

INTRODUCTION

Kansas 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

We 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 post-summit facilitation guide and to the following organizations for hosting the post-summits in their region.

- KC– Kansas City Kansas Community College
- NE– Lawrence Public Schools District Office
- NC– Salina Area Chamber of Commerce
- SE– Neosho County Community College
- SC– South Central Kansas Education Service Center
- SW– Garden City Community College
- Wichita– Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kansas DropINs regional post-summits were a follow-up to the statewide summit held October 20, 2009 in Wichita KS. The purpose of the post-summits was to prioritize the challenges (identified at the pre-summits) of each region and to develop goals, objective and strategies to those prioritized as “high.” Participants also determined what strategies currently existed for meeting the challenges. The information collected will be used to develop a statewide action plan on dropout prevention due summer 2010.

Over 175 participants, including educators, business members, elected officials, community members, and 50 youth, attended the seven post-summit conversations held in: Chanute, Clearwater, Garden City, Lawrence, Kansas City, Salina, and Wichita.

At each summit, the challenges were reviewed and further explanation was provided for those that were not clearly understood. Regions were given the option of removing challenges from the list prior to voting so long as it was a majority decision. There were three main reasons why challenges were removed from the list:

1. The challenge was too complex to address in the three hour session.
2. The challenge was one that participants had no control over.
3. The challenge was not directly related to why students drop out.

Participants were then given three voting dots to vote for the challenges that they considered to be the key reasons why youth dropped out. Those challenges that rose to the top in terms of number of votes were the “high” priority challenges that were then addressed with action planning.

Editor's note: A post-summit was planned for the Northwest region (Colby KS), but was cancelled the day before the event due to a lack of participation. We are looking at ways to engage that region through survey or interactive media.

Kansas City Region

Regional Challenges

Below are the challenges addressed at the post-summit. The number on the left side indicates the number of votes that challenge received. The challenges that received "no votes" were eliminated prior to voting. The challenges in purple are the "high priorities" that were ultimately tackled during the post-summit.

27- Lack of parental involvement and support	3- Youth focused on life survival
21- Lack of consistent mentor/mentee relationships	3- Bullying and peer pressure
18- Lack of communication between students, parents and educators	3- Gangs and substance abuse
13- Living arrangements	3- Poverty
11- Adults don't listen to youth or engage them when making policy decisions	2- Youth uninformed of opportunities prior to entering high school
8- Students unable to find applicability of school to "real world"	1- Confusion around sexual orientation
7- Failure of adults to capitalize on the strengths of youth	1- Classes are boring/uninteresting
4- Board of education has lost its connectedness to schools	1- Parents/schools are unaware of truancy
	1- Teenage pregnancy
	0- Young people have to work to support their family
	0- Mental health issues
	0- Incarcerated family members
	0- Deployed family members
	No vote- Lack of life skills

Action Planning

Challenge 1: Lack of communication between students, parents and teachers

Goal: Create opportunities to build healthy relationships through understanding individual needs.

Objectives: Students will be able to identify an adult with whom they have a healthy relationship within eight weeks of each semester. Through communication, understanding and trust student's confidence will take form. Parents will select a support network in their community to guide and build communication with their children.

Strategies:

- Attend events – football games, plays, concerts, parent teacher conference
- Support network with helpful resources
- Use various means of communication - text, voicemail, MySpace, Facebook

Challenge 2: Lack of consistent mentor/mentee relationships

Goal: Increase the percentage of students who have consistent mentors.

Objectives: Within two years, establish or enhance peer to peer mentoring programs in each elementary school and adult to student mentoring programs in each middle and high school.

Strategies:

- Gather baseline data (number of programs, number of students)
 - Research and identify best practice
 - Mobilize all sectors of the community
 - Showcase the fringe benefits of education
 - Advertise on Kansas Mentors, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Communities In Schools
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Challenge 3: Increase parental involvement and support

Goal: To increase parental involvement and support.

Objective: Create partnerships using a family-communication intervention.

Strategies:

- Start with early intervention strategies
 - Develop into K-5 to begin
 - Implement grades 6-8 later
 - Raise greater parental awareness of the "whole child"
 - Create a checklist of communication methods completed
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Challenge 4: Living arrangements

Goal: All school age children should have a safe place available in the community.

Objective: Ensure that all school age youth have a safe place available with counseling at least five days per week within six months to one year.

Strategies:

- Will market through newsletters, flyers, Board of Education, churches, Wal-Mart, community activists, Facebook/Twitter, community channels
 - Funding through grants, fundraisers, volunteers, locations, and donations
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Challenge 5: Adults don't listen to youth or include their input when making policy decisions

Goal: Integrate a systemic plan to include all students in policy decisions relating to education in the KCK school district.

