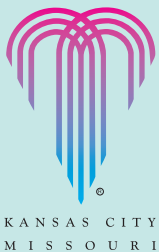




Not graduating impacts our community.

Kansas City Dropout Prevention Summit Report

Oct. 5, 2009



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Executive Summary

Kansas City's Dropout Prevention Summit

The Kansas City Dropout Prevention Summit, one of 105 held in states and cities across the United States, brought together businesses, philanthropy groups, non-profits, the educational community, school districts, city officials, the faith-based community and numerous young people who are in school as well as those who have dropped out. Over a one-month period, from September to October 2009, these stakeholders shared their knowledge of the local dropout problem, their ideas for future dropout prevention efforts, and made commitments to action for the next three years. More than 240 people attended the pre-summit focus groups, and 187 people shared their visions and commitments at the day-long summit. The City of Kansas City, Mo., Youth Advocacy Office, a division of the City Manager's Office, served as the host organization and Draper Communications provided facilitation and reporting assistance.



The process

The Kansas City dropout prevention plan began when an **advisory committee** invited key committee stakeholders from all sectors of the community to attend **pre-summit focus groups**. The focus groups were broken down into categories, including: business and philanthropic representatives, the faith-based community, not-for-profit and educational participants and young people. These focus groups shared their analysis of the current situation, opportunities and challenges.

In October, many of the focus group participants came together again for the Kansas City Dropout Prevention Summit. This time, they were divided into five groups and asked to focus on different categories that had been rated as important by the focus groups. The **summit strategy groups** further refined the ideas the focus groups voted to have the most merit. They also detailed which stakeholder groups should be responsible for each activity and developed a timeline for action. In addition, the summit participants made commitments to action at a commitment ceremony.

Who Participated

The Kansas City Dropout Prevention Summit included stakeholder participation from every key group in the Kansas City area.

- **Youth:** In preparation for the Kansas City Dropout Prevention Summit, planners interviewed more than 50 young people who had dropped out of school; 85 students attended the pre-summit focus groups and/or the summit, including students from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, East High School, Cristo Rey, DeVry, Central High School, Lincoln High School, Hope Academy and Kansas City Academy.
- **Youth Commissioners:** Members of the Kansas City Youth Commission.
- **Businesses:** Owners and representatives of various businesses in the Kansas City community.
- **Representatives of city and county departments and federal education officials:** including the City of Kansas City, Mo., Jackson County Family Court, the City's Parks and Recreation Department and others.
- **Educators:** including representatives from Kansas City public schools and charter schools; the Ruskin School District; Center School district; Hickman Mills School district; several pre-school centers; and UMKC education department.
- **Faith-based community**
- **Elected officials:** including a U.S. Senator, state senator, City Councilmembers, school board members, and/or their representatives.
- **Neighborhood representatives**
- **Representatives of more than 70 nonprofit organizations.**
- **School district officials and board members:** representing the Kansas City, Missouri School District, Hickman Mills district, Grandview district, Center District and North Kansas City district.

(for a full list of groups represented see Appendix 4 on page 51)

Starting Points

As the summit's work began, participants received some basic information about the causes and impact of the dropout problem. The Alliance for Excellent Education projects that about one-fourth of the graduating class in 2009 in Missouri and Kansas will not graduate. The alliance estimates that the lifetime economic impact from those dropouts could mean \$5.3 billion in lost income in Missouri and \$2.4 billion in Kansas.



Top Five Reasons for Leaving School

- Classes weren't interesting
- Missed too many days and couldn't catch up
- Friends weren't interested in school
- Too much freedom and too few rules in my life
- Was failing in school

KC School District Survey 2008-9 –secondary students, issues raised

Dealing with bullies	18%	Drug awareness	15%
Self-esteem	11%	School violence	6%
Grief, separation	10%	Home/community violence	9%
Stress	5%	Study skills	5%

Gallup Poll/America’s Promise Index Kansas City findings

<p>Hope: the ideas and energy we have for the future. Hope drives attendance, credits earned, and GPA of high school students. Hope predicts GPA and retention in college, and hope scores are more robust predictors of college success than are high school GPA, SAT, and ACT scores.</p>	<p>Hopeful – 50%</p>	<p>Stuck – 33%</p>	<p>Discouraged – 17%</p>
<p>Engagement: the involvement in and enthusiasm for school. Engagement distinguishes between high-performing and low-performing schools.</p>	<p>Engaged – 50%</p>	<p>Not engaged- 30%</p>	<p>Actively disengaged – 20%</p>
<p>Well-being: how we think about and experience our lives. Well-being tells us how our students are doing today and predicts their success in the future. High school freshmen with high well-being earn more credits with a higher GPA than peers with low well-being. The student who is thriving earns 10% more credits and a 2.9 GPA (out of 4.0), whereas a student with low well-being, completing fewer credits, earns a 2.4 GPA.</p>	<p>Thriving – 63%</p>	<p>Struggling – 38%</p>	<p>Suffering – 1%</p>

Coordination with School Districts and other Dropout-Prevention Efforts

The Kansas City Dropout Prevention Summit made an effort to build upon the foundation of other activities already going on in the community. We convened an advisory committee of key dropout prevention efforts to guide our planning. We met with numerous school district officials, including Kansas City Missouri District officials, to understand their current plans such as the KCMO district’s current Accountability Plan. We also developed a comprehensive list of current dropout-prevention efforts in the Kansas City area.

See starting points from the KCMO Accountability Plan in appendix 3.

Pre-summit focus groups	Summit strategy groups	Actions/commitments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business/philanthropic community • Faith-based community • Not-for-profit/education • Youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate across boundaries • Put more emphasis on the parental and community part of the equation • Increase community support for the value of education • Expand programs to give one-on-one attention to students • Enhance business involvement in school-to-work programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-6 months: what needs to be done • 1 year: what's different • 3 years: what's different
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current situation • Opportunities • Challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action steps • Responsibilities • Big ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timelines • Commitments for action

Chart 1: Building upon the starting points, the pre-summit focus groups assessed the current situation and identified opportunities and challenges. The summit strategy groups identified big ideas and specified action steps and responsibilities. The summit participants made commitments at the commitment ceremony at the summit.

Focus groups: key needs to be addressed

The focus groups held before the America's Promise Dropout Summit identified five major sets of concerns they felt needed to be addressed to impact the dropout problem. These needs were not the only ones discussed, but they represent those that received the most votes from the focus groups.

1. Collaborate across boundaries.

- a. Find a way to let the community know what help schools need from the community.
- b. Increase collaboration between community leaders, the faith-based community and school districts.

2. Put more focus on the parental and community part of the equation.

- a. Strengthen the relationship between parents and teachers.
- b. Develop supports to help communities deal with students who feel like no one cares about them.

3. Increase community support for the value of education.

- a. Change community standards toward the importance of education.
- b. Develop and communicate a consistent approach from all parts of the community.

4. Expand programs that give one-on-one attention to students.

- a. Expand mentoring and after-school programs.
- b. Increase early-childhood, reading and pre-high school prevention efforts.

5. Enhance business involvement in school-to-work programs.



- a. Build upon existing business mentoring and internship programs.
- b. Bring businesses together with schools to connect education with life.

More details about what the focus groups said about these needs can be found in appendix 1.

“Big Ideas” Running through the Conversations

Some of the concerns and ideas that the participants discussed did not fit neatly into any of the action steps, yet received enough attention from the groups to merit mention. These include:

- **Trinity of dropout prevention:** The three key groups in dropout prevention efforts are students, teachers and parents (with mentors acting in a parental role when necessary). Whenever possible, these groups should work together and reach decisions jointly to ensure the best success. For example, parent-teacher conferences should become parent-teacher-student conferences, to make sure students are engaged in planning their own futures.
- **Young people need to be involved in designing services for themselves:** When issues affecting young people are being discussed or programs to serve young people are being designed, young people need to be engaged and involved. Participants said we need to make sure young people are at the table to discuss programs and services that affect them, and that they are engaged in conversations about how to improve education and help young people succeed.
- **Students drop out because they feel no adult cares:** In preparation for the summit, we interviewed dozens of students who have dropped out, and more joined in the conversations at the summit. They repeatedly told us that they felt no one adult cared if they stayed in school. Some students said that some teachers seem to want poor-performing or troublesome students to fail so they will not disrupt or slow down the rest of the class. Many said that if they had felt one adult cared, they might not have dropped out.
- **Learning that is connected to careers is more motivating:** Students want to see the connection between what they are learning and their future. Programs such as internships, job shadowing and other school-to-work programs are useful in helping students make the connection.
- **Parents need teachers:** Several groups separately discussed the concept of creating a Parents as Teachers-type organization to help parents learn to be supportive of their children’s education. Since some parents did not successfully complete school themselves or do not know or understand the value of education, participants felt that helping them learn educational values and skills could be helpful. They also thought that parents could be connected to school earlier, therefore receiving more support in helping students succeed.

