



## KANSAS DROPOUT PREVENTION PRE-SUMMIT REPORT

Major Findings from Eight Regional Pre-Summits Around the State

SEPTEMBER 2009

**PLAINTIFFS'**  
**EX. 140**

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# INTRODUCTION

**K**ansas DropINs is a collaborative organization committed to seeing all children in Kansas graduate from high school ready for the next phase of life. The group is comprised of over 25 public and private agencies from around the state and is housed within the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. They have been tasked, by America's Promise Alliance, with developing a statewide action plan for dropout prevention

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**W**e would like to thank the members of the Kansas DropINs planning team for their leadership and direction on this initiative. Special thanks to the Center for Community Support and Research at Wichita State University for developing the regional pre-summit facilitation guide and to the following organizations for hosting the pre-summits in their region.

KC- Kansas City Kansas Community College	Wichita- Workforce Learning Center
NE- Lawrence Public Schools District Office	SE- Neosho County Community College
NC- Salina Area Chamber of Commerce	SC- SC KS Education Service Center
NW- Colby Community College	SW- Garden City Community College

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kansas DropINs regional pre-summits set the stage for the statewide summit held October 20, 2009 in Wichita KS by raising awareness of the dropout problem and identifying key areas that should be addressed. Information gathered also influenced the conversations at the regional post-summits in January 2010.

Over 225 participants, including educators, business members, elected officials, community members, and 30 youth, attended the eight pre-summit conversations held in: Chanute, Clearwater, Colby, Garden City, Lawrence, Kansas City, Salina, and Wichita.

At each pre-summit three questions were asked:

1. In this region, what challenges do your students and families face that result in students not being engaged in school and community?
2. In this region, what's working that keeps your students and families engaged in school and community?
3. In this region, what do we still need to learn about keeping students and families engaged in school and community?

While each conversation highlighted issues unique to a region, several statewide themes were identified: the need to approach dropout prevention as a community issue versus simply a school problem; stronger collaboration between all youth-serving organizations and parents; and better engagement of the business community to provide real-world opportunities such as job shadowing, classroom speakers, and internships.

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"The major objective of Kansas DropINs is to develop a comprehensive action plan to prevent over 3,000 young Kansans that are dropping out from school each year. The regional pre-summit conversations were the first step towards this goal, allowing us to bring to light the challenges and needs unique to each region of the state."

-Roderick Bremby, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment

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## SHARED CHALLENGES

In this region, what challenges do your students and families face that result in students not being engaged in school and community?

Challenges	KC	NE	NC	NW	SW	SC	SE	Wichita
Lack of parental involvement and support	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Gangs and substance abuse	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Poverty	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Bullying/peer pressure	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Students unable to find applicability of school to "real world"	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Lack of consistent mentor/mentee relationships	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Young people have to work to support the family	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Lack of communication between teachers, parents and students	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Classes are boring/uninteresting	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Lost credits for transfer students	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Classes are crowded/missing one-on-one relationship with teacher	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
The Generational Cycle	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Parents/schools are unaware of truancy	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Lack of teacher diversity/teaching styles	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Shift work interferes with school/employers do not value education	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Teenage pregnancy	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Delayed gratification	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Lack of funding	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Parents/students are unaware of alternative education opportunities	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Living arrangements	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Physical distance to school/transportation	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Stereotyping young people	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Mental health issues	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■



## UNIQUE CHALLENGES

In this region, what challenges do your students and families face that result in students not being engaged in school and community?

### Kansas City Region

- Youth focused on life survival
- Incarcerated family members
- Deployment
- Sexual orientation/confusion
- Lack of life skills
- Youth uninformed of opportunities prior to entering high school
- Board of Education has lost connectedness to schools

### Wichita Region

- Youth are disrespected by adults
- Unidentified learning disabilities
- Domestic violence
- Hunger
- Failing students are afraid to ask for help
- No clothes for school
- Increased rigor of curriculum for graduation
- Youth don't have money for college or vocational school

### Northwest Region

- Parents let their experiences frame how they deal with their children (I didn't...)
- Lack of professionals
- Region can't pay teachers well, which leads to retention and recruitment issues
- Licensing process to become a teacher is rigorous
- Lack of fine arts classes
- Landscape shifting/changing values among youth (if I don't have to work hard, why should I?)

### North Central Region

- Students do not commit to the community
- Lack of commitment and follow through among adults
- Not enough placements for career program

### Northeast Region

- Sense of hopelessness/perception that teachers don't care
- Students feel it is better to act bad than look stupid
- Alternative education programs are perceived as being easy or convenient
- Crime/victimization
- Punishments for attendance issues are not effective in the early years
- Requirement that students must attend school for a full day- no half day availability
- Starting school too early (studies show it is better to wait until after 9am)

### Southeast Region

- Students have to meet core areas instead of engaging in elective opportunities
- Vocation-bound and college-bound students are on the same curriculum track
- Media influences
- Students unable to transfer to other districts
- Schools are defensive and angry
- Parents don't value education

### Southwest Region

- Language barrier
- Service providers are unaware of other programs in community
- Lack of engagement among all populations in community decision making
- Legality of citizenship of students
- Need to address the "modern" student

### South Central Region

- Lack of health care
- Need better utilization of technology
- Efforts and resources are developed but not utilized by educators
- Children are poorly prepared for kindergarten
- Lack of head start and at-risk pre-school programs



## SHARED SUCCESSES

In this region, what's working that keeps your students and families engaged in school and community?

