

FOCUS NEWSLETTER



Expanding Opportunities for High School Students



USD 305 high school students will soon be able to earn an Associate Degree before high school graduation. By expanding dual credit elective class choices (taught at Kansas State University Polytechnic {KSU} by a KSU professor) from 36 to 102 classes, USD 305 students could have an associates credential in the high demand areas of aviation, business or engineering from KSU Polytechnic before they finish 12th grade. The credits would also transfer into a four-year program if a student chose to do this.

Another benefit of this expanding partnership with KSU Polytechnic is the chance to earn an industry recognized credential in fields like applied

manufacturing, composites repair, aviation maintenance and more. Students would be able to leave high school with a certificate recognized by area employers.

These new opportunities join a long list of offerings at USD 305 that help students find success after high school.

That journey beyond graduation begins early.

“Aligning the high school experience with what a student foresees beyond graduation is kind of like driving,” explained Dr. Curtis Stevens, director of secondary programs. “Students’ sight must extend past what is right in front of them.” USD 305 students have multiple ways to develop a path to success that is unique to them.

The Individual Plan of Study (IPS) is created in 8th grade and is a roadmap that incorporates a student’s interests, choices and experiences into a plan that carries them past graduation. The plan is no longer just what classes they take. Purposeful exploration makes up that plan and may take the form of internships, junior or four-year college classes, Advanced Placement classes and more.

Currently, a partnership with Salina Area Technical College offers USD 305 students tuition breaks on college credits and credentials in areas such as heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC). Senate Bill 155 pays tuition for high school students to take SATC trades classes (e.g. HVAC, plumbing, mechanical, electrical).

With such a wide range of choices, every USD 305 student can have a post-secondary experience while still in high school. Increasing options for students outside of high school classes is another way USD 305 helps students on the journey to success after graduation.

Did You Know?

The number of graduating USD 305 seniors identified as concentrators* in a career pathway increased from 57 in May 2015 to 228 in May 2019.

**Concentrators are high school students who earned at least two credits in a state-approved pathway, at least two of three levels of coursework (intro, technical, application).*

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New Strategic Plan Introduced

A new Strategic Plan for USD 305 was approved by the Board of Education on November 10. The new vision statement, mission statement and goals are the result of input from students, staff, families and community (nearly 3,000 comments) from which common themes surfaced. These resulted after much consideration:

- *The vision of Salina Public Schools* is to transform Salina and the world.
- *The mission of Salina Public Schools* is to be the best place to learn and work by embracing challenges, creating belonging, fostering pride and inspiring hope.
- *Three goals are*
 - o *Increase students' communication skills*
 - o *Increase students' critical thinking skills*
 - o *Increase students' social-emotional skills*

In the coming months, building staff will be working on how to measure the Strategic Plan goals. Implementation of those plans will begin in spring 2021 and progress will be reported to the Board of Education and the community in the fall of 2021.