- **We should communicate with parents when their children are successful, not just when they are failing.** A recurring idea was that we let parents know when their children are failing, but we don't have a mechanism for letting parents know when their children are doing well. In addition to talking about dropout problems, we should broadcast more success stories, and communicate hope and build confidence. One idea was to utilize the dropout prevention hotlines currently in place to call parents with good reports on their children.
- **Each child should have an individualized graduation plan.** Several groups expressed similar ideas about this. They said schools, counselors, parents and mentoring groups should work together to create an individualized plan for each student that takes into account career goals, individual strengths and needs for help in specific areas.
- **Today's mentored students are tomorrow's mentors.** The groups liked the idea of using students who have "graduated" from mentoring programs as mentors for the next wave of at-risk students.
- **Students learn better from their own peer group.** Students repeatedly told us they would like more tutors and mentors from their own age group, rather than older adults. They also liked the idea of college students working with high schools students, since this also reinforces the possibility of going on to higher education.
- **Dropout prevention needs to begin as early as possible:** The community needs to address dropout prevention even before children start kindergarten, and it's essential to pay attention to risk factors in middle school in order to get help to students before it's too late. Ninth grade is a key point for making sure students are ready to finish high school.
- **An "adopt a school" approach could be valuable:** Several groups discussed the merits of having churches, corporations or neighborhood groups adopt a specific school in order to expand the resources available and build relationships across the community.

The Action Steps: a summary

The summit strategy groups took the needs developed by the pre-summit focus groups and developed ten specific action steps they want to the Kansas City community to take. Each action builds upon a need expressed by the focus groups, and includes specific timelines for action.

1. Collaborate Across Boundaries

In both the pre-summit focus groups and the summit strategy groups, there was a great deal of discussion about collaboration. The participants developed a plan for creating a dropout consortium that would coordinate information, resources and transportation to dropout-prevention programs.



Action Steps

- **Develop a dropout consortium that works across boundaries to inform stakeholders about the dropout problem and give accurate information on its causes and solutions.**
- **Create a central resource center to gather together details about needs and current services and coordinate transportation efforts to get students to programs included in the central resource center.**

2: Strengthen the trinity: parents, teachers and students working together

The participants in the focus groups and the summit have several ideas for strengthening the relationship of what they called the trinity: parents, students and teachers. They choose two key approaches, one that involves bringing together the members of the trinity with other key stakeholders; a second which focuses on increasing safety both within and outside schools.

Action Steps

- ⑩ **Create an advocacy group of students, parents, educators and the community.**
- ⑩ **Annually assess district and building safety needs.**

3: Increase community support for the value of education.

Another major theme in the discussions was the need to build upon the current level of community support for education. This group shared some ideas that came from other groups around increasing levels of parental involvement. It also develop a specific plan for increasing community engagement at the neighborhood level, in order to bring the community, businesses and cities into the dropout prevention process. The summit groups choose two major strategies:

Action steps

- ⑩ **Find new resources to meet the basic needs of families.**
- ⑩ **Increase parental involvement and increase parenting by the community.**

4: Expand programs that give one-on-one attention to students.

Both the pre-summit focus groups and the summit strategy groups had a lot to say about the role of one-on-one mentoring and tutoring programs in attacking the dropout rate. They identified two major strategies that could help reduce the dropout rate.

Action Steps

- ⑩ **Develop a specific academic career support network and progress report for each child.**
- ⑩ **Expand programs that give one-on-one attention to students.**

5: Enhance business involvement in school-to-work programs.

The final major area of planning encompasses the relationship between Kansas City businesses and schools. The business community discussed the role and value of school-to-career programs and called for an expansion of these programs and an increased relationship between businesses and schools. The summit participants refined the previous work done by the focus groups and identified three major strategies in this area.

Action Steps

- ⑩ **Students have access to a mentoring relationship with a responsible adult.**
- ⑩ **Students have a clear vision of the resources and options for careers based on their experience in high school.**
- ⑩ **Students have been exposed to life skill, leadership and character skill building programs.**

A detailed discussion of each action step and what the groups said about it is included in the following section, Action steps: The conversations.

Commitments

Beginning at the summit and continuing after it has ended, participants are being asked to make commitments to take on specific actions identified as action steps for addressing dropout problems. At a commitment ceremony the day of the summit, some participants made the following commitments to action.

Kansas City Youth and Family Master Plan

One of the key action steps developed by the participants is a dropout consortium that allows the community to take a “big picture” approach to the dropout problem and career development. The City through Councilwoman Cindy Circo has committed to action in this arena. At the Kansas City Dropout Prevention Summit, Circo announced that the city will work with partners to implement a blueprint outlining best practices and strategies to prepare our young people academically and in the workplace.

The Kansas City Youth and Family Master Plan has been launched as a result of the summit. The plan will address one of the major areas of need identified by the summit participants, the need for collaboration across boundaries. By the end of 2009, it will begin to consider ways to enhance the community’s programs, services and quality of life for youth and families. Youth Master Planning is increasingly used by cities across the United States to address the needs of youth and family. The National League of Cities, the California League of Cities, the California School Boards Association, and the California Cities, Counties and Schools Partnership have all strongly encouraged their members to engage in youth master planning.

The Master Plan process will be guided by an Advisory Committee, which will be recruited beginning in late 2009. Additional community volunteers will assist the Advisory Committee with developing and implementing its plans. The committee will build upon the Kansas City Dropout Summit assessment of needs and ideas for action. Its 25-30 community stakeholder members will:

- Determine a vision.
- Set goals.
- Set standards for youth and community participation in family-related issues.
- Develop an understanding of the issues impacting youth and families.
- Review existing services.
- Develop a measurable action plan to guide youth and family programs, services and facilities in the City of Kansas City, Mo., over the next 5 to 10 years.

Recruitment is Underway

Individuals with expertise or experience in youth and family issues, and individuals who represent youth and family interests from multiple perspectives are encouraged to apply to serve on the advisory committee. The advisory committee is expected to represent the full richness of Kansas City diversity and age groups, including youth in the following types of categories:

- Private and public education
- Child development professionals
- Housing
- Faith based community
- Youth sports
- Non-English speaking families
- Mental health community
- Fitness and well-being experts
- Parents and guardians
- Non-profit organizations
- Technology experts
- Law enforcement providers
- Public transportation officials
- Business community.

The City of Kansas City will begin recruitment of Advisory Committee members on Dec. 1, 2009.

Additional Commitments

- **The City of Kansas City, Mo.**, committed to creating an enhanced and expanded clearing house to catalogue all youth services and resources.
- **Federal Student Aid** committed to help counsel students, parents and counselors about how to prepare for and plan for education beyond high school.
- **The Ivanhoe Neighborhood** committed to making its community center available for activities for youth that encourage positive interaction and promote healthy habits that lead to higher education appreciation and attainment.

- **The Ad Hoc Group Against Crime** committed to working on bridging the gap between youth, parents and teachers and the greater community.
- **BE1** committed to collaborating with the City of Kansas City, Mo., to create a tracking system to recruit, train and implement mentors at youth-serving organizations. Goal: to connect 1,000 mentors to students.
- **University of Missouri-Kansas City** committed to a partnership to provide college students a direct link to mentor and tutor students who are academically challenged.
- **Victory Wail Church** committed to mentoring youth in Genesis and Hogan schools.
- **More 2** committed to providing 20 mentors for at-risk youth.
- **Kansas City Power & Light** committed to exposing students to careers and professional opportunities through high school career tours.
- **The City of Kansas City, Mo.** committed to expanding its current internship program to high school students and to increase the number of job shadowing experiences by 20 percent.
- **CVS** committed to providing internships for high school students who are interested in science to provide tangible career exploration programs for middle school students.
- **The Boys and Girls Club** committed to providing individual support and assistance to help its members graduate from high school on time with post-secondary plans.
- **The Center for Equitable Education** committed to focus on work force development, environmental education and green careers training and placement.
- **Target** committed to provide professional mentors and financial support for leadership development initiatives.
- **University of Missouri-Kansas City** committed to a partnership to provide college students a direct link to mentor and tutor students who are academically challenged.
- **JE Dunn** committed to making a financial contribution to support academic incentives that are a direct result of this action plan.
- **State Farm** committed to making a financial contribution to support academic incentives that are a direct result of this action plan.

The Action Steps: the conversations

The actions steps are a combination of the ideas developed by the pre-summit focus groups and the refinements added by the summit strategy groups. They represent the actions the participants said they most wanted to pursue. The descriptions below show the comments and priorities set by the pre-summit focus groups and by the summit strategy groups. The discussion gives more detail about what the participants said about why the issue was important and what they hoped to accomplish through action.



1. Collaborate Across Boundaries

In both the pre-summit focus groups and the summit strategy groups, there was a great deal of discussion about collaboration. The participants developed a plan for creating a dropout consortium that would coordinate information, resources and transportation to dropout-prevention programs.

