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The Kansas Learning Network Meets to Collaborate on Plans to Address Key Priority Areas in Improving Kansas Public Schools

Kansas Educators Convene to Increase Student Achievement

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Wichita, KS – On June 3-4, 2010, over one hundred Kansas educators representing seventeen Kansas public school districts convened in Wichita to participate in the third statewide meeting of the Kansas Learning Network. Participants collaborated in engaging workshops to promote continuous improvement in increasing student achievement across the state. The districts included: Kansas City Public Schools, Turner Public Schools Ulysses Public Schools, Iola Public Schools, Wichita Public Schools, Haysville Public Schools, Ottawa Public Schools, Goodland Public Schools, Peabody-Burns Public Schools, Mullinville Public Schools, Coffeyville Public Schools, Leavenworth Public Schools, Liberal Public Schools, Topeka Public Schools, Parsons Public Schools, Greenbush Public Schools, Garden City Public Schools, and the Kansas State Department of Education.

The conference began with a welcoming dinner and keynote speech by Don Shalvey, Deputy Director for Education at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Diane DeBacker, Interim Commissioner of the Kansas State Department of Education. The next day, the Kansas school districts met to learn more about the forthcoming voluntary state evaluation system for teachers, principals, and superintendents. Next, attendees had the opportunity to select workshops on topics such as *Using Classroom Observations to Drive Instructional Improvement*, *Using Data to Drive Whole System Improvement*, *Creating and Managing Professional Learning Communities*, *Developing and Using Instructional Leadership*, *Graduation and Dropout Rates*, and *Aligning Curriculum and Assessments to Improve Student Outcomes*. Each district also took advantage of *District Team Time* to meet and discuss district plans for addressing key priority areas.

The Kansas Learning Network is a collaborative venture between the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and the education consulting firm Cross & Joftus, whose goal is to improve school and district policy and increase student achievement by working collaboratively in the areas of organizational development, systems theory and the effective use of data.