Objective: Develop a student policy council structure within one year— where each school has a site council of parents, teachers and students that make policy decisions for the school.

Strategies:

- Student representatives on each council would convene in a larger "youth council" that would contribute to policy decisions made by the school board
- School board would be required to seek input from youth council before making certain policy decisions

Northeast Region

Regional Challenges

Below are the challenges addressed at the post summit. The number on the left side indicates the number of votes that challenge received. The challenges that received no votes were eliminated prior to voting. The challenges in purple are the "high" priorities that were ultimately tackled during the post summit.

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|---|---|
| 16- Lack of parental involvement/support | 1- Young people have to work to support their family |
| 7- Students unable to find applicability of school to real world | 0- Students think it is better to act bad than look stupid |
| 5- Youth struggle with delayed gratification | 0- Crime/victimization |
| 5- Lack of communication between students, parents and educators | 0- Punishment for meanness is not effective in elementary and middle school |
| 5- Lack of teacher diversity/teaching styles | 0- Classes are too crowded, missing one-on-one relationship with teacher |
| 4- Sense of hopelessness/perception that teachers don't care | 0- Parents/students are unaware of alternative education opportunities |
| 4- Lack of funding | 0- Lost credits for transfer students |
| 4- Lack of consistent mentor/mentee relationships | 0- Living arrangements |
| 4- Gangs and substance abuse | 0- Work interferes with school/ employers don't value education |
| 3- Classes are boring/uninteresting | 0- Stereotyping young people |
| 3- Generational cycle | No vote- Physical distance to school transportation |
| 3- Adults don't listen to youth or include their input when making policy decisions | No vote- Start school too early |
| 2- Bullying and peer pressure | No vote- Poverty |
| 2- Alternative education programs are perceived as being easy or convenient | |
| 2- No half day availability- students must attend school for a full day | |

Action Planning

Challenge 1: Students unable to find applicability between school and future success; youth struggle with delayed gratification

Goal: Help students make connection between school and future success.

Objective: Investigate curriculum and instructional strategies that address students' changing world including globalization, teamwork networking and technology.

Strategies:

- Identify models
- Develop list of models
- Evaluate models based on developed rubric

Challenge 2: Lack of parental involvement and support; Lack of communication between students, parents and educators

Goal: Engage parents and children in a meaningful, positive way throughout their school career.

Objective: Increase parent and child participation with the school system throughout each year.

Strategies:

- Early establishment of positive relationships with parents before negative encounter.
 - Staff development for teachers to encourage steps to initiate positive PR with parents and at-risk children.
 - Encourage participation in this initiative with incentives.
 - Contact community members for incentives and for involvement with students and classes. Health classes, for example, could be targeted.
 - Every semester evaluate school attitudes and parent attitudes.
 - Early relationships and communication established with truant/negative at-risk students.
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Challenge 3: Lack of teacher diversity; sense of hopelessness/perception that teachers don't care

Goal: Develop a teaching staff with whom students can relate.

Objective: Increase the number of students that feel connected to school as displayed by results of pre and post survey. Increase diversity of teaching staff as shown by employment statistics.

Strategies:

- Team with Communities That Care to develop a survey that addresses all of our concerns
- Share survey data with students and staff every year as part of professional development
- Conduct diversity training for teachers
- Educate students about careers in education (KS Teaching Fellows and other education opportunities)

North Central Region

Regional Challenges

Below are the challenges addressed at the post-summits. The number on the left side indicates the number of votes that challenge received. The challenges that received "no votes" were eliminated prior to voting. The challenges in purple are the "high" priorities that were ultimately tackled during the post-summits.

11- Lack of consistent mentor/mentee relationships	7- Student relationships
10- Lack of parental involvement and support	7- Lack of commitment and follow through by adults
10- Lack of diversity in the classroom	7- "Cause and effect" in classroom as different (aka generational differences)
10- Stereotyping young people	7- Young people have to work in support their family
9- No connection between agencies and programs within the community	7- Youth are overwhelmed and lose hope
5- Classes are boring/uninteresting	1- Discrepancy between adults/teachers and students perceptions
4- Gangs and substance abuse	0- Bullying and peer pressure
4- Lack of student accountability	0- Not enough placements for career program
4- Mental health issues and medication usage	0- Counselors are not available
3- Unrealistic expectations of students	0- Students do not commit to the community
3- Students are afraid to talk to their teachers or counselors	0- Classes are too crowded, missing one-on-one relationship with teacher
2- Lack of connectivity between students, parents and educators	0- Lost credits for transfer students
2- Lack of funding/resources	

Action Planning

Challenge 1: Stereotyping young people

Goal: Use student mentors to educate incoming students about the causes and effects of stereotypes and the actions that could be taken to overcome those stereotypes.