Action Steps

- **Develop a dropout consortium that works across boundaries to inform stakeholders about the dropout problem and give accurate information on its causes and solutions.**
- **Create a central resource center to gather together details about needs and current services and coordinate transportation.**
- **Coordinate transportation efforts to get students to programs included in the central resource center.**

The needs it addresses:

- We should find a way to let the community know what help schools need from the community.
- We should find ways to increase collaboration between community leaders, the faith-based community and school districts

Discussion

The pre-summit focus groups said we need to find a way to let the community know what help the schools need. They suggested that schools could list their needs so that organizations or people who wanted to help out could know what was needed. They also talked about the value of creating a dropout consortium. Others said there should be a central clearinghouse for dropout prevention resources or a central resource site where all available resources and contacts are listed. The groups also talked about the need for a more holistic approach to dropout prevention.

Those groups additionally developed ideas around increased collaboration between community and faith-based leaders and school districts. They suggested that a coalition of leaders could help engage the community in dropout prevention efforts. They also said this group could encourage foundations and public/private partnerships to get involved. They also thought that a coalition might help to coordinate efforts across sectors and groups.

At the summit, the strategy groups further refined these ideas into plans to create increased collaboration in three interrelated ways to give the Kansas City community a clear idea of why students drop out or are at risk. The central resource coalition (CRC) would work at the district level to identify needs. The toolkit would bring together resources. Then the coalition would link community centers to the CRC and coordinate the transportation necessary to get students to the right programs.

Action Steps

The two inter-related action steps they identified include:

Develop a dropout consortium that works across boundaries to inform stakeholders about the dropout problem and give accurate information on its causes and solutions. The overall approach the strategy group favored involves conducting a needs assessment to develop a picture of student needs as well as identifying stakeholder resources. The dropout consortium would connect with every school, including charter schools and public schools in both Kansas and Missouri, to gather attendance and truancy data, develop a profile of dropouts, and assess transportation needs. Then the consortium might apply for donations or grants to provide share-a-ride, free bus passes or an adopt-a-bus program. The group said the consortium should capture the imagination of the community and give stakeholders an accurate image of the dropout rate.

The consortium would begin its work by meeting within 3-6 months of the dropout prevention summit. It would then connect with all school districts and ask each to designate a coordinator who would be responsible for collecting data on attendance, truancy and dropout rates. The consortium would track the data and look for patterns. Within three years, the consortium would have created a system that profiles what a dropout “looks like,” would have

identified red flags or indicators, and would have an understanding of family issues that contribute to the dropout rate. The consortium would then target students who are at risk of dropping out with services.

Create a central resource center to gather together details about needs and current services. The central resource center, or CRC, would provide a central list of needs across school districts, including both public and charter schools. The group suggested that the Youth Advocacy Office or Neighborhood and Community Services Department should then construct a central resource database showing the programs that are available.

The final action necessary is to coordinate transportation efforts to get students to programs included in the central resource center. Once the central resource center is operating, it would seek donations and/or grants from organizations such as philanthropies, the Area Transportation Authority, Share-a-Ride, American Investment and Recovery Act, or Title I for elementary and secondary schools. Organizations could adopt a bus to defray some costs. The coalition would develop statistics on where and when transportation is most needed. Parents could also help by forming carpools.

2: Strengthen the trinity: parents, teachers and students working together

The participants in the focus groups and the summit had several ideas for strengthening the relationship of what they called the trinity: parents, students and teachers. They choose two key approaches, one that involves bringing together the members of the trinity with other key stakeholder; a second which focuses on increasing safety both within and outside schools.

Action Steps

- **Create an advocacy group of students, parents, educators and the community.**
- **Annually assess district and building safety needs.**

The needs it addresses:

- We should create an advocacy group of students, parents, educators and the community that annually assesses the needs of each district and/or building.
- Parents, teachers and educators should work together to find ways to address the needs of students who are at risk of dropping out.

Discussion

The focus groups put a lot of emphasis on finding ways to strengthen the relationship between parents and teachers. They suggested that the community could develop focus groups for parents of young people who are on the verge of dropping out, so that parents had some support for dealing with this problem. They also said we should be looking for ways to strengthen the relationships between parents and teachers. One suggestion the participants liked was to create a parent resource center in each school.

Secondly, the focus groups talked about the need to address the feeling some students have that no one cares about their educational success. Young people told us they think some teachers may want certain students to drop out, because they are “hard to love” kids. Teachers said that they don’t always have time to give special attention to students, even when they know a student might be failing. The groups thought that providing professional development training for teachers as well as the entire school staff from the janitor to the principal might be valuable.

At the summit, participants further refined these ideas. They talked about the primary importance of the community, parents and schools providing interrelated direct, visible support for student success. They said that parents need to have a clear understanding of the role they play in their child’s education. They also wanted to see community leadership in the schools. Additionally, they said we need to stabilize classrooms and that teachers need to utilize new methods of teaching.

A group of Lincoln students that attended the summit left some comments on this area. They suggested that parents should get weekly progress reports; that schools should make classes more interesting; that we should find ways to increase communication between parents and teachers; and that parents should encourage and praise students when they get good grades.



Action steps

Create an advocacy group of students, parents, educators and the community. The summit participants suggested that students, schools and parents should work harder to engage parents in school activities. They suggested that we expand the definition of parent-teacher conferences, so that they become parent-student-teacher conferences. The group liked the idea of creating an advocacy group of students, parents, educators and the community that annually assesses the needs of each district and/or building. This process would begin with creating an assessment tool to measure needs, and then devising strategies to meet the top-priority needs. The advocacy group would also need a structure for measuring progress and holding people accountable. Once these tools were in place, the group could begin to recruit members from all groups. Finally, the group would celebrate its successes.

Annually assess district and building safety needs. This strategy is aimed at improving safety in and on the routes to and from school. The participants said the advocacy groups created in the strategy above could also take on this task. The participants want to see schools being used by the community, and they said property values can be expected to rise around well-maintained schools.

3: Increase community support for the value of education.

Another major theme in the discussions was the need to build upon the current level of community support for education. The summit strategy groups favored increasing levels of parental involvement. They also developed a specific plan for increasing community engagement at the neighborhood level, in order to bring the community, businesses and cities into the dropout prevention process. The summit groups choose two major strategies:

Action steps

- **Find new resources to meet the basic needs of families.**
- **Increase parental involvement and increase parenting by the community.**

The needs it addresses:

- We must change community standards toward the importance of education.
- We should develop and communicate a consistent approach from all parts of the community.

Discussion

The pre-summit focus groups said we need to change community standards toward the importance of education. They wanted to encourage the community to put a high value on education by, for example: electing qualified, experienced people to the school board; communicating the value of community involvement; and showing support for legislation that

will provide pay and professional training for teachers. The groups also liked the idea of using community engagement to tackle the dropout problem.

At the summit, the strategy group discussed ways to increase community support for education. Once again, this group focused on the value of the trinity: parents, students and teachers working together. Group members suggested expanding mentoring programs to including mentoring for parents. It also said the community must parent when parents cannot do the job. They said college should be the goal for every child.

Many of the group's suggestions had to do with the role of businesses in supporting education. One popular idea was starting programs to let businesses, neighborhoods or churches adopt a specific school. The group also suggested corporations might "compete" over how much time they donate to the school districts. They also commented that a corporate approach to marketing and branding could be an effective way to encourage the community to connect with and contact the schools.

The group liked the model the Ivanhoe Neighborhood has adopted, which includes community engagement, block contracts, neighborhood staff, and corporate and civic involvement. They also found the Harlem Children's Zone to be an effective model of a holistic approach to supporting young people's success.

Action steps

Find new resources to meet the basic needs of families. This group echoed an idea from another summit group about the need for a central clearinghouse of information. For this group, a goal would be promoting community involvement and resources. The group also suggested that neighborhood preservation is a key tool for enhancing family health.

Increase parental involvement and increase parenting by the community. This group suggested developing contacts for parents to hold them accountable for their children's success. It also found a need for increased adult education such as mentors in the home.

4: Expand programs that give one-on-one attention to students.

Both the pre-summit focus groups and the summit strategy groups had a lot to say about the role of one-on-one mentoring and tutoring programs in attacking the dropout rate. They identified two major strategies that could help reduce the dropout rate.

Action Steps

- **Develop a specific academic career support network and progress report for each child.**
- **Expand programs that give one-on-one attention to students.**

The needs it addresses:

- We should develop a specific academic career support network and progress report for each child.
- We want to expand programs that give one-on-one attention to students.

Discussion

The pre-summit focus groups discussed the need to increase early-childhood, reading and pre-high school dropout prevention efforts. At the same time, they suggested a need for more prevention resources to be targeted at middle school students. They said we need to identify the early risk factors for dropping out and make sure there are programs to meet the needs of young children. In addition, they said there are not enough reading teachers in the schools, and that there should be coordination between school districts on early childhood education. The participants felt that Parents as Teachers, Head Start, Healthy Families and Operation Breakthrough all provide valuable early-childhood resources, but they are stretched too thin.

