

# Kansans Can School Redesign Project



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**Imagine** an education system where:

- Students are **empowered** to take control of their learning.
- Students are **engaged in meaningful dialogue** with parents and educators to identify their passions and areas of interest.
- Students are **engaged in learning that is personalized to their individual preferences** and at a pace that **ensures they are achieving to their fullest potential**.
- Students are **excited to engage and take charge** of their day.

Now, think about what that education system could mean for Kansas children.

More engagement means fewer student absences, fewer behavioral references and an increase in student achievement. Students having a say in how they structure their own learning and school day will foster responsibility, accountability and critical thinking. Designing learning around a student's passions and interests increases the likelihood of that student graduating high school and pursuing a meaningful future.

This is the education system Kansas is building through its Kansans Can School Redesign Project.



Students at Tescott Grade School, Twin Valley USD 240, studied erosion and weather through project-based learning.

## What is project-based learning?

**Project-based learning is a student-centered instruction that helps students acquire a deeper knowledge through exploration of real-world challenges and problems.** It requires collaboration between students and a teacher, and the learning occurs throughout

the course of a project, not just after the project's completion. It is an active style of learning that helps students learn about a subject by working for an extended amount of time to investigate and respond to a problem, challenge or complex question.

For more information about the Kansans Can School Redesign Project, visit [www.ksde.org](http://www.ksde.org).



A social-emotional focus at Coffeyville USD 445 has changed the culture of the district, drastically reducing discipline issues across the district and helping students manage their emotions.



Students at Kennedy Elementary School, Wellington USD 353, used computers to work at their own pace, and many classrooms have flexible seating areas.

## What guiding principles are being used in the redesign project?

School redesign is a process driven by **four principles**:

- **Student success skills:**  
An integrated approach to developing social-emotional growth.
- **Family, business and community partnerships:**  
Partnerships are based on mutually beneficial relationships and collaboration.
- **Personalized learning:**  
Teachers support students to have choice when it comes to time, place, pace and path.
- **Real-world applications:**  
Project-based learning, internships and civic engagement make learning relevant.

## What is personalized learning?

**Personalized learning is instruction tailored to each student based on the student's strengths, needs and interests.** Through a personalized learning approach, teachers are better able to:

- Understand each student's personal and academic background, strengths and needs.
- Help each student develop ownership of their learning.
- Provide students targeted instruction, practice and support in areas where they are struggling.
- Help students communicate effectively.
- Help students learn how to learn.

Students will have the choice to learn in the time they need, at the pace they need, in the setting in which they learn best and on a path that matches their interests and passions. Personalized learning provides opportunities for increased interaction with teachers and peers and encourages higher levels of student engagement. The ultimate goal is to ensure each student is adequately prepared with the knowledge and skills they need for college or career.

## Why is Kansas redesigning its educational system? Is our current system broken?

The current educational system has worked very well for some students, but not for all. This is evident when we look at Kansas' graduation rate. While 87 percent is a solid graduation rate, the flip side of that indicates that we are failing 13 percent of our students. Our children deserve better. We believe personalizing learning for each student is the answer. By offering students more opportunities and different ways to learn, they will become engaged learners and will grow in self-regulation, self-efficacy and independence. We are taking the best educational practices used throughout Kansas' history to craft a model that will help each Kansas student succeed.

## How does the state know what Kansans want in an educational system?

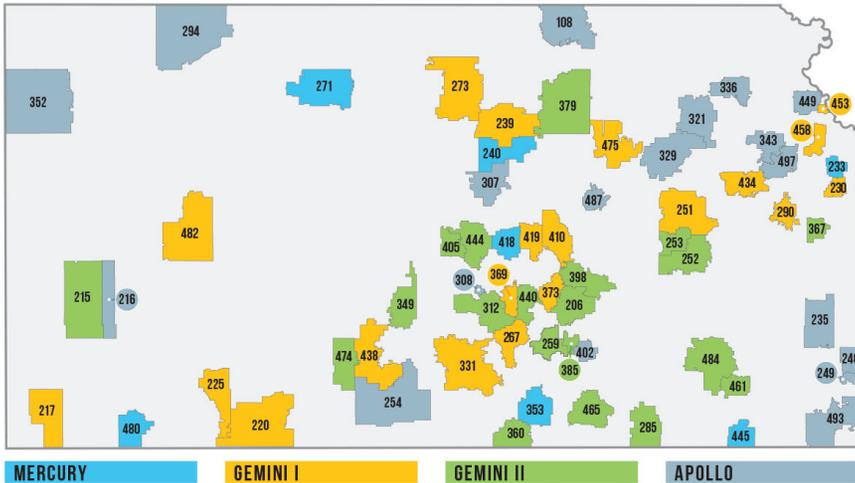
Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) leaders, along with Kansas State Board of Education members, conducted more than 20 community conversations with teachers, parents, business leaders and community members across the state before setting a new vision for education. Kansans said academic skills are important, but so are nonacademic skills, such as critical thinking, teamwork, perseverance and civic engagement. Kansans also said we need to move away from a "one-size-fits-all" system that relies exclusively on state assessments to measure student success. The new, student-focused system will provide support and resources for individualized success.



*The Age-to-Age program at Windsor Place Nursing Home is a partnership between Coffeyville USD 445 and Windsor Place Nursing Home that began in 2008. The intergenerational environment pairs kindergarten students with residents, also known as "grandmas and grandpas," who have years of life experience to share. Students read to the residents and vice versa.*

## Will all schools take part in the Kansans Can School Redesign Project?

**Yes.** In order to ensure all districts are fully supported during redesign, we are phasing in districts as resources and staffing capacity allows. Currently, more than 65 of Kansas' 286 school districts are taking part in the Mercury 7, Gemini I, Gemini II and Apollo project phases. The goal is to have all Kansas' public school districts started in the redesign process by 2026.



This map shows Kansas school districts taking part in redesign initiatives.



The Aug. 8, 2017, Kansas State Board of Education meeting marked the announcement of the Mercury 7 districts.

## How will we, as a state, know if this redesign is successful?

The State Board of Education has identified five key outcomes by which to measure our progress. Those outcomes include:

- Social-Emotional Growth of students measured locally.
- Increasing high school graduation rates to 95 percent.
- Ensuring all children enter kindergarten at age 5 socially, emotionally and academically prepared.
- Making sure students are civically engaged by the time they leave high school.
- Providing each student, starting in middle school, with an Individual Plan of Study (IPS) focused on the student's career interests.
- Increasing the percent of high school graduates who earn postsecondary degrees and certificates from 44 percent to 71 percent.

## Is this redesign just a fad?

**No.** Our current education model was developed nearly 100 years ago to accommodate the family farm and factory work day, not the student.

So schools are taking the best educational practices used throughout Kansas' history coupled with what Kansans said they wanted and current research-based methods to craft a model that places students at its focus.

KSDE, State Board of Education members, teachers, parents, business leaders, stakeholders and community leaders are committed to the success of each student. This new system will be based on personalization and project-based learning. There will be more focus on social and emotional development and immersion with parents and the community.

And students and teachers will become more engaged in and out of the classroom, with mentoring playing a pivotal role in the students' educational experience.