

# Kansas City Public Schools Saving Our Students (S.O.S.)

Major Stevie Brooks  
2901 Troost Ave  
Kansas City, Missouri

(816) 418- 7026

sbrooks@kcpublicschools.org



*Saving Our Students (S.O.S) program is designed to increase the number of high school graduates prepared to transition successfully into postsecondary studies, high demand STEM Careers, and entrepreneur opportunities.*

*Keywords: STEM, transition, entrepreneur opportunities*

**Funding Sources:**

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE)

**Project Cost and Budget Narrative:**

The grant would provide \$4,000,000 over a period of five years. This program would provide funding to help keep a student on-track with the rates indicators program that will trigger individualized student support. This funding would provide support for collaborative and local solutions to the dropout problem that would provide coaches to monitor a cohort of first year freshman students' on-track and off-track early warning indicators that will trigger effective individualized targeted interventions to improve student outcomes. The program will allow for four Graduation Academic coaches, and four Graduation College and Career Coaches to be placed in each of our four comprehensive high schools. This would allow for individualized targeted services that would include extra academic tutoring, test preparation, social-emotional supports, college and career development and case managers to help students negotiate the many difficult issues luring them to leave school. Graduation Coaches will provide staff with data to develop and deliver effective interventions for identified students, the system automatically emails results to school leaders twice a month. The program would also provide incentives for teachers to use this system to improve outcomes for students. This program will give students who are behind in school a chance to catch up and follow a path to a high school diploma, college, a STEM career or entrepreneurship. The coaches will track the cohort to increase the graduation and seek resources to assist students/parents when opportunities occur.

**Population Served:**

Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) educates 15,564 children from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade and employs 2400 teachers and administrators throughout Kansas City, Missouri. As an urban District, KCPS offers a rich multi-ethnic, multi-cultural mix of students speaking more than 50 languages, many of whom face significant challenges in reaching their academic potential. Among the student population, 100% qualify for free/reduced lunch plan, 91% live in poverty, and 91% are of minority racial or ethnic backgrounds.

**Project Origination:** Major Stevie Brooks

Dropout Prevention and Recovery Coordinator  
Kansas City Public Schools

**Issues Addressed:**

To address and help keep a student on-track with the rates indicators program that will trigger individualized student support.

1. Increase graduation rates and reduce the number of dropouts from KCPS schools.
2. Provide school and communities with opportunities for greater collaboration to plan and implement systemic approaches that include evidence-based solutions.

3. Provide a testing ground for innovative graduation programs, incentives and approaches.
4. Provide information regarding the effects of specific innovations, collaborations and policies on dropout prevention and recovery.
5. Document educational strategies that increase graduation rates.
6. Provide a focused menu of elective learning clusters, or pathways, that are 21st century career-aligned, engaging for students, and connected to the college and industry opportunities in our community. These clusters will be designed for all students and will not be segregated between career- and college-focused classes (i.e. students in each cluster will have an array of options).
7. Implement a student career advisory program: Assigning students to a Graduation Academic and College and Career staff member to work with throughout their high school career who become more invested in their assigned students' welfare and help foster a culture of collaboration and support among students and staff. In addition to monitoring academic progress, advisors will receive materials for lessons surrounding bullying, respect, and tolerance, as well as topics related to college and career success to ensure the advisory period. Coaches will also help support students in developing and revising their Your Plan for Your Future individualized learning plans as guides for their high school academic and careers.

**Desired Outcomes and Measurable Objectives:**

The first goal of the KCPS Dropout Prevention program is to assign 100% of the 2021 first year freshman cohort to the KCPS S.O.S. program. The desired result of this objective is that by May 2022, 90 percent of 2021 first year freshman cohort will have received at least 6 credits and be classified as Sophomore as verified by the district and school counselor.

The second goal for KCPS SOS program is that by May 2023, 90 percent of first year freshman cohort will have received at least 11 credits and be classified as Juniors as verified by the district and school counselor. The outcome should result in 90 percent first year freshman cohort will be assigned to the program as verified by the district and schools by August 2023.