At the summit, participants further refined their strategies. They expanded the strategy of providing mentoring and after-school programs, finding a need to emphasize life skills in settings like homeroom. They talked about the value of a customized plan for each child. For the summit groups, this strategy would be successful when all students were performing at grade level. They defined success by increased student interest in school, student confidence, and customization of teaching so that each child is challenged.

The most valuable strategy for this group was to provide a year-round reading program through the Freedom Schools. The group participants¹ committed to working together to allow the Freedom Schools to provide a year-round reading program. They said that standardized benchmark exams by subject are already in place. To enhance reading levels, schools would be encouraged to make students practice and require reading at their grade level. Parents would be encouraged to challenge their own children to read at the required level.

¹ Deana Ervin, CEO KC Freedom School Initiative; Vanessa Wates, City of Kansas City, Mo.; Irene Von Collins, coordinator of schools and community relations; Stephanie Milby, Director Project Safe, Rose Brooks; Ann Greene, Literacy Council Kansas City, tutor; Chris Williams, KC Youth Commissioners and UMKC student, graduate of KCMSD; Elva V. Carrillo, Cristo Rey Kansas City, and Darrel Rocker, KCPD.

Action steps

Develop a specific academic career support network and progress report for each child. The group suggested that planning for the program would begin with a pilot project at DeLaSalle; mentors would assist counselors in setting up customized plans and student participants would be recruited through advertising. Within a year, the Rose Brooks Center would have a plan for each child in its program. Commissioner Chris Williams would gather other successful students to serve as mentors. The Kansas City Freedom Schools would support academic goals by using more than 200 collegiate mentors to teach. At the end of three years, all graduating 12th graders would have completed at least one internship and there would be career oriented classes in every school. The board of education or school districts (the group was not clear where to assign responsibility) would have a triage process in place to help schools meet these goals.

Expand programs that give one-on-one attention to students. The group decided the most important element of victory for this strategy would be creating a job-ready and college-ready workforce. They liked the idea of former students becoming mentors. The group said the process would begin with bring together key groups already involved in mentoring. These groups would then develop a plan for expanding services. Within three years, the effort would have increased the number of businesses and organizations providing mentoring, and students who had graduated from the program would be mentors themselves.

5: Enhance business involvement in school-to-work programs.

The final major area of planning encompassed the relationship between Kansas City businesses and schools. The business community discussed the role and value of school-to-career programs and called for an expansion of these programs and an increased relationship between businesses and schools. The summit participants refined the previous work done by the focus groups and identified three major strategies in this area.

Action Steps

- Students have access to a mentoring relationship with a responsible adult.**
- Students have a clear vision of the resources and options for careers based on their experience in high school.**
- Students have been exposed to life skill, leadership and character skill building programs.**

The needs it addresses:

- We should build upon existing business mentoring and internship programs
- We need to bring businesses together with schools to connect education with life.

Discussion

The pre-summit focus groups said that many beneficial school-to-career programs are already in place, but they need to be expanded. They also called for a stronger relationship between businesses and schools. They said there is a need to make students more aware of paths to success, and to increase job shadowing and career education. The groups also suggested businesses could do more to support parents. They liked the models of DST and CVS's mentoring and internship programs.

The groups also wanted to find ways to make new connections between businesses and schools. They wanted to start making school-to-careers connections for even young children. They said career counselors should help kids develop a dream for a successful career and that we should encourage businesses to help prepare students to be ready to learn. The summit strategy group said that in order to successfully achieve this goal, businesses would have to do more than just commit money to dropout prevention; they would also have to commit human capital resources. They said students would benefit from the wisdom of being shown, not told, the value of business skills. In the future, they would like to see students being mentored at workplaces as well as in the schools. The group suggested a defined number of businesses should be assigned to work with each school. In order to achieve this vision, they said the schools will have to begin to see visitors as a benefit, and they suggested that there is a need to rebuild relationships between schools and businesses.

Action steps

Students have access to a mentoring relationship with a responsible adult. This strategy begins with the community identifying urban core youth from multiple ethnic backgrounds who have ability but need mentoring. To begin the process, business and faith-based leaders, school administrators and students should meet to develop ideas. This group will identify new sources of mentors and bring them to the table. Within a year, the business community will be providing mentoring and training in the schools to help these students build skills that will lead to their success in the workplace. They will also be involved in internships provided by the businesses. By the end of three years, these students will have emerged as leaders in their own career areas. They will then commit to mentoring other younger students.

Students have a clear vision of the resources and options for careers based on their experience in high school. The implementation of this strategy will begin with a dialogue between businesses and schools about what this vision should entail. Then businesses within the city will begin working with school districts to develop a career exploration curriculum track. This curriculum should include human resources, health, natural resources, arts, communication, business, industrial engineering, and retail industry. At the end of three years, businesses will offer

an increased number of internships that offer students hands-on experience and the ability to learn more about career options.

Students have been exposed to life skill, leadership and character skill building programs. This strategy will begin with student, families, the community and businesses jointly identifying the elements of these programs. They should consider how students will be made to understand the importance of developing a basic level of effective communication, respect, presentation and discipline. The programs should include a measure of student accountability and teach core values and life skills. A year from now, the programs will be up and running. Each student will have an individual success plan that allows him or her to see progress toward these skills.



Timetable for action: Ten Key Activities

Action Steps	3-6 months: what needs to be done	1 year: what's different	3 years: what's different
<p>1. Develop a dropout consortium that works across boundaries to inform stakeholders and give accurate information on dropout causes and solutions.</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business community • Faith-based community • Schools • Non-profits • Other stakeholders 	<p>Identify key stakeholders</p> <p>Define role of consortium</p> <p>Connect with each school</p>	<p>The consortium has a system for identifying at risk students and the tools to provide help. The consortium is coordinating transportation to sites where programs are available.</p>	<p>The consortium continues to operate.</p>
<p>2. Create a central resource center to gather together details about needs and current services and coordinate transportation.</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dropout consortium 	<p>Conduct a needs assessment of all school districts</p> <p>Begin planning to provide transportation for all Central Resource Center programs</p>	<p>The consortium has developed a central database of programs that are available.</p> <p>The consortium has begun to coordinate transportation for all Central Resource Center programs.</p>	<p>The consortium continues to update its central database of programs that are available.</p> <p>The consortium continues to coordinate transportation for all Central Resource Center programs.</p>

Action Steps	3-6 months: what needs to be done	1 year: what's different	3 years: what's different
<p>3. Create an advocacy group of students, parents, educators and the community.</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Schools • Parents 	<p>Create a group</p> <p>Develop measurement tool</p> <p>Expand parent teacher conferences to parent-teacher-student conferences</p>	<p>The advocacy group is meeting and assessing needs for each building annually.</p>	<p>Parents, students and teachers are more engaged and working together more closely.</p>
<p>4. Annually assess district and building safety needs.</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Schools • Parents 	<p>Use the advocacy group (above) to annually assess safety needs of each school,</p>	<p>The advocacy group is meeting and assessing needs for each building annually.</p>	<p>The advocacy group is continuing to meet and assess needs for each building annually.</p>
<p>5. Increase parental involvement and increase parenting by the community.</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Parents 	<p>Develop contracts for parents to hold them accountable for student success.</p>	<p>Parents have signed contracts holding them accountable for student success or failure.</p>	<p>Parents have signed contracts holding them accountable for student success or failure.</p>

Action Steps	3-6 months: what needs to be done	1 year: what's different	3 years: what's different
<p>6. Ensure that students have access to a mentoring relationship with a responsible adult.</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business community • Faith-based community • Schools 	<p>Identify youth who need monitoring</p> <p>Meet to identify sources of new mentors</p>	<p>The business community is providing mentoring, training and internships.</p>	<p>Students trained in first year are mentoring new students.</p>
<p>7. Ensure that students have a clear vision of the resources and options for careers based on their experience in high school.</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business community • Schools 	<p>Develop career exploration curriculum track.</p>	<p>Businesses and schools are working together to expand internships and career experiences.</p>	<p>Businesses are offering an increased number of internships and career experiences.</p>
<p>8. Ensure that students have been exposed to life, leadership and character skill building programs.</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Families • Businesses • Communities 	<p>Develop program for teaching communication, respect, presentation and discipline.</p>	<p>Programs are being offered. Each student has individual success plan.</p>	<p>Programs are being offered. Each student has individual success plan.</p>

Action Steps	3-6 months: what needs to be done	1 year: what's different	3 years: what's different
<p>9. Develop a specific academic career support network and progress report for each child.</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DeLaSalle, Rose Brooks • Schools • Businesses 	<p>Start a pilot project at DeLaSalle</p> <p>Mentors and counselors set up customized plans</p>	<p>Rose Brooks Center has a plan for every child in its programs.</p> <p>More than 200 collegiate mentors are working with students</p>	<p>All 12th graders have completed at least one internship before graduation.</p> <p>There are career-oriented classes in every high school.</p> <p>A triage process is in place to help schools meet these goals.</p>
<p>10. Expand programs that give one-on-one attention to students.</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All groups currently doing mentoring 	<p>Discuss how to expand services.</p>	<p>The groups providing mentoring have developed a plan for expanded services.</p>	<p>There are expanded mentoring programs provided by a larger number of businesses and organizations.</p> <p>Students who have completed the mentoring program are now mentors themselves.</p>

