



KFCS' District Newsletter
What Is KFCS Doing for Their 20%?
By Superintendent, Paul Hillyer

A study published in January, 2013, by the National Education Policy Center on high school dropouts is worth quoting:

"There is no single factor that explains or predicts the likelihood of dropping-out. A complex mix of individual, family, school and community factors leads to 'a long process of disengagement that may begin before a child enters school.' The National Dropout Prevention Center identified 25 significant predictors. Typically, students are at risk when they have several (three or more) of the risk factors. These include items such as low socioeconomic status, students holding jobs, low parental educational level, family disruption, low education expectations, high-risk peer groups, low achievement, poor attendance and misbehavior. A key lesson from this research is that the core underlying reasons primarily lie outside the school. As educators have little control over individual risk factors, social conditions, and larger social problems, they are faced with effectively dealing with the manifestation of external factors. In fact, schools, by themselves control only about 20% of the variance in dropout rates. Accordingly, reducing dropout rates requires solutions that go beyond (yet certainly include) school functions." (William Mathes, University of Colorado at Boulder, January 2013).

The 80/20 rule referenced above is the reason why KFCS is engaging community and parent support in increasing our graduation rate. This study concludes that 20% of the factors that lead to dropping out are in the control of schools. So what is KFCS doing to hold up their end of the bargain to make an impact on the factors under their control?

1. They have established an early warning system that notifies all their schools each quarter on which students are on the path to future dropping out based on four characteristics: academic failures in reading and/or math, poor attendance, and discipline problems. Any student with two or more of these warning signs during the last quarter are considered at risk and schools begin or continue to intervene to help them improve.
2. Daily interventions are conducted in reading and math for students that are not meeting grade-level expectations.
3. Summer school programming has been implemented to help students who are behind scholastically or in high school credits make up lost ground.

4. All KFCS have increased the rigor, time spent, and student engagement strategies in all areas especially math and language arts in order to help students attain competence in the standards for their grade level.
5. Principals closely monitor student attendance and intervene with students and families to improve poor attendance patterns.
6. Teachers work in teams weekly during student early-out times to review student-achievement data, establish tutoring programs, share effective teaching strategies, and do curriculum planning for the upcoming instructional units.
7. Schools have initiated parent partnerships to work with families to improve student success. This is done through the goal-setting process, student-led conferences, and through an emphasis on communication strategies with the home.
8. The district has initiated special alternative programs, such as Link River and Klamath Institute to give students who struggle in traditional classrooms other learning options more suited to their needs.
9. KFCS has an outreach to community partners to help overcome the graduation problem in the area.
10. KU has developed a monthly program called PEPs (Personal Education Plans) that meets regularly with students to clearly lay out graduation requirements, college options, and career options for students with varying educational attainments.
11. More college partnerships are in development to give students opportunities to begin post-secondary work while in high school and get more students on college campuses to encourage them to set future school and career goals.

These are some of the efforts that KFCS has started in the last few years to address the dropout problem in the Basin area. Admittedly, these efforts are not enough by themselves to overcome a very difficult problem. However, the faculty and staff of KFCS are committed to doing whatever we can to break the insidious cycle of high school failure that haunts so many of our children and families. Schools working alone will never win this war. It takes a full community with each member doing his/her part to bring about lasting change for our children. They are worth the investment.

Other Notes:

1. Congratulations to Fairview principal, Tony Swan, who has been named Health Schools Program Ambassador by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation for his efforts in promoting healthy lifestyles with his students.
2. KFCS will have their first budget committee meeting next Tuesday, April 23, at 6:30 p.m. in the boardroom in the Lucile O'Neill Center at 1336 Avalon St. The Superintendent's budget message will be delivered at this meeting and a time for public open forum will be provided.
3. The newly remodeled Mills' Auditorium is a wonderful improvement. The project cost about \$1.4 million and was paid for from a state seismic improvement grant. **There will be a public open house on Friday, June 7, at 6:30 p.m.** followed by a musical performance by Mills' students. You are welcome and encouraged to attend and see this beautiful facility. Refreshments will be served.

4. KU's band, orchestra and choir are all state finalists again this year and will be at the state competitions at OSU in early May. Best of luck to these talented groups. Their hard work and commitment to excellence is a model for all to follow.
5. It is now official: the new board-approved KFCS' mission statement is, "100% Graduation is Our Expectation." You see our new logo at the top of this newsletter. The new board-approved vision statement is, "Each child ready for the next grade." We believe these clear and concise statements will provide focus and direction for the district and its many partners as we finish off one school year and move strategically toward the next.

Please forward this newsletter to anyone you think might be interested in KFCS' news. If you are not a regular recipient of this free newsletter and would like to be, please respond to this email and let us know.