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all of our patrons to visit lsr7.org/equity to learn more about this important work.

Finally, LSR7’s rich and robust career education programs have for years provided students with opportunities to achieve industry certifications, college credit and other professional experiences. But our data shows us we can do more to help students engage with these opportunities.

Through the Real World Learning (RWL) initiative highlighted on Pages 6 and 7, we are partnering with community employers and organizations to build upon this commitment to college and career readiness. By expanding and improving accessibility to our career education programs, our goal is for all of our high school students to graduate with marketable skills that prepare them for the workforce.

As we continue this unprecedented year, LSR7 remains committed to reflecting equity in our district initiatives and programs. It’s an honor to serve our community by preparing all students to succeed.

With much appreciation,

DAVID BUCK, Ed. D
SUPERINTENDENT

Federal Program Complaint Resolution Procedures: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) requires certain notifications to parents/guardians when school districts receive federal funds. School districts must annually disseminate Federal Programs Complaint Resolution Procedures to parents/guardians of students and appropriate private school officials or representatives. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Complaint Procedures can be found at: https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/qs-fedcomp-Complaint-Procedures-ESSA.pdf.
From kindergarten to middle school, I studied in Mexico. When I came here, everything was different. The school was big. I got more teachers.

Absolutely, the language was a change for me.

The best part of living here is the schools.

I like the schools because you can understand more specifically what you want, and the teachers are great.

I was excited to learn a new language. Other people in Mexico who speak English, other people think that’s awesome. Then I went to learn English when I came here, I was scared because I didn’t know anything about English. I was at zero.

I feed the animals we have [at Colonial Gardens], chickens, ducks, geese, alpacas, goats and sheep. I have more responsibilities, and I go straight to work. I stopped playing video games and stuff like that, and I learned more English.

The English Language Development program helps you to grow your second language. Also, it helps you with the classes, and you can talk to people from other countries. I’m getting better in my second language, English. It helps me with what I want to be.

Teachers have helped me with what I want to do, and when I got confused with something they helped me out. For example, we didn’t have internet at home, and they helped us with the internet too.

I play soccer. When I was in Mexico, all my friends and family played soccer.

I’m also in the Spanish Club right now. We talk a lot about the culture of the Spanish and the different countries.

I want to go to college, get my degree and be an architect. I don’t know what type of architect I want to be, but I want to be one. My dad knows a lot of construction, so he’s been teaching me things like that. I think I can be a good architect. I can help the country with projects that I have.

If I was in Mexico, I would maybe be working already. When I came here, I decided that I wanted to be someone. The teachers that I know helped me. For example, if I want to be an architect, they help me with the classes and stuff like that. ☝️

Alexis Perez Acero, a sophomore at Lee’s Summit High School, studies in the English Language Development program, belongs to the Spanish Club and plays soccer. He moved to Lee’s Summit from Jalisco, Mexico at 13 years old and works at Colonial Gardens with his father.
I think the first pillar in my philosophy of teaching is that all students are capable of learning. You just have to figure out how. That’s your job as the educator.

I also believe that basic needs have to be met before higher learning can take place, so that’s priority one: to get to know your student and to make sure they feel safe in the school setting.

English Learners education is very important because we are a nation full of immigrants. That’s the story of America.

I think the first thing to understand about EL is the goal is to provide equitable education, to make core content knowledge comprehensible to a student that does not speak English. It’s not a separate curriculum, and it’s not a special education program. It is simply taking the content that is available to every mainstream student and presenting it in a way that they can understand and learn.

The “I Belong” campaign started as a conversation I was having with the Heritage Spanish teacher. What we want to see is more participation among the EL students in school activities, in special programs like the Seal of Biliteracy, A+, AVID, sports. We want that representation there, and I think part of that is building confidence in the kids and part of that is the rest of the school reaching out to those kids. That’s what “I Belong” means.

I want the students to tell a story of their high school experience and that it was a place where they felt like they belong.

Ms. Jess Tonnies, English Language Development teacher at Lee’s Summit High School, is in her first year as a teacher. She joined LSR7 in 2018 as a paraeducator.

I think there’s a lot of things about our education system that simply do not work and haven’t for decades. It’s been so stagnant because the system has been in place, and it’s very difficult to change something that’s so established, but [COVID-19] is an opportunity to build something new and better, to build something that does work for every student.

What I want people to know about our district is that it is a very diverse district. Diversity is something we should capitalize on. Diversity is a strength.
WHAT DOES LSR7 MEAN WHEN IT REFERS TO “EQUITY?”