Commitments to key actions

Action Steps	Initial Commitments
<p>1. Develop a dropout consortium that works across boundaries to inform stakeholders and gives accurate information on dropout causes and solutions.</p>	<p>Councilwoman Cindy Circo committed the City to begin a Youth and Master Plan Advisory Committee. The City will begin recruiting the Advisory Committee by Dec. 1, 2009.</p>
<p>2. Create a central resource center to gather together details about needs and current services and coordinate transportation.</p>	<p>The City of Kansas City, Mo., committed to creating an enhanced and expanded clearing house to capture all youth services and resources.</p>
<p>3. Create an advocacy group of students, parents, educators and the community.</p>	<p>Federal Student Aid committed to help counsel students, parents and counselors about how to prepare for and plan for education beyond high school.</p>
<p>4. Annually assess district and building safety needs.</p>	
<p>5. Increase parental involvement and increase parenting by the community.</p>	<p>The Ivanhoe Neighborhood committed to making its community center available for activities for youth that encourage positive interaction and promote healthy habits that lead to higher education appreciation and attainment.</p> <p>The Ad Hoc Group Against Crime committed to working to bridge the gap between youth, parents and teachers and the greater community.</p>

Action Steps	Initial Commitments
<p>6. Ensure that students have access to a mentoring relationship with a responsible adult.</p>	<p>BE1 committed to collaborating with the city of Kansas City to create a tracking system to recruit, train and implement mentors at youth-serving organizations. Goal: to connect 1000 mentors to students.</p> <p>UMKC committed to a partnership to provide college students a direct link to mentor and tutor students who are academically challenged.</p> <p>Victory Wail Church committed to mentoring youth in Genesis and Hogan schools.</p> <p>More 2 committed to providing 20 mentors for at-risk youth.</p>
<p>7. Ensure that students have a clear vision of the resources and options for careers based on their experience in high school.</p>	<p>KCPL committed to exposing students to careers and professional opportunities through high school career tours.</p> <p>The City of Kansas City, Mo., committed to expanding its current internship program to high school students and to increase the number of job shadowing experiences by 20 percent.</p> <p>CVS committed to providing internships for high school students who are interested in science to provide tangible career exploration programs for middle school students.</p> <p>The Boys and Girls Club committed to providing individual support and assistance to help its members graduate from high school on time with post-secondary plans.</p> <p>The Center for Equitable Education committed to focus on workforce development, environmental education and green careers training and placement.</p>

Action Steps	Initial Commitments
8. Ensure that students have been exposed to life, leadership and character skill building programs.	Target committed to provide professional mentors and financial support for leadership development initiatives.
9. Develop a specific academic career support network and progress report for each child.	
10. Expand programs that give one-on-one attention to students.	<p>BE1 committed to collaborating with the city of Kansas City to create a tracking system to recruit, train and implement mentors at youth-serving organizations. Goal: to connect 1000 mentors to students.</p> <p>UMKC committed to a partnership to provide college students a direct link to mentor and tutor students who are academically challenged.</p>
Misc. commitments	<p>JE Dunn committed to make a financial contribution to support academic incentives, which are a direct result of this action plan.</p> <p>State Farm committed to make a financial contribution to support academic incentives, which are a direct result of this action plan.</p>

Action Steps	Initial Commitments
	<p>Sarah Foster committed to dedicating her time to the youth of Kansas City as a mentor and source of information.</p> <p>Chris Williams committed to developing a college entrance application and essay workshop for Kansas City youth.</p> <p>Sharon Nibbelink, principal of Center School, committed to serving her students and their families in every way that she can.</p> <p>Sally Newell of the Center School District committed to serving her students and their families to prevent dropouts.</p> <p>Doug Elmer committed to becoming a mentor.</p> <p>Stephanie Bland committed to becoming more proactive and collaborative in service.</p> <p>Antonette Collins committed to being a mentor.</p>

Appendices

Appendix 1: Focus group results

The focus groups held before the Kansas City dropout summit identified five major sets of strategies they felt would be the most valuable in addressing the dropout problem. These strategies were not the only ones discussed, but they represent those that received the most votes from the focus groups.

1: Collaborate across boundaries.

One of the major strategies the focus groups wanted to develop was increasing collaboration across boundaries in the community.

1. We should find a way to let the community know what help schools need from the community.

The ideas the focus groups said had the most merit.

- Schools should list their needs so that people in the community who want to help know what they can do.
- We need a dropout consortium.
- We need a central clearinghouse for dropout prevention resources.
- We need a central resource site where all available resources and contacts are listed.
- We need to encourage foundation/public/private partnerships.
- We need a more holistic approach across programs.

Other ideas the focus groups discussed:

- There should be a web of services around students including parents, teachers, community leaders, mentors, and tutors.
- Young people need to be involved in developing programs that serve them.



2. We need to find a way to increase collaboration among community leaders, the faith-based community and school districts.

The ideas the focus groups said had the most merit.

- We should develop collaboration with community leaders, faith-based communities and school districts to prevent dropping out through engagement.
- 🕒 We need to encourage foundation/public/private partnerships.
- 🕒 We need a more holistic approach across programs

Other ideas the focus groups discussed:

- Connect suburban church with urban needs in collaboration.
- Territorial feelings often prevent collaboration. Gangs have more unity than groups that work with young people.
- There is a huge lack of networking and communication between groups.
- Community centers could be a huge resource.
- Leaders need to speak to issues of collaboration.
- A program summit might help to look for overlap, gaps and possible areas of collaboration.
- We need greater connections between youth development programs between districts and a regional approach.
- Churches should adopt a school.

2: Put more focus on the parental and community part of the equation.

One of the major strategies the focus groups wanted to develop was putting more focus on the role of parents and communities in nurturing students' education.

1. We should find a ways to strengthen the relationship between parents and teachers.

The ideas the focus groups said had the most merit.

- We should develop focus groups for parents of kids, with separate groups for parents of kids who are on the verge of dropping out and those who have already dropped out.
- We should communicate with parents when their children are successful, not just when they are failing.
- We should strengthen the relationships between parents and teachers.

- We should hold parents accountable for what their children do when they are in out-of-school suspension.
- Each child should have an individualized graduation plan.
- Each school should have a parent resource center.

Other ideas the focus groups discussed:

- Parents don't have control over their kids at home.
- Parents lack knowledge about how to handle their kids.
- In some homes, abuse is a problem.
- In some homes, the parents aren't raising their children because they are incarcerated or not present.
- The schools should be places where community resources are provided. Parents could be offered classes in life skills, budgeting and real estate, for example.
- Adults should be able to get education in the schools.
- Adults should be encouraged to attend meetings at the schools.
- The faith-based community could provide programs for adults who fear going back to school.
- Parents need to be more supportive of teachers.
- There needs to be more connection between home life and school.
- Parents need to be more involved.
- Call parents with encouragement, not just when kids are in trouble.
- Create alternative ways of involvement for parents.
- Identify family needs and support families.
- English language classes to parents.

2. We must find a way to give special attention to students who are failing without putting all the responsibility on teachers who are already strained.

The ideas the focus groups said had the most merit.

- Many students feel like no one cares about them. Teachers feel like they don't always have the time to give them special attention.
- Teachers need professional development training to help them understand and support at risk students.
- Entire school staffs (from janitor to principal) need professional development training on self-respect for others.

- Teachers should have the time to teach curricula that is interesting to students as well as teaching to the test.

Other ideas the focus groups discussed:

- Teachers may not miss dropouts, because they are often “hard to love” kids.
- We have not dangled the right carrot that will motivate students.
- Students, teachers and others who work with students need to develop trust.
- Demographic/cultural shifts are making it hard for teachers to communicate with some students.
- We need to develop new ways for students to express their concerns or make adults aware of problems.
- Teacher burnout is a significant problem.
- There should be “recovery rooms” in each building where students go for short-term suspension. There need to be certified personnel in these rooms.
- Students don’t appreciate teachers’ efforts.
- Schools should offer a nurturing environment that makes students feel valued and safe.
- Standards should be changed so students who are failing are not just passed.

3: Increase community support for the value of education.

The focus groups said we need to change community standards about education.

1. We have to change community standards toward the importance of education.

The ideas the focus groups said had the most merit.

- We should put more value on education as a community.
- We should make students, teachers and parents all accountable.
- We should elect qualified, experienced people to school boards and communicate the value of community involvement.
- The community should show support for legislation that will provide pay and professional training.
- Stimulus money that comes to local education should be used to improve education rather than pay consultants.
- We should use community engagement to tackle the dropout problem.
- We need to educate the community about the importance of finishing school.