Objective: Identify peer mentors at the start of the school year to work with incoming students.

Strategies:

- Identify students who are interested in being a mentor – completely voluntary
- Use life experiences to reinforce what is being taught
- Have mentors visit students on a regular basis to ensure good relationships and comprehension of life lessons
- Initiate conversations between adults and youth to talk about stereotypes
- Break down barriers by forcing interaction among different groups

Challenge 2: Lack of consistent mentor/mentee relationships

Goal: To get more peer and adult volunteers involved with students.

Objective: Find caring, compassionate and knowledgeable volunteers to help staff with existing programs to bring about fewer incidents of ISS loss, increased graduation rates and reduced gang activity.

Strategies:

- Develop a mentoring hotline and create a media campaign to recruit volunteers
 - Conduct volunteer training and background checks
 - Make calls to churches, family members, community centers
 - Develop internet mentoring system (e-mail, internet chat, etc.)
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Challenge 3: No connection between agencies and programs within the community

Goal: All schools, health and human service organizations & government agencies to work together to increase high school graduation rates.

Objective: Establish a system and processes for ongoing integration (communication and coordination) of information for referral to those in need or who are at-risk of non-completion.

Strategies:

- Identify community resources and parameters
 - Educate counselors and case managers on info and referral
 - Establish a collaborative case management system (on the web and in print)
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Challenge 4: Lack of diversity in the classroom

Goal: Recognize individuals as having diverse learning styles.

Objective: To produce tax payers – not tax users. Discover how each student learns and what motivates each student.

Strategies:

- Create lessons plan that include all styles simultaneously
 - Encourage student to take an active part in their learning
 - Administer learning style inventory more often
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Challenge 5: Lack of parental involvement and support

Goal: Increase parental involvement and support.

Objective: Educate parents on role and responsibilities, opportunities and resources available. Increase communication between parents, schools and community agencies.

Strategies:

- Offer mini classes for parental development (i.e. building a website, using excel, enrolling children in school) to help build positive relationships
- Show parents ways they can support their children
- Use technology to communicate and obtain accurate contact information (especially social networking)
- Survey parents on how to involve them and how to get information to them

Southeast Region

Regional Challenges

Below are the challenges addressed at the post summit. The challenges in purple are the high priority that were ultimately tackled during the post summit. (Editor's note: votes per challenge were not recorded in this region)

- | | |
|---|---|
| Students have to meet core areas rather than engage in electives | Parents/schools are unaware of trancy |
| Students unable to find applicability of school to "real world" | Lost credits for transfer students |
| Lack of collaboration between schools and community organizations | Living arrangements |
| Poverty | Work interferes with school/employers don't value education |
| Lack of funding | Teenage pregnancy |
| Lack of consistent mentor/mentor relationships | Vocation bound and college bound students are on the same track |
| Classes are too long/uninteresting | Media influences |
| Generational cycle | Students are unable to transfer to other districts |
| Bullying and peer pressure | Schools are defensive and angry |
| Parents/students are unaware of alternative education opportunities | Parents don't value education enough |
| | Lack of community involvement |

Action Planning

Challenge 1: Students unable to find applicability of school to "real world"

Goal: Help students make connection between school and future success.

Objective: All K-12 students will receive assistance in developing a post-graduation plan.

Strategies:

- Design individual graduation plan around career clusters for high school students
- Hold career fairs/careers on wheels for elementary and middle school students
- Utilize community speakers from specific professions
- Host career mentorship day for middle and high school students
- Increase school/business partnership
- Evaluate post-graduation plans annually

Challenge 2: Lack of parental involvement and support

Goal: Increase communication between parents and school staff.

Objective: All parent/guardians (families) will be notified of all relevant school events.

Strategies:

- Utilize resources that are available for better communication – calendar, newspaper, all call system, power school, website, and planner
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Challenge 3: Students have to meet core areas rather than engage in electives

Goal: Realign curriculum within core/career clusters.

Objective: All schools will work with the Kansas State Department of Education to develop appropriate career clusters.

Strategies:

- Develop collaboration between administration, counselors and appropriate instructors in developing curriculum
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Challenge 4: Lack of collaboration between schools and community organizations

Goal: Increase collaboration between schools and outside agencies.

