



## PRESS RELEASE

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### DISTRICT PILOT INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ANNOUNCED

*5 Elementary School Proposals Accepted to Enhance Student Performance*

**ST. LOUIS, MO, July 6, 2009** – During a recent regular meeting of the Special Administrative Board for the St. Louis Public Schools District, the three panel board approved five proposed pilot independent schools as presented by Dr. Kelvin Adams, district superintendent, for the 2009-2010 school year.

The five pilot independent schools were developed in part due to a collaborative effort between the district's Special Administrative Board; the AFT St. Louis, Local 420; and the Office of the Superintendent to improve student and teacher performance in the classroom by employing innovative school management and instruction techniques for student learning.

“By providing school leadership with more autonomy in governance, staffing, budget, curriculum and instruction, daily schedule and the school calendar, these schools will have flexibility to do what works to educate children,” said Dr. Adams. “The pilot schools are open to students living in the pilot independent schools neighborhoods. I encourage families to contact SLPS for enrollment information,” Adams continued.

The five pilot schools for the 2009-2010 school year will be:

**Froebel Literacy Academy** at Froebel Elementary. This school will serve pre-kindergarten through fifth grade children under the leadership of Principal Mamie Womack. It will focus on school-wide balanced literacy and prepare students to become self-motivated, strategic learners. Teachers will implement conceptual based thematic units pre-kindergarten through second grade and project-based learning for grades third through fifth.

**Herzog Academy** at Herzog Elementary. This school will offer pre-kindergarten through sixth grade under the leadership of Principal Deidre Jackson. It will utilize reading clinics to gear all instruction to the goal of developing highly fluent readers equipped with the foundation to pursue successful high education opportunities.

**Hodgen Elementary College Bound Academy** at Hodgen Elementary. This school will offer pre-kindergarten through sixth grade under the leadership of Principal Vasilika Tschlis. It will provide a strong emphasis on literacy and mathematics by collaborating with students, staff, parents, and the community to ensure that each student achieves high levels of academic and relationship competence. Additionally the Academy will stretch each student's ability to think, conduct research and learn about themselves, the world around them, and other enrichment experiences.

**Jefferson School** at Jefferson Elementary. This school will offer pre-kindergarten through sixth grade under the leadership of Principal Nathalie Means. It will focus on engaging students in creative processes that connect art forms to content objectives. Students, staff, and the community will benefit from the strong partnership of Interchange, a collaborative program of the Center of Creative Arts, to provide collaborative artist residencies, professional development and arts experiences.

**Mason School of Academic and Cultural Literacy** (Mason ACL) at Mason Elementary. This school will offer pre-kindergarten through sixth grade under the leadership of Principal Deborah Leto. It will focus on the four components of literacy: reading, writing, speaking and listening. In addition, each classroom will adopt a country for the entire year and explore the people, customs, geography, language, economics and current events.

Assisting with the district's efforts to establish successful pilot independent schools is the Missouri Charter Public School Association (MCPSA). During the Summer Leadership Academy held June 15<sup>th</sup> until July 20<sup>th</sup>, pilot independent school principals will be working with leaders from MCPSA on developing organizational fundamentals and leadership for their individual schools as well as ways to recruit and retain strong leaders for each school's administrative and governing board as well as establishing roles and responsibilities for the school.

Aaron North, Executive Director for Missouri Charter Public School Association (MCPSA), stressed the importance of crafting a strong mission statement, establishing a ten year vision, and setting "SMART" goals.

North stated, "We support quality public education options for families and students. We hope the St. Louis Public Schools pilot program is a positive step in the effort to provide those options throughout the city."

Also coaching the new pilot independent school principals during the Summer Leadership Academy is the Center for Collaborative Education (CCE) from Boston, MA, which supported efforts in creating Boston Public Schools' renowned pilot school network. Christina Brown, Director of CCE's Pilot School Development Network, taught sessions on developing a set of consistent classroom practices against which performance is evaluated that connect the vision of the particular school to the work done by each student and establishing autonomy over each school's resources in order to best serve their students.

Rick Sullivan, President and Chief Executive Officer for the Special Administrative Board, expressed his support, "The district has laid a strong groundwork for major academic reforms in the next year. Dr. Adams' vision for these schools is setting the bar high, but I believe that is a necessity to ensuring that our students are prepared for the challenges that lay beyond graduating."

Families living in the pilot independent schools' neighborhoods are encouraged to apply by contacting their area schools directly or by calling the Office of Recruitment and Counseling 314-633-5200. In addition, the district encourages all families to attend the Back to School Fair on Saturday August 8<sup>th</sup>, from 9:00am until noon, at Gateway Elementary, located at #4 Gateway Drive.

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