Other ideas the focus groups discussed:

- Outside of the schools, there is not enough community support for education.
- Parents value money and working over education.
- We should consider year-round school, Saturday classes, and starting the school day later as possible ways to improve education.
- The community should support higher pay for district teachers.
- When community members see students skipping school, they should stop them and ask why.
- The community should support smaller class size.
- We need to develop a caring community.
- The community has a mindset of not caring about the Kansas City School District.
- The community needs to understand that, when it doesn't vote for bonds, it is creating a massive lower class.

2. We should develop and communicate a consistent approach from all parts of the community.

The ideas the focus groups said had the most merit.

- Bring together the trinity (parent/teacher/student).
- We need to put the school inside the home and take a village approach.

Other ideas the focus groups discussed:

- Broadcast more success stories, communicate hope and build confidence.
- Replace the old “neighborhood” concept by programs that are neighborhood safe to link children to outer world.

4: Expand programs that give one-on-one attention to students.

The focus groups said many good mentoring, tutoring and other one-on-one programs exist, but they need to be expanded and broadened.

1. We need to expand mentoring and after-school programs.

The ideas the focus groups said had the most merit.

- One group said we might create a community education center with teachers for schoolwork and case managers for other assistance.

- We need more after-school programs, especially those that stay open later.
- Social events, like movie nights, will keep young people off the streets. (This applies to Hope Academy in particular).
- We need more tutoring programs after school at the school site.
- We should increase the number of college students working with at-risk students. This work should be supported by colleges.
- We need more mentoring programs that include personal relationship building.

Other ideas the focus groups discussed:

- Basic life skills in classroom are absent, driving, cooking, theater, music, arts curriculum.

2. We should increase early-childhood, reading and pre-high school dropout prevention efforts.

The ideas the focus groups said had the most merit.

- We need to identify early risk factors for dropping out and make sure there are programs to meet the needs of young children.
- We need to invest more in early childhood education.

Other ideas the focus groups discussed:

- There are not enough reading teachers in the schools.
- We need more quality early-childhood programs.
- Early childhood learning should also connect parents to the schools.
- There should be coordination between early education programs and the school districts.
- Parents as Teachers is an untapped resource.
- Head Start, Healthy Families and Operation Breakthrough all provide valuable early-childhood resources, but they are stretched too thin.
- We need to put more resources into prevention at the middle school level.

5: Enhance business involvement in school-to-work programs.

The focus groups discussed many beneficial school-to-career programs, but called for expanded school-to-career programs and a stronger relationship between businesses and schools.

1. We need to build upon existing business mentoring and internship programs.

The ideas the focus groups said had the most merit.

- We need to make students more aware of paths to successful futures.
- We need to increase job shadowing and career education.
- Businesses should do more to support parents.
- We should emulate business DST and CVS-type mentoring and internship programs.
- We need more after-school tutors from the private sector.

2. We need to bring businesses together with schools to connect education with life.

The ideas the focus groups said had the most merit.

- We need to start connecting school to careers for even young children so they see the connection before its too late.
- We need to give students things that interest them in order to help them learn.
- Career counselors should help kids develop a dream for a successful career.
- We should encourage businesses to help prepare students to be ready to learn. For example, pharmaceutical companies might provide health services to students.

Other ideas the focus groups discussed:

- In many schools, technology is lacking or missing.
- Students graduate without business skills.
- There is a need for vo-tech programs.
- Creating partnerships between businesses and schools promotes ownership.



Other ideas that did not fit into larger strategies:

- Opportunities for youth to express concerns/barriers
- Male teachers
- More social services
- Human capital
- Deal with whole child
- Corporate sponsored alternative schools
- Fund nurses, other missing staff
- Reevaluate the hours of school, longer and more flexible
- Change the schedule to fit the new model of students.
- Community and educators need awareness of the changing demographics
- Technology support at home.
- Getting to know students' strengths and weaknesses
- Respect
- Smaller classrooms, individual focus
- Respect the students no matter what
- We need to focus less on discipline more on learning, activities and relationships
- Start school later
- Periodic focus groups of students
- Teachers teach subject, not student so a counselor needs to provide guidance.
- Students must know objective and expectations in the classroom. Students are behind when they arrive in high schools
- Clarity in expectations.
- Remedial support to catch up.
- Career education (4).
Shadowing opportunities (4).
- Focus on trades and entrepreneurship.
- Community-wide focus.
- Green impact zone for student programs
- Attendance Communication –students need to be in school, effect quality of schools
- Reengage parents, make parents care about the child's schooling, you can't reach what you don't know

- Get students who are competent out of dumbed down classes
- Start school later – helps with attendance, learning ability
- More resources to include all aspects of community
- Schools to be welcoming
- Knowing school policies and translating different languages
- Raise dropout age to 18
- Teacher training: cultural training, prepare teachers for the shock of the classroom
- Inform community of accountability plans
- Schools quieter and more orderly
- Get rid of “bad apples”
- Student planning time in school day (like homeroom)
- Make school more challenging

Appendix 2: Current community resources

The focus group participants listed the resources currently available in the community to deal with dropout-related issues. The follow is a list of community resources as they were listed by the focus groups or as they are listed by the group itself on its website. Information was not available for all groups.

- **100 Black Men in America:** The mission of the 100 Black Men of America, Inc. is to improve the quality of life within our communities and enhance educational and economic opportunities for all African Americans. 100 Black Men of America, Inc. is committed to the intellectual development of youth and the economic empowerment of the African American community.
- **4H:** Kansas City 4-H is an after school program that includes educational enrichment, customized curricula, community activities, and school connection programs. The programs emphasize success in academics, sports, work, respect for others, and dedication to the community.
- **20/20 Leadership:** 20/20 Leadership is a **bi-state youth educational and development program** in 11 school districts focusing on the **2.0–4.0 GPA** student.
- **A+ Program:** The primary goal of the A+ Schools Program is to ensure that all students who graduate from Missouri high schools are well prepared to pursue advanced education and employment.
- **Achievement Matters:** This collaborative alliance between the Kansas City Urban League and the National Urban League offers a comprehensive array of activities to enhance the academic, social, employment, and technological skills of youth.
- **Achievement First:** The framework that guides the reform efforts of the KCMSD district's secondary schools. AF focuses on strengthening relationships and improving teaching and learning through proven structures and processes. It consists of three key strategies: small learning communities), family advocacy and improved instruction.
- **Alternative Schools:** A separate program within a K-12 public school district or charter school established to serve and provide youth a choice or option whose needs are not being met in the traditional school setting.
- **ArtsTech:** ArtsTech's mission is to better the lives of underserved urban youth through the development of marketable artistic and technical skills.
- **Beta Lambda:** Beta Lambda's members volunteer their time and resources to assist youth in educational workshops, career seminars, serving as role models, and providing college scholarships.
- **Boys and Girls Club:** The Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City promotes the development of self-esteem, values, and skills for boys and girls, ages 5-18, with special emphasis on youth from disadvantaged circumstances.
- **Bright Future:** The Bright Future Employment Fair provides part-time and full-time summer employment, internships and pre-apprenticeships for Kansas City, Mo. residents ages 15-22.
- **Business Tech 2**

- **Career Exploration and Job Shadow Program:** The City of Kansas City, Mo., Career Exploration Job Shadow Program is available to high school students who are interested in exploring a particular career area for all of, or a portion of, the school day.
- **CASA:** An agency that strives to be a child's voice in court. The organization aims to recruit, train and support lay volunteers who act as advocates on behalf of abused and neglected children.
- **Center for Education and Equality**
- **Central Bank:** Central Bank is proactive in community engagement with their "Bank to School Program," Individual Development Accounts for higher education for secondary school students at Westport High, and Reading Buddies Program at Scarrett Elementary.
- **College For 2 Day Program:**
- **College Bound at Rockhurst University:** RU College Bound is an after-school program for middle and high school students. For an hour and a half once a week participants receive personalized tutoring and exposure to the world of higher education.
- **Cross Point Community Church:**
- **CVS Introduction to Healthcare Program**
- **DARE:** D.A.R.E. is a police officer-led series of classroom lessons that teaches children from kindergarten through 12th grade how to resist peer pressure and live productive drug and violence-free lives.
- **Debate Kansas City:** This group uses debate to improve academic performance and move toward positive social change. DKC is an organization that engages youth to become more successful and confident as debaters and students of the future.
- **DeLaSalle Education Center:** DeLaSalle Education Center was the first fully accredited private alternative school in the Kansas City area, and is now the region's only private secular alternative school system educating nearly 350 urban youth daily at three schools.
- **Don Bosco Center:** Don Bosco's Youth Development Center provides a safe and supportive environment for the community's local youth to participate in a variety of activities designed to educate, involve and encourage. Additionally, the center runs Don Bosco Charter High School, an educational environment where students will receive opportunities for each individual learning style and support for the future.
- **Confidence Task Force for Education:** The Confidence Task Force is a not-for-profit corporation whose primary purpose is to strengthen confidence in Kansas public education and to increase awareness of the positive aspects of public education in this state.
- **For Kids Only**