At its core, educational equity is any and all actions we take to ensure that all of our students have what they need to succeed within our school district and after they graduate, while honoring a deep sense of belonging for them while they attend our schools. This work is infused in all aspects of the district because it is essentially the practice of asking ourselves: What barriers might be in the way of each of our student’s success? How can we remove those barriers? How do we ensure students have the unique resources they need to thrive academically and feel a deep sense of dignity and belonging when they are at school?

In that sense, equity is everything we do to provide a personalized education that cultivates a student’s individual talents, prevent social or cultural factors from impeding a student’s ability to be successful, and ensure that every student feels included, valued and celebrated within LSR7.

WHAT GOALS DRIVE LSR7’S EQUITY WORK?

Meeting all of our students’ unique needs is the equity mission or “lens” we aim to apply to all district decisions. Our Equity work is fueled by six fundamental focus areas found in our Equity Plan approved by the Board in February 2019 (visit lsr7.org/equity for more information).

• **Governance and leadership:** Ensuring equitable practices are reflected in our policies and leadership decisions.
• **Professional learning and development:** Equipping our staff, students and community with knowledge and resources to make the learning experience more equitable.
• **Curriculum and instruction:** Teaching a diverse curriculum that incorporates and reflects a broad and diverse range of experiences.
• **Student-centered support and programming:** Building support systems that promote student success and engagement.
• **Parent and community engagement:** Involving our community and parents in our equity initiatives.
• **Recruitment, hiring, development and retention:** Hiring and retaining a diverse workforce that has both cultural awareness and equity literacy.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF EQUITY RELATED WORK IN LSR7?

Often our community correlates LSR7 Equity work specifically with external and internal training we’ve provided to staff, community members and students in 2019 and 2020. This valuable training covers topics such as bias, cultural responsiveness and belonging since diversity, equity and inclusion efforts should be inclusive of any/all typically marginalized groups.

Race is a significant topic in equity work, as systemic racism has been one of the longest, most significant and historically prevalent sources of inequity in our nation. However, our Equity work is part of broad and comprehensive efforts to remove barriers for all students. Other examples of equity-related initiatives in the past year include expanding translation resources for families, distributing hotspots to families in need of internet access during virtual learning, adding protections for people who are gay or transgender in our district’s non-discrimination code, and continued expansion of the districts Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS).
“EEC training is a bonding experience. To connect in a way that most of us don’t have the opportunity to do elsewhere.”

DR. LISA JANEWAY, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM SPECIALIST


2020-21 EQUITY UPDATES

• The Board of Education approved additional funds to expand Educational Equity Consultants work during its second year.
• A team of teachers and administrators formed to begin developing a framework of professional learning targets for staff in the area of equity with feedback from the Parent/Community Equity Team, which also formed in the fall.
• LSR7 students completed a Panorama climate, equity and inclusion survey. This student data reflects how inclusive, collaborative and welcoming students feel their school environment is.
• The district has adopted Collaborative Classroom, an elementary English language arts resource in which 41% of story characters are characters of color.
• All staff members engaged in equity-focused professional development in November.
• LSR7 joined many area school districts in participating in an equity-focused collaboration cohort guided by Beloved Community and hosted by the Kauffman Foundation.
• Per a national directive from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, the district named Assistant Superintendent of Equity and Student Services Dr. Christy Barger as the district’s new Title IX Coordinator. The district’s nondiscrimination policy and forms can be found at lsr7.org/anti-discrimination.
• The Board of Education approved the addition of sexual orientation and gender identity to the district’s non-discrimination policy in the summer of 2020. The Board heard a first reading of this proposal in March 2020.
• District leaders are conducting a systematic review of Board of Education equity policies and equity-based decision-making protocols from various districts, with the intention of determining best next policy steps for LSR7.
• District and community leaders have formed a Recruitment and Retention Task Force to continue to recruit and retain excellent educators who reflect the entire student population.

COMING UP

• The district will conduct a review of LSR7 discipline – including a data analysis of student subgroups most impacted. This data will provide baseline information to inform future policy reviews.
• New staff and student cohorts are scheduled to convene in the spring of 2021 for EEC training. Originally scheduled for the fall, these sessions were postponed to the spring in order to achieve the best chance of having them in person. Parent permission is always required for student participation in EEC training.
• The district’s Real World Learning (RWL) initiative through the Kauffman grant will continue its work to expand access to opportunities such as internships, certifications and client-connected projects for all students (see the next page for some RWL stories).
REAL WORLD LEARNING: PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS

A REAL WORLD LEARNING GOAL IS FOR ALL STUDENTS TO GRADUATE WITH EXPERIENCES LIKE MADISON, DERA, COLTON AND TOMMY.

LSR7 students grow through advanced learning and hands-on professional experiences in programs such as Career and Technical Education, Innovation Track, Community-Based Instruction, the Missouri Innovation Campus and International Baccalaureate.