Objective: Develop a school and community outreach program.

Strategies:

- Attend regional meeting if one exists
- Host a community meeting
- Develop a community resource guide of available services

South Central Region

Regional Challenges

Below are the challenges addressed at the post-summmit. The challenges in purple are the "high" priorities that were ultimately tackled during the post-summmit. (Editor's note: votes per challenge were not recorded in this region)

Lack of parental involvement and support

Students unable to find applicability of school to "real world"

Lack of consistent mentors/mentee relationships

Classes are too crowded, missing one-on-one relationship with teacher

Lack of community involvement

Lack of health care

Generational cycle

Bullying and peer pressure

Parents/students are unaware of alternative education opportunities

Living arrangements

Gangs and substance abuse

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

Finding employers willing to do job shadowing

Action Planning

Challenge 1: Students unable to find applicability of school to "real world"

Goal: Help students make connection between school and future success.

Objective: At least twice a year all students will be exposed to career education information (career opportunities and interest inventories).

Strategies:

- Utilize the KS career pipeline
- Provide training for teachers on the pipeline tool
- Identify resources (who can come speak and where can we go visit)
- Identify skill sets needed for career cluster
- Assist teachers in developing and delivering cross curricular strategies

Challenge 2: Lack of consistent mentor/mentee relationships; missing one-on-one relationship with teacher

Goal: Increase attachment to school.

Objective: Students will develop meaningful relationships within the school community as measured by a pre and post survey.

Strategies:

- Find (identify) mentors
 - Develop the pre/post survey
 - Inform students of events they might be interested in
 - Identify students who are not connected
 - Educate mentors about how to connect
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Challenge 3: Lack of parental involvement and support

Goal: Involve parents to promote student's successful completion of educational objectives.

Objective: Increase positive parental involvement, especially for the highest needs students in the school community.

Strategies:

- Identify highest needs students
- Identify student's educational objectives
- Invite those parents to appropriate activities (including career nights)
- Utilize technology to communicate with parents

Southwest Region

Regional Challenges

Below are the challenges addressed at the post-summit. The number on the left side indicates the number of votes that challenge received. The challenge that received no votes were eliminated prior to voting. The challenges in purple are the "final" priorities that were ultimately tackled during the post-summit.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 20- Gangs and substance abuse | 4- Parents/schools are unaware of infancy |
| 12- Lack of parental involvement/support | 1- Lack of guidance on how to start |
| 12- Teenage pregnancy | programs in rural communities |
| 12- Bullying and peer pressure | 0- Classes are too crowded, missing one |
| 5- Classes are boring/uninteresting | on-one relationship with teacher |
| 4- Lack of consistent ment/mentor | 0- Mental health issues |
| relationships | 0- Language barriers |
| 4- There is no master plan across the state | 0- Service providers are unaware of other |
| for preventing dropouts | programs in the community |
| 2- Need to address the modern student | 0- Parents/schools are unaware of |
| 2- Lack of engagement among popula- | alternative education opportunities |
| tions in community decision making | 0- Lost credits for transfer students |
| 2- Lack of communication between | No vote: Poverty |
| students, parents and educators | No vote: Young people have to work to |
| 2- Students unable to find applicability of | support their family |
| school to "real world" | No vote: Shift work interferes with school/ |
| 1- Lack of teacher diversity/teaching styles | employers don't value education |
| 1- One size fits all curriculum doesn't | No vote: Equality of citizenship of students |
| work for all students | |

Action Planning

Challenge 1: Gangs and substance abuse

Goal: Eliminate substance abuse and gang involvement in our community.

Objective: 10% reduction in crime rate annually (crime rates as they relate to gangs and substance abuse – i.e. drug related arrests, DUI's, battery, etc. – gang affiliated).

Strategies:

- Comprehensive early interventions at elementary levels
- On-going drug/violence education
- Utilize community based programs like the YMCA, clubs/sports, Big Brothers Big Sisters and teen leadership

Challenge 2: Bullying and peer pressure

Goal: Reduce the number of bullying events

Objective: Reduce the number of student-on-student events by 10% in a school year.

Strategies:

- Collecting data on bullying incidents and conduct parental survey
 - Bullying training: increase students ability to identify different levels and types of bullying in order to increase awareness and prevent bullying
 - Involve the community in an anti-bullying campaign
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Challenge 3: Teen pregnancy

Goal: Decrease the number of teenage pregnancies and the number of dropouts as a result of pregnancy.

Objective: Reduce the number of teenage pregnancies by 10% and increase graduation rates among teen moms by 10%.