- **Gear Up Program:** This grant program is designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP provides six-year grants to states and partnerships to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools.
- **Junior Achievement:** Junior Achievement's purpose is to educate and inspire young people to value free enterprise, business and economics to improve the quality of their lives.
- **Junior Achievement of Middle America:** works to provide young people with practical economic education, programs and experiences in the competitive private enterprise system and facilitate partnerships between business and education by providing schools with various resources and tools.
- **Key Club - A Kiwanis Club Program:** Key Club is the oldest and largest service program for high school students. It is a student-led organization that teaches leadership through service to others.
- **Man 2 Man**
- **Missouri Option:** A program designed to target students who have the capabilities to complete Missouri High School Graduation Requirements, but for a variety of reasons lack the credits needed to graduate with their class and are at risk of leaving school without a high school diploma.
- **Cristo Rey:** Cristo Rey Kansas City provides a Catholic, college prep education enhanced by an innovative corporate work-study program to culturally diverse students with economic needs.
- **Drop Out Recovery Program:** Kansas City, Missouri School District, in collaboration with the City of Kansas City, Mo., and Jackson County, Missouri, is developing a continuum of services and out-of-school opportunities to return students to the traditional, private alternative and work-based educational environments better prepared for long term success.
- **Education First, Athletics Second Coalition:** A non-profit agency that builds strong relationships through education, recreation and positive interaction between adults and youth.
- **Emmanuel Family and Child Development Center:** The mission is to ensure that our program provides high-quality early education in a safe nurturing environment while promoting the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of young children ages birth to seventeen and their families.
- **Hickman Mills Coalition:** The Hickman Mills Prevention Coalition serves the Hickman Mills community in southern Jackson County, Kansas City, Mo. HMPC is a group of concerned residents and parents who have the intention of keeping the youth of their community drug free.
- **Genesis School:** Genesis provides services within alternative settings that address the academic, social, and individual needs of youth so they may become responsible and self-sufficient.
- **Genesis School Virtual Academy:** A program that allows students to continue school by taking their assignments over the Internet at home. Although Genesis is a charter school, the program is available to middle school students throughout the Kansas City School District.

- **Generation Rap:** A fast paced hour of public affairs, get-ahead-in-life advice and honest talk about tough topics on a Kansas City radio station.
- **Family Mentor Program**
- **Freedom School:** The freedom School concept is a summer enrichment program with a mission to create safe, nurturing educational environments that set high expectations for all children.
- **Foster Grandparent Program:** Foster grandparents help young people achieve improved physical, mental, emotional and social development, thereby helping them become more confident and independent.
- **Head Start:** Head Start is a national child development program for children from birth to age 5 that provides services to promote academic, social and emotional development, as well as social, health and nutrition services for income-eligible families.
- **The Hope Center's Leadership Academy:** A youth program that aims to provide a world-class neighborhood school whose students excel in a culture of academic rigor, character development, and caring relationships.
- **Hope Academy:** An alternative school designed to help high school dropouts, ages 16 to 21, attain a diploma.
- **Inroads:** A non-profit organization that trains and develops talented minority youth for professional careers in business and industry.
- **Ivanhoe Positive Alternatives project:** A program under the Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council that provides a variety of structured programs, monthly activities and annual events that are designed to promote positive alternatives to delinquency, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, violence and other criminal activities for youth and families in the Ivanhoe neighborhood and surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Job Corps and Vocational Tech**
- **Kansas City Academy:** An educational institution that provides a college preparatory education through a creative, personalized approach to learning.
- **Kansas City Public Library**
- **Kansas City Urban Youth Center:** The mission of the Kansas City Urban Youth Center is to offer Christian hope, community, and wholeness to urban youth. Through afterschool programs, they aim to empower youth with resources to develop faith, character, knowledge, and skills.
- **Kauffman Scholars:** A comprehensive, multi-year program designed to help promising, yet challenged, low-income urban students in Kansas City prepare for and complete a college education. The program provides support to students beginning in seventh grade and will work with students until they complete college
- **LINC:** An initiative to provide leadership and influence to engage the Kansas City Community in creating the best service delivery system to support and strengthen children, families and individuals, holding that system accountable, and changing public attitudes towards the system.

- **Literacy Kansas City:** An initiative that aims to advance literacy among Kansas City area adults through direct services, advocacy and collaboration.
- **LNESC Young Readers:** Since 1986, LNESC has worked with educators to create a model literacy program that improves reading skills among young Hispanic children.
- **LNESC Heroes**
- **LNESC Hispanic Leadership Opportunity Program:** a leadership development program that introduces high school participants to the servant- leadership model. Throughout the yearlong program, students are exposed to career exploration activities, personal development curricula, community service and cultural awareness events.
- **LULAC:** The League of United Latin American Citizens and the LULAC National Education Service Center.
- **Mattie Rhodes:** The EXPLORE program facilitates positive connections among peers and adults. The program provides opportunities for youth to develop life-skills such as teamwork, leadership, communication, and self confidence
- **Metropolitan Missionary Baptist**
- **Mentoring for a Better America:** An organization sponsored by local firehouse, IAFF 42 **geared at changing** the mindset, behavior, and attitudes of young men in Kansas City.
- **Mother's Refuge:** Its mission is to shelter and educate homeless, pregnant and parenting young women by providing comprehensive services that empower them to make successful life decisions for themselves and their babies.
- **National Society of Black Engineers:** NSBE's present activities include tutorial programs, group study sessions, high school/junior high outreach programs
- **Operation Breakthrough:** Starting at the earliest ages, Operation Breakthrough helps children who are living in poverty develop to their fullest potential by providing them a safe, loving and educational environment.
- **P-20 Initiatives:** Efforts to connect educational systems for increased student performance, greater efficiency, improved outcomes, and smoother pathways throughout a student's career. The Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE) is working on several fronts to help ensure that connections between early childhood, elementary and secondary education, and higher education can create a more seamless pipeline for Missouri students.
- **Police Athletic League:** A program that offers disadvantaged youth the opportunity to interact with Kansas City, Missouri Police Officers and create positive relationships by participating in cultural, character development, and sports programs.
- **Pave the Way**
- **Power Hour Tutors**

- **Reach Out and Read:** Reach Out and Read is a national nonprofit organization that promotes early literacy by giving new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud in pediatric exam rooms across the nation.
- **ReEngage Inc.:** A non-profit agency with a mission to foster the reconnection of the black male with their children through outreach and counseling, education, and preparation.
- **Ruskin Advisement Program**
- **Scarface Association**
- **School Resource Officers:** The School Resource Officer program is a program where a full time law enforcement officer is assigned to high schools located throughout Kansas City, Kansas. The goal of the program is to help create and maintain a safe learning environment for students, teachers and staff.
- **Service Learning:** A teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.
- **Seton Center:** Seton Center provides health, social and educational programs to address current community needs and tools to support people in transforming their lives. Seton Center focuses on the youth through their Back to School Giveaway and Child Enrichment Program.
- **Smart Learning Center**
- **Hispanic Chamber of Commerce:** A group dedicated to the creation, advancement, promotion and development of economic opportunities within the Hispanic market and business community.
- **Swope Corridor Renaissance:** Directed by this mission, the Swope Corridor Renaissance/Upper Room provides youth development programs, including the Upper Room Tutoring Program.
- **Teenage Pregnancy Center**
- **U First**
- **UMKC Mentors:** The Starr Women Leaders provides mentoring to 9th, 10th, or 11th grade girls in Kansas City, as well as leadership development to female UMKC students
- **Kansas City Summer Transportation Institute:** Allows high school students in the Greater Kansas City area to learn about careers in transportation in an intense, four-week summer program.
- **University of Missouri:** Supports child and youth support services including Adventure Club, Child Development Lab, Student Parent Center, and Summer Sport Camps.
- **United Minority Media Association:** a nonprofit, volunteer organization of minority entrepreneurs, professionals and students in the communications and media industry who share a commitment to career development, education and community service.
- **United Way**

- **Upper Room**
- **Urban Rangers**
- **Urban Youth Core**
- **Vex Robotics**
- **YMCA:** A community organization that provides events for kids and teens through clubs, activities, and Young Achievers Program. The YMCA offers programs that give kids and teens opportunities to gain leadership skills and develop core values while assisting them in making wise and healthy choices.
- **YWCA:** The YWCA provides opportunities for the female youth of Kansas City through in-school, after-school, and summer programs.
- **YMCA Young Achievers:** A program that aims to encourage minority high school students in the metro area to pursue higher education and focus on professional careers.
- **Youth Build:** The program is a ten-month training and education program for undereducated urban core youth where trainees split their time between the classroom, construction sites, and doing community service.
- **Youth for Change**
- **Youth Commission:** A program that mobilizes the city's youth to become engaged in the civic arena and promote positive programs and activities in the community. The commission gives people ages 12-23 the opportunity to be the official youth voice in the City's decision-making process.
- **YouthFriends:** YouthFriends is a nationally recognized and rapidly growing school-based mentoring network involving more than 70 school districts across the states of Missouri and Kansas.
- **Wright Place, Wright Time**

Appendix 3: Starting Points

This information was provided to the pre-summit focus groups as basic information for beginning their discussions.

