



2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

CSDGKC MISSION

The mission of the Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City is to leverage our members' combined strengths to provide high-quality and cost-effective services and resources to maximize learning for all students.

Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City

CSDGKC Improvised to Meet the Needs of Students and the Community

In March 2020, the pandemic forced Missouri school districts to abruptly switch to remote learning, and it quickly became clear that the needs didn't end at the classroom door. Districts were also called upon to help students and their families with food insecurity, and emotional and physical health. Many of those challenges carried through to the 2020-21 academic year as students learned both in the classroom and remotely.

As Fort Osage School District Superintendent Jason Snodgrass put it, "Our 'norms,' as we have known them, changed immediately with COVID-19." During the 2020-21 school year, the Missouri School Districts that are members of the Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City built on the strategies they developed in the spring of 2020. Those district leaders, administrators, teachers and staff got creative to meet the needs of their communities.

"As the 2020-21 school year approached, our priority was to maintain and expand on the commitments we made in March 2020 when the pandemic began," said CSDGKC Executive Director Dr. Kenny Southwick. "We wanted to make sure our students were fed, had access to the academic tools they needed to learn, and to keep students and staff safe. Our members were resourceful and thrived in many ways during a challenging time."

School Districts Meet the Needs of Their Communities



Throughout 2020, the Hickman Mills C-1 School District's Nutrition Services team provided curbside meal distribution to students. Beginning in October 2020, the team went even further by distributing 8,000 Fresh Harvest meal kits, which equates to 216,000 meals of breakfast, lunch and dinner. Nutrition Services created the kits to provide families with free fresh, healthy food options, because learning improves when students are nourished.

Fort Osage's Food Service Department distributed nearly 500,000 meals to students and families in the district between March 2020 and August 2020. The Food Service scheduled meal pick up for students, provided weekday drive through dinners for families, delivered meals on buses and provided free food boxes for those in need.

The Independence School District offered free meals, too, including breakfast and lunch, to students at pick-up locations and meal delivery services along high school bus routes throughout the school closures in 2020. Meal pick-up locations remained open during in-person summer school and continue to operate for students who are learning virtually during the school year.

In spring 2020, Independence Schools staff members made more than 1,000 cloth face coverings when the mandates went into effect and masks were in short supply. Staff members' goal was to make masks for all employees for their safety and well-being when in-person summer school began in July 2020.

Innovating Technology to Make Learning Available to Everyone



As the 2020-21 school year began, districts assessed their situations to determine how learning would take place whether it was in the classroom or remotely. CSDGKC members managed their hybrid learning environments by creatively meeting students' needs.

Following the statewide school closures in March 2020, Independence School District's teachers developed daily Virtual Learning Resources for early education and K-12 students to complete as supplemental learning opportunities. The district helped families with technology challenges by distributing thousands of Google Chromebooks.

The Raymore-Peculiar School District offered in-person education for pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade and a hybrid schedule for grades 6-12, and none of their schools experienced a long-term closure throughout the year. During the summer of 2020, the academic team created Ray-Pec's online academy, the Virtual Instruction Program of Ray-Pec (VIPR).

For 2020-2021, students could choose to learn remotely or in-person. All of the VIPR classes in grades K-5 and the majority of classes for grades 6-12 were taught by Ray-Pec teachers. The future of VIPR includes expanding the learning opportunities to members of the Cass County student community. continued on next page...

MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY continued from front page...

Ray-Pec also went beyond classroom education to ensure the best possible student experience. The district used its technology and communications departments, along with teachers, coaches, and media students, to install and operate cameras and streaming services so families could watch students compete and perform in activities and athletics.

This meant that Ray-Pec quickly went from *never* having broadcast a game to having students provide play-by-play commentary of home football games, installing cameras at volleyball and basketball venues, and livestreaming softball games on Facebook. By following strict safety protocols and isolation and quarantine rules, fans were able to watch Ray-Pec teams compete throughout 2020-21, highlighted by a Class 6 state football championship for the Panthers.

Independence was among the first districts to return to the classroom in August 2020, and district leaders recognized that they would have to innovate beyond technology to make a hybrid model successful. Throughout the COVID-19 closure, the district provided childcare services for essential staff as well as Independence police, fire and emergency response for children from birth to 8th grade. The district also provided daily access to school nurses to support students with health concerns throughout the pandemic.

Districts Didn't Let a Pandemic Slow Them Down

Many district leaders took a long view and forged ahead with long-term goals, despite the pandemic. While they managed the challenges of the present they worked toward a successful future.



Ray-Pec's Board of Education purchased a former grocery store building that will be renovated to provide career-oriented education and real-world learning as the Ray-Pec LEAD Center (Learning, Experiences, and Discovery).