Lastly, the third goal for the program is that by May 2023, 90 percent of first year freshman cohort will have received at least 17 credits and be classified as a senior as verified by the district and school counselor. The outcome should show that KCPS graduation rates have increased by 11% by May 2024 as verified by school graduation data.

**Strategies and/or Interventions of the Project:**

The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. Consult with parents and other school personnel to determine if the student might have a specific learning or

behavior problem interfering with learning. Low achievement, retention in grade and behavioral difficulties are highly predictive of dropping out of school. Assessment of possible learning and behavior problems might help identify special services to help the student find school more successful. Speak with the parent, school counselor and/or school psychologist to see if the student's goals can be reached in the current school environment. If not, discuss options for alternative settings. Include the student in all discussions with school personnel. If parents decide to investigate alternative education settings, encourage the student to make the contacts, visits, complete forms, and ask questions. Use the strategy “not every student is appropriately college-bound”. Help the student to identify strengths and areas of interest, and to explore career options that maximize interests and skills. If attending college is the way to reach the student's vocational goal, help set steps in place to get there. In many cases, a post-secondary technical training or 2-year community college program is more appropriate to meet the student's goals and get him/her employable. Look at facts that will help the program help students plan based on their educational future.

### Results (Outcomes and Achievements)

Date	Activity	Measure	Person Responsible
Aug 2021	Course Selection	100% of freshman have required courses	Graduation Academic Coaches
Aug 2021	Career interest inventory	100% of freshman take interest inventory	Graduation College & Career Coaches
Sept 2021	First Quarter Progress Review and Tutoring	90% of freshman are “on track” passing their courses	Graduation Academic Coaches
Sept 2021	College & Career Fair	100% of freshman will participation	Graduation College & Career Coaches
Oct 2021	Individualized Academic Review	100% of freshman received review	Graduation Academic Coaches
Oct 2021	Individualized Career & College Review	100% of freshman received review	Graduation College & Career Coaches
Nov 2021	Second Quarter Progress Review and Tutoring	90% of freshman are “on track” passing their courses	Graduation Academic Coaches
Nov 2021	College & Career Fair	100% of freshman will participation	Graduation College & Career Coaches
Dec 2021	Academic Incentive field trips	100% of freshman will participation	Graduation Academic Coaches
Dec 2021	Pre-Testing – ASVAB, ACT, Community Service	100% of freshman will participation	Graduation College & Career Coaches
Jan 2022	First Semester Assessment & Targeted Intervention	100% of freshman received Grade Audit	Graduation Academic Coaches
Jan 2022	College & Career Fair	100% of freshman will participation	Graduation College & Career Coaches
Feb 2022	Parent/Student Conference	90% attendance of Parent/student	Graduation Academic Coaches
Feb 2022	College & Career Showcase during Parent Conference	90% attendance of Parent/student	Graduation College & Career Coaches
Mar 2022	Third Quarter Progress Review and Tutoring	90% of freshman are “on track” passing their courses	Graduation Academic Coaches
Mar 2022	College Tours & Careers Exploration	100% of freshman will participation	Graduation College & Career Coaches
Apr 2022	EOC Assessment and Tutoring	80% of freshman achieve basic, 15% above basic 5% Advanced	Graduation Academic Coaches
Apr 2022	College & Career program assessment	100% of freshman have goals for College or Career	Graduation College & Career Coaches

May 2022	End of Year Assessment Course Selection for Sophomore	100% of freshman receive individual assessment & course selections for Sophomore year 80% successful attained 6 credits	Graduation Academic Coaches
May 2022	College Tours & Careers Exploration Summer Intern	100% of freshman will participation 10% provide summer intern opportunities	10% provide summer intern opportunities
Jun 2022	Summer School for Freshman with less than 6 credit	80% of freshman requiring summer school attend and successfully complete	Graduation Academic Coaches
Jun 2022	Summer Intern	10% provide summer intern opportunities	10% provide summer intern opportunities

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
By August 2021, 850 of the first year freshman cohort will be assigned to the Saving Our Students Program.	By May 2021, 90 percent of first year freshman cohort will receive 6 credits and be classified as Sophomore as verified by the district and school counselor.
By August 2021, 765 of first year freshman cohort enrolled in 2022 will have received at least 11 credits and will be classified as a junior according to school records.	By May 2022, 90 percent of the first year freshman cohort group who became Sophomores will receive 11 or more credits and be classified as Junior as verified by the district and school counselor.
By August 2022, 689 of the first year freshman cohort enrolled in 2023 will have earned 17 credits and be classified as a senior as verified by district and school record	By May 2023, 90 percent of first year freshman cohort who became Juniors will received 17 or more credits and be classified as Seniors as verified by the district and school counselor.