Goal A: Showing students a clear link between school and a successful career and/or college education.

- Research highlights:**
- 81 percent of dropouts said opportunities for real-world learning to make classroom more relevant would improve student chances.(1)
 - The NEA advocates an increase in career education and workforce readiness programs in schools so students see the connection between school and careers after graduation. To ensure students have the skills they need for careers, the NEA suggests integrating 21st century skills into the curriculum. (3)
 - 82 percent of students who participated in service-learning say their feelings about attending high school became more positive as a result of service-learning. (1)

- KCMO
Accountability Plan:**
- Prepare students for post-secondary education and careers through workplace visits/tours, job shadowing, internships, post-secondary college and career academy, ACT prep courses.
 - Make effective transition to post secondary options available to students with disabilities.

Goal B: Increasing students' safety, perception of safety and feeling of being valued in the schools.

- Research highlights:**
- Students need to have safe and effective mass transportation options for getting to school. (4)
 - Minorities and ethnic groups should have the feeling they are welcome in school buildings and classrooms. (7)
 - A calm, safe and orderly environment is a prerequisite for learning, reducing stress and the distractions for students and teachers, creating norms and confidence to enable deeper staff and instructional change to occur. (6)
 - A sense of safety is the first rung of the ladder, particularly in neighborhoods where crime and chaos are part of everyday life. (6)
 - Clear codes of behavior and well-defined but flexible routines must be applied consistently and transparently to students, parents and staff. (6)

- KCMO
Accountability Plan:**
- Develop a student-focused culture visible in every building to support student learning and collaboration.
 - Create a representative advisory council (teacher, counselor, student, administrator, parent, government official, civic leader, clergy, etc.) to review and assess existing violence prevention curriculum for comprehensiveness and continuity.
 - Perform a comprehensive safety inventory of all school buildings utilizing Missouri Center for Safe Schools’ safety review checklist.
 - Install ground circuit interrupters in various schools.
 - Install electrical outlet covers in various schools.
 - Evac-u-trac chairs will be purchased for every multi-level school building.

Goal C: Providing individual support to students at risk of dropping out.

- Research highlights:**
- Successful schools make themselves proficient at addressing poverty effects head-on. The schools address a broad range of health and human service needs, offering breakfast, eye exams, and parent training. They connect with a broad range of partners and social service providers to address these needs. (6)
 - Early alarm bells can identify with nearly 70 percent certainty a student in the third grade who will go on to drop out from high school – attendance is a key predictor. (1)
 - Nearly 70 percent of dropouts said they were not motivated to work hard, and two-thirds would have worked harder if more had been demanded of them. (2)
 - Students drop out because of an event or a need outside of school. Pregnancy, incarceration or out-of-home placement in the juvenile justice system, health problems, aging out of foster care, caring for an ill family member, or needing to work to support themselves or family members are the most frequent factors. (1)
 - The community needs to have child-care options so older students are not drafted to watch younger siblings while parents go to work. (4)

- KCMO Accountability Plan:**
- Conduct home visits in grade Pre K-12 whose attendance falls below 75 percent.
 - Monitor student attendance and intervene with students whose attendance rate falls below 80 percent.
 - Family Advocates in Achievement first schools will monitor attendance of every student in their advocacy group using the academic and behavior profile and make contact with parents of students with attendance issues.

Goal D: Increasing involvement of parents, the community and partner organizations.

- Research highlights:**
- Students drop out of school because they do not enough credits to be promoted to the next grade. Many of these dropouts begin to fall off the path to graduation in the middle grades, where they begin to fail courses, miss a lot of school, or misbehave. The key point for promotion — or failure — is from 9th to 10th grade. (1)
 - The NEA encourages involving families in students’ learning and at home in new and creative ways so that all families can support their children’s academic achievement, help their children engage in healthy behaviors and stay actively involved in their children’s education through high school. (3)
 - One community solution is creating a community-wide compact including all key stakeholders. (4)
 - The Kansas City Missouri School District encourages parents to get involved in individual school’s School Advisory Committees (SACs) or Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). (5)

- KCMO Accountability Plan:**
- Provide career exploration courses and career-themed elective courses through career-themed small learning communities.
 - Re-engage parents and the public and rebuild public confidence in the school board and district.
 - Establish quarterly joint parent-board training.
 - Establish a Legislative Agenda adopted by the board.
 - Host a public Legislative Workshop in conjunction with the District Advisory Committee.
 - Recognize outstanding performance of students and schools at board meetings.

Goal E: Sharing the community’s professional, volunteer and financial resources to help the school district succeed.

- Research highlights:**
- The NEA calls for involving the entire community in family-friendly policies that provide release time for employees to attend parent-teacher conferences, “adopt a school” programs to encourage volunteerism and community-led projects in schools. (3)
 - Faith-based and community groups can be on call to call students who are absent each morning to see if they need help getting to school, National service organizations such as Ameri-Corps and City Year can provide the manpower. (4)
 - Technology like conference calling can be used to accommodate parents’ work schedules. (4)
 - Businesses and institutions can provide employees with nine-month leaves to serve as implementation managers for key reforms. (4)

KCMO

Accountability Plan:

Sources

1. GradNation: America’s Promise
2. The Silent Epidemic,
3. NEA’s 12-Point Action Plan for Reducing the School Dropout Rate
4. <http://www.every1graduates.org/PDFs/WhatYourCommunityCanDo.pdf>
5. Kansas City School District website
6. Mass Insight Report, the Turnaround Challenge
7. Summit Planning Committee

Appendix 4: Participation

The following groups and organizations participated in the Kansas City Dropout Prevention Summit and pre-summit focus groups.

Businesses

JE Dunn
KCP&L
Central Bank
CVS/Caremark
Commerce Bank
State Farm Insurance
Odysseyware Inc.

City, council and state departments

City Planning and Development
Jackson County Family Court
Jackson County Social Worker
Jackson County Social Worker
Family Court
Kansas City Parks and Recreation
U.S. Department of Education
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
Federal Student Aid

Educators representing

Kansas City Academy
UMKC
Cristo Rey
North Kansas City School
Tolbert Prep Academy

DeLaSalle
KC Freedom Schools
Ruskin High School
Don Bosco High School
Southeast High School
Benjamin Banneker Charter Academy
Center School District
Hickman Mills High/ Junior ROTC
St. Paul's Episcopal Day School
Derrick Thomas Academy
Hogan Preparatory
Arts Tech
CSOS/John Hopkins
Emmanuel Family Child Development Center
Genesis School
Truman Medical Center
Corporate Academy
Metropolitan Community College-Penn Valley
North Kansas City High School
Niles Preparatory School

Elected officials and/or representatives

Brooke Ballentine, a representative from U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill's Office
Councilwoman Cindy Circo
State Senator Yvonne Wilson

Faith-based Community

St. Stephens Baptist Church

Grand Avenue Temple- United Baptist Church
Christian Follower
Metro Lighthouse Apostolic Church
Linwood United Church
Victory Wail Church
Cross Point Community Church
Grand Avenue Methodist Temple
Swope Parkway Church
Zion Grove
Metrolighthouse Apostolic Church
Calvary Temple Church
Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church
Rosewell Church of Christ Evangelist

Neighborhood Organizations

Briarcliff West Homes Association
Palestine
Gregory Ridge Home Owners Association
Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council
49/63 Neighborhood Coalition
Can Center
Westside Housing Organization

Non profits

Greater Kansas City LISC
Mazuma Credit Union
School Age- Program
Niles Home

Aim 4 Peace
American Indian Council
NAACP/ The Black Agenda
Group
Imagine Me/ Scarface
CCO
Swope Corridor
Man to Man
Partnership for Children
Local Link
Kauffman
Re Engaged, Inc
United Services
Boys and Girls Club
W.S.D
United Way
Literacy Kansas City
National Society of Black
Engineers
American .Federation of
.Teachers
Kansas City Public Library
Front Porch Alliance
United Inner City Services
Kauffman Stadium
The Family Conservancy
The Center of Equitable
Education
ERA
Beyond The Conviction
Azanzu Entertainment
20/20 Leadership
Kansas City Keys
Negro League Baseball
Museum
More 2

Ad Hoc Group Against Crime

Greater Kansas City Community
Foundation

School Districts

KCMO School District
Hickman Mills
Grandview School District
Center School District
North Kansas City School
District
Ruskin

Students from

Kansas City Academy
Cristo Rey
Hope Academy
Swope Corridor
Ruskin High School
East High School
DeLaSalle Education Center
Lincoln High School
Northeast High School
UMKC
Kansas City Youth
Commissioners