Strategies:

- Early education programs – statewide and research based, start at 4th grade level
 - Involve parents at an early age
 - Educate public of statistics of long term effect, i.e. cost to state and tax payers
 - Hold open forum type classes to de-glamorize pregnancy, increase self-esteem and change how girls think about getting pregnant.
 - Utilize electronic babies and hold meetings with teen moms
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Challenge 4: Lack of parental involvement and support

Goal: Develop opportunities for students, parents and school personnel to form positive partnerships.

Objective: Within the 2010-2011 school years, plan and implement three opportunities for positive interaction with parents and students.

Strategies:

- Offer opportunities at a variety of times and days
- Home visits by school personnel
- Reschedule opportunities for those who were unable to attend. Provide teambuilding opportunities
- Provide child care/student activities
- Host informational/open house events

Wichita Region

Regional Challenges

Below are the challenges addressed at the post-summer. The number on the left side indicates the number of votes this challenge received. The challenges that received "no votes" were eliminated prior to voting. The challenges in purple are the "high" priorities that were ultimately tackled during the post-summer.

21- Lack of communication between students, parents and educators	0- Punishment for truancy is not effective in elementary and middle school
18- Lack of parental involvement and support	0- Poverty
16- Teenage pregnancy	0- Lack of teacher diversity/teaching styles
14- Lack of school connectedness	0- Hunger
10- Gangs and substance abuse	0- Domestic Violence
6- Bullying and peer pressure	0- Increased rigor of curriculum for graduation
5- Classes are boring/uninteresting	0- Stereotyping young people
5- Undiagnosed learning disabilities	No vote- Physical distance to school/transportation
4- Students unable to find applicability of school to "real world"	No vote- Classes are too crowded, missing one-on-one relationship with teacher
2- Failing students are afraid to ask for help	No vote- Youth are disrespected by adults
2- Generational cycle	No vote- Youth struggle with delayed graduation
1- Have the resources, but are unsure how to market them	No vote- Technology is not emphasized for job success
1- Young people have to work to support their family	No vote- Youth don't have money for college or vocational school
0- Students think it is better to act bad than look stupid	
0- Crime/victimization	

Action Planning

Challenge 1: Lack of parental involvement and support

Goal: To increase the level of parental involvement and support in schools.

Objective: To see a 10% increase in parental involvement.

Strategies:

- Establish a baseline by targeting home visits for at-risk students
- Have local media showcase positive parental involvement
- Track number of open house attendees, parent-link communications and "coffee with the counselor" attendees
- Educate parents on how to be involved with their children (academic and other)

Challenge 2: Lack of communication between students, parents and educators

Goal: Increase access to information for students, parents, and educators

Objective: School staff works toward intentional relationships with students and continue those relationships via increased communication.

Strategies:

- Increase usage of student advisory groups
 - Identify any student with deficient credit and find an educator they feel connected to and their situation/home/families
 - Continue to explore all avenues of communication (i.e. face-to-face, phone, email, etc.) with students and parents
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Challenge 3: Gangs and substance abuse

Goal: Decrease gang involvement for middle school and high school youth.

Objective: By June 2011, identify, educate and provide resources to an additional 150 youth involved in gangs.

Strategies:

- Utilize community collaboration, faith based support and school support
 - Multidisciplinary agencies – sharing resources and mentoring.
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Challenge 4: Lack of school connectedness

Goal: Increase school connectedness for all students.

Objective: By December 31, 2010 each student can identify a person, program or activity that makes them feel connected to their school.

Strategies:

- Identify the students who do not "show" well on the connectedness survey (currently done at USD 259)
 - In-service teachers on way to connect with all students above just being in the classroom (currently done at USD 259 but not at all schools)
 - Identify other students in the school who can build relationships with students who may not be connected to a school or a program
 - Identify community groups to provide connectedness for schools
 - Have more group activities during classroom time so students can build relationships with others during class
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Challenge 5: Teen pregnancy

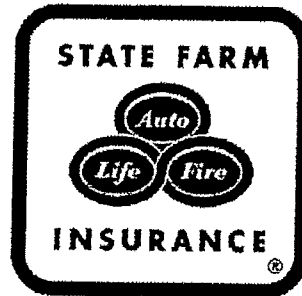
Goal: To decrease the percentage rate of teen pregnancy in our region.

Objective: By 2010, decrease the number of teen moms by 10%.

Strategies:

- Require parenting classes freshman year for boys and girls to educate teens on the expenses of having a child
- Initiate meet and greet with teen moms

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



KANSAS
VOLUNTEER COMMISSION