services. “We are hit

**Changes in Serving School Breakfast**

In 2012, KCKPS began a new initiative to increase participation in school breakfast. It is called Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC). It consists of providing a nutritious breakfast to all students in their first hour class instead of the cafeteria. Rushed schedules, late arrivals or the proximity of the cafeteria to take with them. BIC has increased participation in the school breakfast program by 200 percent in some buildings.

“We know that students who have a full breakfast are more ready to learn and less likely to be distracted or misbehave because of a rumbling stomach,” Mathiasmeier said.

**BREAKFAST PRODUCT COMPARISONS**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Calories</th>
<th>Store-bought Poptart (2)</th>
<th>KCK Whole Grain Poptart (1)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>15 grams</td>
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<td>180 mg</td>
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**Fast Food Breakfast Burrito**

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<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>2 grams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Taste of 500**

Nutritious foods aren’t always popular with students, sometimes because of their taste, and sometimes because they are unfamiliar with them. For these reasons and others, KCKPS annually hosts a “Taste of 500” food tasting fair. The event allows students to sample food items from a number of food service brokers, and then provide feedback on the taste and quality. All food items presented are evaluated using a simple scoring technique. Positive responses are considered for upcoming school menus, or the after school snack program. The district has been conducting this program for the past 18 years.

“This past year, we taste tested a really popular macaroni and cheese, which tested much higher than any other mac and cheese product we have looked at in the past,” Mathiasmeier said. “And now it’s on our menu.”

**Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program**

This school year, KCKPS received a $300,000 grant from USDA to conduct a Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program in 16 of its elementary schools.

Through the program, students take part in a taste test of fresh, and usually unique, fruits and vegetables. The program increases their exposure to new, healthy food items. These might include: star fruit, kiwi, blackberries, snap peas, watermelon, jicama and others. Along with tasting the items, students are provided with a fact sheet that tells about the food item. The fact sheet includes information on how the item is grown, the nutritional value, plus a fun exercise or two for students (such as a puzzle or game).

The program kicked off September 1 and will continue to take place twice a week throughout the school year.

**INCREASED PARTICIPATION**

On September 1, the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools (KCKPS) began providing free breakfast and lunch to all early childhood and elementary students. The district is participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), a program of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 that allows schools with high poverty rates to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students. KCKPS receives reimbursement from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for its school meals program.

Josh Mathiasmeier, director of Nutritional Services, said the program impacts approximately 13,000 students in the district at all elementary schools, early childhood centers and the Bridges program. At this time, secondary schools do not qualify for the program, but Mathiasmeier said his department will continue to monitor those schools. CEP eliminates the burden of collecting household applications to determine eligibility for school meals. It also eliminates barriers to good nutrition at school, and can enhance participation in school meals programs. In fact, it is expected that participation in the school breakfast lunch programs will grow as a result of the district’s adoption of the CEP. Mathiasmeier estimated a 7 percent increase in the school breakfast program (which is about 853 students) and a 3.5 percent increase in the school lunch program (which adds up to about 426 students). And on the first day the CEP was enacted, the numbers surpassed these. The district served an additional 960 breakfasts and an additional 718 lunches compared with other days in August.

**FREE MEALS FOR ELEMENTARY AND PRESCHOOL STUDENTS**

[Image of a child eating a healthy meal]
Photos from the Classroom!

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