

Development Begins on New State Assessment System

USDE Approves Extension of EPAS for Grades 8-12

The United States Department of Education has granted the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools a two-year extension of a waiver to substitute the Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS) family of assessments for the Kansas assessments for grades 8-12.

This means that again this spring, instead of taking the Kansas Assessments, 8th graders will take the EXPLORE, and 11th graders will take the ACT. This system of testing will provide KCKPS students with college and career readiness measures that will be valuable to them as they plan for their post high school endeavors at universities and in their work.

For grades 5-7, the Kansas assessments will once again be administered this year, but the good news is, this will be the final year for this system. The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) has been working with the Center for Education Testing at the University of Kansas to develop a new summative assessment aligned to the Common Core that will follow the Kansas College and Career Ready standards set by KSDE. (Go to http://kckps.cloudaccess.net/images/Kansas_CCR.pdf to view the standards.) These new assessments will require students to demonstrate that they know how to use what they have learned.

The timeline is to have an interim summative assessment for grades 3-7 for the 2013-14 school year. The interim assessment will mirror what is anticipated to be the next generation of assessments. Some districts will be selected to field test this at specific grade levels. By 2014-15, the new final assessments will be in place across the state.

It's Time for Math Relays!

Secondary students across the district are gearing up for one of the largest and most popular events held each year – Math Relays. In fact, this week, a number of students have been participating in individual events at their home schools in preparation for the big day.

Math Relays will take place Saturday, February 16 at Wyandotte High School. The event is expected to draw more than 1,100 middle and high schools students for a day of individual and team math events. All KCKPS high schools and middle schools will be participating. The Relays will run from 8:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. An awards ceremony will close the event at 1 p.m.

“This event gives students an opportunity to showcase their academic skills and intellect,” said **Jarius Jones**, Math Relays coordinator.

In Math Relays, students will compete in four major strands: algebra, geometry, number concepts, and statistics and probability. A Sigma category also exists for students who want to compete in all strands.

Medals will be awarded to the students placing in the top four in each category. Traveling trophies will be awarded to the middle and high school scoring the most points overall. The most prestigious honor is being inducted into the Math Relays Hall of Fame. This program was instituted in 2006 to recognize students who have medaled in individual events four times throughout their secondary careers. Students inducted will have their names placed on a plaque and will receive a \$200 college scholarship.

The Kansas Enrichment Network is partnering with the district for a college and career fair which will also be a part of this year's event.

South American Visitors



A Brazilian delegation of high school teachers visited the district this week, touring Wyandotte High and Sumner Academy as part of a program being coordinated through the University of Missouri-Kansas City. The group of 39 is working to increase their English skills and Teaching English as a Foreign Language methodology. (Above) Sarah Giesler, English 1 and 2 teacher at Wyandotte, welcomes a member of the delegation to her classroom. (Below) A visiting teacher chats with a student.



Teacher Earns National Board Certification

Tami Hedenskog, lifeskills 2 teacher at Stony Point North Elementary School, has earned her National Board Certification. This means she has met intensive and rigorous standards set by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

National Board Certification is a voluntary process whereby educators seek recognition for meeting rigorous standards in one of 25 areas defined by subject and students' age. Candidates must complete two components of an assessment process designed to examine teaching competencies, skills and knowledge in relation to their subject area. Hedenskog's area was Exceptional Learners, PreK through adult. It requires intensive study, expert evaluation, self-assessment and peer review. Hedenskog estimates that the process took her approximately 1,000 hours to complete.

"The biggest component of this process is looking at how you are impacting

your students," Hedenskog said. "There was a lot of discovering new ideas and looking at what you are doing and how you can do it better. The feeling of completing it and knowing that my kids have

benefitted from it, as well as me, has made it worthwhile."

Hedenskog has been teaching in the district for seven years at Stony Point North.

"The biggest component of this process is looking at how you are impacting your students."

■ Tami Hedenskog,
Stony Point North

She has a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Park University and a master's in special education from the University of Iowa. She will be recognized at the Kansas Exemplary Educators Network (KEEN) conference in Topeka on February 22.

Since the National Board Certification program was established in 1987, 100,000 educators nationwide have earned this certification. Hedenskog is one of only three KCKPS staff members



Tami Hedenskog has been teaching in the district for seven years.

to be certified. The other staff members are: **Jennifer Holt**, elementary literacy content teacher leader; and **Sabrina Rauer**, fourth grade teacher at M.E. Pearson Elementary.

Employees Encouraged to Sign Up for Health Screenings

Once again this year, KCKPS employees are being provided with the opportunity to receive a free health screening as part of the district's initiative to focus on employee health and well being. Employees who participate in the screenings, and complete the online Health Risk Assessment (HRA), will qualify for an incentive for the 2014 calendar year through Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City. Last year's incentive was waving the \$300 prescription deductible. The 2014 incentive has not yet been determined, but details will be released as soon as they are available.

The screenings will include cholesterol, blood pressure, BMI, waist circumference, body fat percentage and more.

Appointments must be made to receive a screening, and can be done by visiting A Healthier You at MyBlueKC.com. You will need your Blue KC ID information located on your member ID card to login to the site for the first time. Be sure to register at least 24 hours in advance to secure your appointment.

Once your screening is complete, you must complete the online HRA onsite or from your own computer. The assessment will give you a better understanding of your current health situation. Completion of the screening will apply toward your 2014 wellness requirements.

For employees who prefer to have a health screening by their personal physician, there is an Alternative Means Screening form available on the

portal. Simply complete this after your individual appointment.

Health Screenings

Main Branch Library
625 Minnesota Ave.
February 25-28
3 to 7 p.m.

South Branch Library
3104 Strong Ave.
March 4-7
3 to 7 p.m.

West Wyandotte Branch Library
1737 N. 82nd St.
March 12-14
3 to 7 p.m.

Central Office and Training Center
(Date and time to be determined)

Staff Notebook is a weekly publication for employees of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools. Submissions are welcome and are due by noon on Monday for the following edition. Direct them to Tammy Dodderidge in the Communications Office, tadodde@kckps.org, (913) 279-2225.