**Outcomes Related to School Completion, Dropout Prevention, and/or Graduation Rates:**

The first goal of the KCPS Dropout Prevention program is to assign 100% of the 2021 first year freshman cohort to the KCPS S.O.S. program. The results of this objective is projected to be that by May 2022, 90 percent of 2021 first year freshman cohort will have received at least 6 credits and be classified as Sophomore as verified by the district and school counselor.

The second goal for KCPS SOS program is that by May 2023, 90 percent of first year freshman cohort will have received at least 11 credits and be classified as Juniors as verified by the district and school counselor. The outcome should result in 90 percent first year freshman cohort will be assigned to the program as verified by the district and schools by August 2023.

Lastly, the third goal for the program is that by May 2024, 90 percent of first year freshman cohort will have received at least 17 credits and be classified as a senior as verified by the district and school counselor. The outcome should show that KCPS graduation rates have increased by 11% by May 2024 as verified by school graduation data.

**Special Conditions, Expertise, and/or Skills Required to Carry Out Project:**

The school leadership team include Major Stevie Brooks, who will provide oversight of the

program and provide supervision, management, training and quality control of the program. On the district administrative level, we have the support of our school leadership team and our director of educational technology integration. Each of these educational leaders are aware of the importance of this project and are committed to its successful implementation.

The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.

Sustainability is built into this plan, in part through the "pooling" of resources with our school's partners. It is also planned that other funding alternatives will continually be examined by our school leadership team to ensure the sustainability of all our programs. This includes working closely with our school board, our internal fundraising team, our Title I budget and with the Kansas City Public Schools Foundation to help build our donor base and fund the KCPS S.O.S. program after the grant expires.

**Current Status of Project:**

Pending grant approval and funding decision

**Role in Project as a NDPS Certification Program Participant:**

Project Originator and Grant Writer

**Lessons Learned:**

To consult with parents and other school personnel to determine if the student might have a specific learning or behavior problem interfering with learning. Low achievement, retention in grade and behavioral difficulties are highly predictive of dropping out of school. Assessment of possible learning and behavior problems might help identify special services to help the student find school more successful. Speak with the parent, school counselor and/or school psychologist to see if the student's goals can be reached in the current school environment. If not, discuss options for alternative settings. Include the student in all discussions with school personnel. If parents decide to investigate alternative education settings, encourage the student to make the contacts, visits, complete forms and ask questions. Use the strategy "not every student is appropriately college-bound". Help the student to identify strengths and areas of interest, and to explore career options that maximize interests and skills. If attending college is the way to reach the student's vocational goal, help set steps in place to get there. In many cases, a post-secondary technical training or 2-year community college program is more appropriate to meet the student's goals and get him/her employable. Look at facts that will help the program help students plan based on their educational future.

**Advice for Dropout Prevention Practitioners about the Project:**

Allow for individualized targeted services that would include extra academic tutoring, test preparation, social-emotional supports, college and career development and case managers to help students negotiate the many difficult issues luring them to leave school. Developed prevention strategies that consist of collecting data about student performance and characteristics related to dropping out in order to identify potential problems early in the student's school experience and thus refer students for specific prevention efforts. Tracking student attendance, test scores, grades, behavior referrals, participation in activities, school attitudes and family participation in school events that provide information to identify students most at risk for later dropping out. Prevention activities will include incentives and supports to improve attendance; programs to encourage parent involvement; early intervention for academic difficulties (such as

peer tutoring programs); community and school-based mentorships; and partnerships with community business to connect school to work. Development of high school alternative programs that provide nontraditional approaches to vocational training and high school completion will also provide options for students who have not been successful in meeting the academic or social demands of the typical school program.