The North Kansas City School District unveiled its Early Education Center. The 110,000-square-foot center, is designed with brightly colored areas with learning nooks and unique, small-scale furniture. The center is home to the district's early education special education students, Parents as Teachers, Success for Six center, and preschool programming. Both North Kansas City and Ray-Pec repurposed existing structures that were not in use, meeting their needs and enhancing the appeal of their communities.

North Kansas City also began an addition to 13-year-old Staley High School, to accommodate growth in that area of the district, a full renovation of Briarcliff Elementary School, and stadium improvements at Oak Park and Winnetonka High Schools. The passage of bond issues made possible the purchases of the buildings and the much needed improvements to schools.

"We see the direct correlation between how the district has supported the needs of the community during the pandemic and the community reciprocating to support efforts that will improve public education," Dr. Southwick said. "The residents in these districts understand that they are partners in the success of their school districts and in their communities."

The past two academic years have been like no other. District leaders kept goals in mind as they improvised to educate students and support their communities. That success has led to exceptional results for many CSDGKC members. Park Hill School District is just one example of succeeding during difficult times.

In 2020-21, Park Hill students and staff members earned more than 50 awards and honors, including five students who earned perfect ACT scores and 15 students who earned National Merit Scholarship Program recognition. Park Hill students took state championships and top honors in athletic events, journalism competitions and music festivals. Two Park Hill teachers were selected as Missouri's Outstanding Beginning Teacher award recipients, and the Greater Kansas City Missouri Principals Association presented its Principal of the Year award and Exemplary Assistant Principal award to two administrators.

"It's not surprising to see outstanding academic results among our members, given the resourcefulness, commitment and innovation they've demonstrated over the past year and a half," Dr. Southwick said. "Many of the technological advances and the commitment to education we saw during the pandemic will benefit students in the future."

SiPGKC an ideal option for districts looking to self-insure

As awareness of the benefits of self-insurance expand, the Self-Insurance Pool of Greater Kansas City (or SiPGKC, for short) continues to prosper, providing an alternative for school districts.

This year, Fort Osage became a member, joining Blue Springs, Grain Valley, and Smithville. The Pool offers these school districts greater negotiating "muscle" than they would have if they decided to go it alone when seeking insurance coverage. The end result? Lower costs, with the control that comes with self-insurance.

If that sounds like something you'd like to learn more about, call Paul Shrout, CSDGKC's Director of Business Services, at (816) 753-7275 or email him at pshrout@csgdgc.org.



Clean audit streak reaches six years

With all the uncertainty that member school districts have dealt with over the last 18 months, the annual audit of CSDGKC's finances is not one of them.

For the sixth year in a row, Marr and Company, PC of Kansas City gave CSDGKC a clean audit following its comprehensive financial review and analysis. In addition to the dollars and cents, Marr and Company evaluated CSDGKC's fiscal practices and procedures to make certain that all was in good order.

Besides the annual audit, members of the Board of Directors receive and review monthly statements, which helps the Board stay current with the organization's finances.



Retirement Trust offers an alternative with a history of success

Since its founding in 2010, The Cooperating School District's Retirement Trust (CSD RT) has stayed true to its two-fold mission: Provide better retirement planning options and outcomes while reducing costs.

The number of school districts and charter school members in the Retirement Trust held steady at 55 this year, and includes the CSD RT districts in Oak Grove, Grain Valley, Harrisonville, Independence, Kansas City, Kearney, Lee's Summit, Liberty, Platte County and Smithville. But the number of employee members has grown to 7,900 (up from 7,500 last year).

Plan assets also continue to grow, standing currently at more than \$214 million, reinforcing the plan's ongoing success in managing and growing its clients' investments for their futures. In fact, more than 97% of the Trust's investment options have outperformed their performance rank in category, further reinforcing the top-tier nature of the advisors providing investment recommendations.

While all of this is taking place, the investment management fees continue to tumble. A full 90% of the Trust's investment options have seen fee decreases.

Administrative fees for participants have decreased by 59% and are just \$49 annually for a participant with an account balance of at least \$10,000.

Strong performance, personalized attention and lower fees? If you'd like to find out more about how it would work for your district and its employees, contact Steve Keyser, Managing Director at skeyser@csdretirementtrust.com or contact CSDGKC's Director of Business Services Paul Shrout to discuss your needs at either (816) 753-7275 or pshrout@csdgkc.org.

New cohort group for the Education Policy Fellowship Program slated for Fall 2021

Things are expected to return to normal later this year for education leaders who want to be part of the 2021-2022 cohort group for Education Policy Fellowship Program, or EPFP.