Now, through a new initiative and partnership with the Kauffman Foundation, the district is making significant strides toward providing “real world” learning experiences to its entire student body.

The goal of the metro-wide initiative, called Real World Learning (RWL), is for students to graduate with at least one of these experiences: internships, client projects, industry recognized credentials, dual college credit and other entrepreneurial opportunities across a range of interests, industries and employers.

Community connections are an essential part of this important work to prepare today’s students to be leaders in our future workforce. When employers give students opportunities to work in business/industry, students connect to the core principles and skills being taught in our classroom. Employers get early access to talent through interacting with students on projects or internships. RWL experiences help employers build their hiring pipeline, especially in high-demand industries.

Visit LSR7.org/RWL to learn more.

RUNNING A BUSINESS

Madison Goff, a student at Lee’s Summit North High School, capitalized on an LSR7 opportunity to develop her business skills.

Madison took over as manager of LSN’s Mane Street Station general store as part of participating in the Marketing pathway of LSR7’s Career and Technical Education program. Madison’s responsibilities include ordering products, pricing, stocking, doing inventory and focusing on customer service.

In addition to these duties, Madison confronted the tough question all businesses faced during COVID-19 — how does one do business during a global pandemic?

Madison pivoted, launching an online store. She created a back-to-school goody bag, pitched families on the idea and then delivered the bags to customers. Madison promoted pre-merchandise sales, advertised around the school and conducted surveys to engage customers.

“I definitely think this position has made me more comfortable in making big decisions and decisions that impact a business,” Madison says.

Her experience has changed her perspective on business.

“I think a big thing is facing problems within a world we can’t control and turning them into something positive and gaining something good out of it,” Madison says.
PLANNING TO HEAL

Dera Okafor, a student at Lee’s Summit West High School, is using LSR7’s Innovation Track program as a stepping stone to fulfill her dream of working in the medical field.

The dual enrollment program gives students the opportunity to attend the Metropolitan Community College-Longview Campus to earn high school and college credit. Interested in skincare and the brain, Dera has several course options to help her navigate her path toward becoming a doctor.

Experiencing a global pandemic is an unusual way to test one’s commitment to enter the medical field, but COVID-19 did not discourage her as she watched doctors in the spotlight.

“They really became to me like stewards of life,” Dera says. “Not only were they helping the sick but they were providing everyone with essential information on the news. I think it put into perspective what I wanted to do with my life after this whole pandemic was over.”

Dera says she would tell her younger self the program suits her.

“This is a great opportunity for me to learn and just grow as a critical thinker, as a person in love with learning and wanting to grow as an individual,” Dera says. “I would say this is the best opportunity for you.”

BUILDING A CONSTRUCTION CAREER

Colton Owen, a student at Lee’s Summit West High School, will be a year ahead in his career before he graduates high school.

Colton launched his career in construction through the Skilled Technical Sciences pathway of LSR7’s Career and Technical Education program, which arranged for him to attend the Herndon Career Center.

Connected to a paid internship in the summer heading into his senior year, he earned an apprenticeship in carpentry with E&K of Kansas City. In addition to finishing school, he is framing walls and hanging drywall.

“I liked that it’s all hands-on,” Colton says. “I don’t really see myself as someone who could work a desk job.”

Colton’s work projects include renovations to the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum and a new cancer treatment facility.

“It’s nice having the opportunity in the first place because I bet a lot of kids from other school districts wouldn’t even have the opportunity to get real-world experience and have a job like this,” Colton says.

DEVELOPING ON-THE-JOB SKILLS

Tommy Webb, a student at Lee’s Summit North High School, is using LSR7’s Community-Based Instruction program to demonstrate his employable skills.

CBI gives students who have special needs the opportunity to practice independence as they work jobs in LSR7 buildings and the community. Around the district, jobs can include cleaning, assisting in athletic training rooms, shredding documents, delivering mail, collecting lunch trays, and recycling at LSN and the Stansberry Leadership Center. Outside in the community, students get hands-on experience in a variety of jobs in the food and retail industries.

Tommy works at Hillcrest Thrift Store, where his responsibilities include clocking in, removing unsold merchandise and shipping it out, and putting returns away.

“Work is fun,” Tommy says. “The job community is fun.” Tommy’s work experience has helped him grow. He’s more confident and less shy about being around new people and asking questions.

“It’s good experience to get a job,” Tommy says.
Iqra T., a Summit Technology Academy student from Lee’s Summit West High School, determines the concentration of a liquid during Medical Interventions class.

Bennett B. and Lexi H. from Greenwood Elementary practice putting the letters of the alphabet in order.
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