

# MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



**Dr. Cynthia Lane**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Live any length of time and we generally come to realize that change is necessary for progress to occur.**

Live a little longer and we generally have experiences that remind us that change is often

difficult. We do know, as Tony Robbins stated, "Change is INEVITABLE. Progress is OPTIONAL."

**Progress is not optional for Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools or our students.**

Progress is what our parents, community, and board intended when we established our vision to become one of the top 10 school districts in the nation. Our community was pleased with our progress as a school system, but not satisfied. We understood there is more we can and must do to prepare our students for the future. We will realize our vision to be among the best as we achieve our essential goal, that each student will graduate prepared for college and careers in a global society. Preparation for college and careers in 2017 means our students graduate with their high school diploma plus one or more endorsements ([www.kckps.org/diplomaplus](http://www.kckps.org/diplomaplus)), validating our students have the skills they need for future success. We have embraced change in KCKPS, and our actions are intentionally designed to achieve positive results that matter for all of our students.

**A key part of our students' future success revolves around their ability to compete in a global economy.**

We are all aware, technology has dramatically changed our world. How we prepare our students for their futures has changed as well. Collaboration, teamwork, technical reading and writing, leadership, flexibility, innovation, solution oriented, problem solving, are the skills, mindsets, and knowledge that students need in order to compete in the workforce. As an innovative school district, our educators embrace these skills, and are actively teaching our students these critical competencies.

Knowing academics are only part of the formula for success, our students are actively learning the skills and mindsets as they learn content. Students are seated in groups, expected to collaborate, and work as a team. Talking between and among peers is encouraged.

Questioning and exploring is commonplace. Students work together to produce research, engage in projects that demonstrate shared learning of the concepts. "Flexible" seating permeates our learning environments. Sofas, wooden patio chairs, stand up desks, desks with no legs, bouncy balls, and "wobble" chairs (that look like mushrooms) are emerging at all levels. Tables are arranged for collaboration, students work in teams, share their work through technology and platforms such as "Google Docs." Productive conversations about the learning are facilitated and nurtured by our teachers. Projects are designed by teachers (and informed by business) to give our students real-world and relevant experiences. Students are not asked to find the "right" answer, but to generate multiple solutions to a problem, test their hypothesis, write and speak about the learning. The focus of field trips is to provide students exposure to all types of careers and professions.

**School today is not about preparing students for more school.** Graduating from high school today means our students are prepared for high-skilled, high-demand careers. Blending academic standards with critical competencies better prepares our students for their future.

**Preparing our students is what graduating Diploma<sup>+</sup> is all about.**



Check out Dr. Cynthia Lane's  
blog, "It's Up to Us" at  
[blog.kckps.org](http://blog.kckps.org)