

PRESS RELEASE

KANSAS CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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School Board Honors Students, Staff and Partners

Scholar Superstars, Terrific Teammates and Community Champions recognized at Sept. 14 meeting

Kansas City, July 23, 2004: The Kansas City Public Schools Board of Directors regularly recognizes students, staff members and partners for outstanding accomplishments and contributions to the KCPS community. The Board honored the following individuals and businesses at its meeting Wednesday night, Sept. 14 at Primitivo Garcia Elementary School.

Scholar Superstars

J.J. Tijerina (7th grade at Northeast Middle School) – Mr. Tijerina is a bona fide hero. On Friday, Aug. 26, he and his buddies Matthew and Michael Rich rescued several people who were trapped in their cars after attempting to drive through a flooded underpass at Askew and Truman streets, according to several local news reports. The trio of courageous young men saw the cars stalling and decided they weren't going to just ignore the problem. Instead, for several hours in monsoon-like conditions, they braved the flood waters to help drivers make it to safety. To put this in context, the water at one point reached almost six feet high.

Adrianna Schoonover (12th grade at Lincoln College Preparatory Academy) – Ms. Schoonover has become an integral and highly valued member of the KCPS Communications and Community Engagement (CCE) Team. For the last two years, she has helped produce numerous videos for Board meetings, athletic competitions and other school and KCPS events. This summer, she served as one of the CCE Department student interns and made enormous contributions while planning and executing multiple communications and community engagement projects, including Dr. Bedell's first day, the Summerfest back-to-school festival and the annual staff Convocation. Some of her outstanding work includes a video honoring Al Tunis' term as Interim Superintendent, a video featuring Superintendent Mark Bedell's early visits to KCPS, and the Convocation review video. Adrianna is bright, insightful and cheerful, and consistently takes the lead on projects. She is a credit to her family, her school and KCPS.

Terrific Teammates

Certified: Joan Kroeger (Exceptional Education Teacher at Southeast High School) – Ms. Kroeger was nominated by one of her KCPS co-workers for her support of student achievement. She takes the time to be very caring and supportive of students no matter what they are experiencing. Ms. Kroeger is solution-focused and does a great job of helping students improve every day, one step at a time. One example of her outstanding work is how she went out of her way to purchase keyed locks for the students who could not handle combination locks on their lockers. She also regularly checks on her colleagues to make sure they've got the help they need, and she does all this with a cheerful, positive attitude.

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Classified: **Dionne Culp** (Parent and Family Liaison at Martin Luther King, Jr., Elementary School) – Ms. Culp was also nominated by a co-worker for her support of student achievement. According to her teammates, she comes to King Elementary each day with a contagious, positive perspective and the highest expectations for herself, her colleagues, her students and the families she serves. She meets and exceeds her goal of strengthening relationships between her school and families. Ms. Culp is a fully integrated member of the King faculty. She supports classrooms, develops student programs, fosters a healthy school culture, gathers and analyzes school data and provides a variety of other administrative and executive-level functions. Ms. Culp has sound methods and expansive knowledge. She cares deeply about and has an invaluable impact on everyone at King Elementary.

Nominate a member of Team KCPS for a Terrific Teammate Award by [completing the online form](#).

Community Champions

Aetna Healthcare - Aetna has been a great partner with KCPS for many years. Aetna’s mission is to build a healthier world. They are a leading diversified health care benefits company, serving an estimated 46.5 million people with information and resources to help them, in consultation with their health care professionals, make better informed decisions about their health care. In partnership with health care providers, they’re committed to transforming the health care system. The goal: to simplify the health care experience and help people enjoy more healthy days.

Aetna was the Presenting Sponsor of the district’s first ever Summerfest. That means, they donated more than \$15,000 to the district. As if that wasn’t enough, they also contributed 1,500 backpacks for students.

Aetna also sponsors many organizations that support KCPS students and families. Specifically, the Hope Dental partnership. This partnership provides dental care to the following schools: Garfield, Longfellow, Melcher, Trailwoods, East High School, Lincoln College Prep, and Paseo Academy.

Aetna staff also conducts yearly presentations to KCPS nurses regarding Medicare resources and other healthcare programs that are available for families.

Smithfield Foods – Smithfield is a “global packaged meats company with farms, facilities, and offices in North America and Europe. The company employs 50,000 people who all work together to provide families worldwide with good food. Responsibly.”

The employees of the Corporate office, located in Kansas City North, reached out to KCPS in June 2016 with a desire to adopt one of the district’s schools. They ended up providing enough food and financial support so that Summerfest attendees could enjoy lunch free of charge. The Community Outreach Committee at Smithfield Foods also decided to adopt Troost Elementary for the 2016-2017 school year. Smithfield employees ended up providing school supplies and food for the Troost Elementary Back-to-School BBQ on Saturday, Aug. 13, plus computers for a parent computer room at the school. The employees are also sponsoring the Troost’s National Honor Society and Scripps Spelling Bee and Greater KC Science and Engineering teams for students.