Extra time and a heavy dose of patience was required for those in the 2019-2020 group, because of changes and cancellations necessitated by the pandemic. Because these challenges were still in place at the time the 2019-2020 cohort remained the same for 2020-2021 and sessions were held virtually.

When the program resumes with a new cohort group this fall, it will begin with a retreat in Jefferson City. This is followed by a trip in October to the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth to learn about Leadership Development and Strategic Thinking.

The other big event is the March trip to Washington, D.C. for the three-day Washington Policy Seminar that features keynote speakers, breakout sessions and access to national education policy leaders.

In between, cohort group members will have assignments to complete and share with the rest of the group. CSDGKC looks forward to restarting this valuable program. Thanks, as always, to the Local Investment Commission (LINC) for their ongoing participation that makes this program possible.



Annual Legislative Dinner goes virtual this year

One of the traditions that CSDGKC member districts look forward to each year is the Legislative Dinner. The January 2021 event was, by necessity, a virtual event.

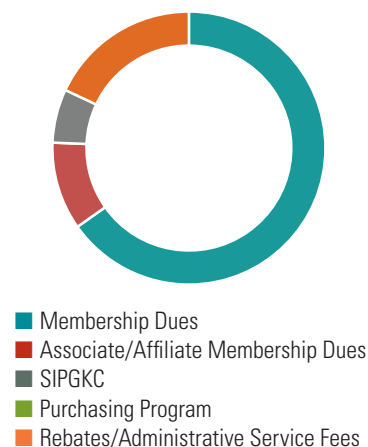
But that didn't dim spirits or limit participation. School district administrators and Board of Education members still had the opportunity to virtually "rub elbows" with members of the Missouri House and Senate, and with staff members of national legislators.

Each guest from the political sphere was given the opportunity to share his or her thoughts about the coming session, followed by an extended Q&A session. Even with the limitations placed on the event due to COVID-19, those who participated said they found it very beneficial.

CSDGKC Actual Revenues vs. Expenditures
2015-16 through 2020-21



Revenues 2020-21
through 3/31/21



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PDN offers education that fits with the times

The Professional Development Network offered coursework to teachers in PDN member districts that was designed to help them create an online platform before the 2020-2021 school year got underway.

Specifically, "Launch Your Online Platform," led by Kincaid Information Technologies, or KIT, guided participants through the process of creating a robust, easy-to-use online learning platform for students and parents.

Combining the advantages of Google Sites and Google Classroom – or any other learning management system in use at their school district – participants built an online presence that was ready for their students to use in no time. This simplified the transition from traditional classroom learning to a blended option (or to a complete eLearning approach) with minimal curricular disruption.

In addition, this Spring, the Kansas City Public Schools and the Raytown School District provided online learning opportunities to PDN member districts on topics such as PEAR deck: Making Interactive Slides, Formative Assessment Showcase: Quizizz, Jamboard and more, Raz-Plus, Nearpod, along with an Introduction to Building a Google Site for your classroom.

Thank you to the PDN Executive Board Members who helped shepherd the availability of these opportunities during a most challenging year:

- Eric Flack – Lee's Summit
- Brian Huff – Raytown
- Mike Kimbrel – Park Hill
- Prissy LeMay – Independence
- Beth Mulvey – Grain Valley
- Becky Nace – Kansas City
- Annette Seago – Blue Springs
- Chad Sutton – North Kansas City
- Alicia Wilson – Platte County



Members of CSDGKC

FULL MEMBERS OF CSDGKC

Adrian	Lee A. Tolbert
Archie	Lee's Summit
Belton	Lexington
Blue Springs	Liberty
Center	Lone Jack
Excelsior Springs	North Kansas City
Fort Osage	Oak Grove
Grain Valley	Park Hill
Grandview	Platte County
Harrisonville	Pleasant Hill
Hickman Mills	Raymore-Peculiar
Independence	Raytown
Kansas City	Richmond
Kearney	St. Joseph
Knob Noster	Smithville
Lathrop	West Platte

PDN-ONLY MEMBERS

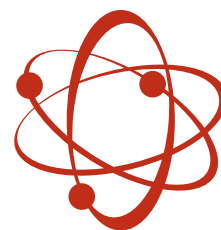
Academy for Integrated Arts
Crossroads
Guadalupe Centers
Kansas City International Academy
St. Therese

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Blue Springs
Fort Osage
Grain Valley
Smithville

CSD Retirement Trust Members

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Harrisonville
Independence
Kansas City
Kearney
Lee's Summit
Liberty
Oak Grove
Platte County
Smithville



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Mid-Continent Public Library
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