Successes	KC	NE	NC	NW	SW	SC	SE	Wichita
Availability of alternative degree programs								
Free and reduced lunch programs								
Availability of effective mentoring programs								
Emphasis on science and math								
Availability of extra-curricular activities and sports								
Career pathways in schools								
Greater variety of classes and flexible schedules								
College classes offered/ dual enrollment opportunities								
Early intervention strategies								
Parents as Teachers program								
Afterschool programs								
Relationships with adults and staff								
Support for expecting teens and teens with children								
Drop-out recovery programs								
Addressing the dropout problem through efforts like this								
Utilizing caring and engaged adults								
Adults maintaining high expectations of students								
School/community partnerships								
Community service projects and volunteering								
Business involvement								
Teen Court (school-judicial court partnership)								



## UNIQUE SUCCESSES

In this region, what's working that keeps your students and families engaged in school and community?

### Southwest Region

- Socializing time built into school schedule
- Educational talent search
- TRIO programs
- Home visits and parent education

### Wichita Region

- Increased access for students
- Advancement by way of individual determination
- Non-academic advocacy time
- Extended school year
- School is no longer just a place to learn (meals, counseling, transportation, clothing, healthcare, etc.)
- Psychological counseling services available
- 21st century skills
- Positive reinforcement
- Substance abuse prevention programs

### South Central Region

- Online health
- Creativity in developing programs
- Opportunities for returning students
- Early childhood development
- Character education
- Increased use of technology

### North Central Region

- No unique successes identified

### Northeast Region

- Reconnecting Youth program
- Summer school
- Native American student services
- Continuation of credits/course work even during long-term suspension
- Free accessible credit recovery programs
- Parents and students can access grades via internet
- Music/arts programs
- Mental health training for teachers
- Elective credit for having a job

### Southeast Region

- Reward programs for good attendance and performance
- Leadership programs
- Life-skills classes
- Focus on transition into post-secondary programs
- Flexible schedules for upper-classmen
- Project based learning: explore areas of interest

### Northwest Region

- Learning center dropout recovery program
- MTSS model
- Getting better at identifying road blocks and challenges
- Seeking early Head Start programs
- Elementary careers on wheels program

### Kansas City Region

- Emphasis on school safety
- Improvement to the learning environment



## SHARED LEARNING

In this region, what do we still need to learn about keeping students and families engaged in school and community?

Still need to learn how to...	KC	NE	NC	NW	SW	SC	SE	Wichita
Increase parental involvement and accountability								
Get students invested in their education								
Expand mental and physical health programs								
Increase availability of technology and computers								
More Individualized attention-one size doesn't fit all								
Increase education alternatives								
Focus more on the transitional periods								
Utilize programs already in existence and be more effective with time								
Address truancy								
Increase collaboration across industries								
Establish more mentoring opportunities for youth								
Create a method for looking at all supports that a youth receives								
Increase cultural understanding								
Communicate programs to all members of the community								
Engage businesses as a supporter of education								
Foster better communication between schools and businesses								
Address ideas about work ethic								





## UNIQUE LEARNING

In this region, what do we still need to learn about keeping students and families engaged in school and community?

### Wichita Region

- Hold seminars to teach youth what is required to graduate
- Create more ILP's so that students can progress at their own pace
- Provide high school credits for youth who have summer jobs or internships
- Teach self-sufficiency
- Create a respectful environment
- Use school buildings for after-school programs in the community
- Tailor education for career goals
- Focus education on learning rather than teaching for the test
- Increase interaction with teachers and counselors
- Identify disabilities

### Kansas City Region

- Stop accepting excuses
- Need advocates for students who feel they are being pushed out of the system
- Restructure the school system
- Increase tutoring availability
- Balance homework requirements
- Additional placement exams
- Realize that school is not a babysitter
- Better communication between schools and parents
- Safer communities
- Inter-agency collaboration
- Create a hub for resources around the state

### Southeast Region

- View the dropout epidemic as a community issue, not just a school issue
- Conduct more research on education alternatives
- Levels vs. age (b/c you are a certain age you have to be in a certain grade)

### South Central Region

- Barriers to learning (drugs)
- Get back to the basics
- Better public awareness
- Change current image of school system
- Shelter electives from budget cuts
- Make early alert system online and accessible
- Find additional funding

### Southwest Region

- Better communication between schools and court system
- Make it more difficult for youth who want to drop out of school
- Deal with AYP challenges

### Northeast Region

- Disseminate information on how school connects to the future
- Recruit and retain qualified teachers
- Reward more
- Listen to and learn from students who have dropped out of school
- Determine where young people get off track
- Relationship building for teachers

### Northwest Region

- Help students understand that there are jobs in the region that require a higher education
- Prevent the generational cycle
- Change the mindset of families who believe it is ok to drop out of school
- Help students who need to work full-time

### North Central Region

- Reach "inaccessible" families through other community agencies
- Involve youth in decision making process

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THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING  
ORGANIZATIONS FOR MAKING  
THE PRE-SUMMITS POSSIBLE

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