



**Do The Right Thing For Kids**  
[dothrightthingforkids.org](http://dothrightthingforkids.org)

**KCPS School Board Report Card**

**Meeting Date: March 14, 2012**

**All School Board members were present: West, Richey, Benson, Carroll, Jackson, Kelly, Rea, and Wilson**

Board Watchers from Do the Right Thing for Kids continue to observe Kansas City Public School Board Meetings and report to the public our sense of what this "snapshot" conveys about the school district's efforts at turnaround. Thus we have enlarged our focus beyond the board to the overall school system as it attempts to deal with its loss of accreditation. "Depressing" was the word one watcher used to describe the March 14, 2012 School Board Meeting. Data continue to indicate student performance far below state standards in most areas. While there are a few bright spots, to which the administration draws attention, the students are not learning at the level they have a right to expect. Only Board President Airick West voiced alarm when he commented on the data from acuity tests predicting dismal results on the April MAP test.

Efforts at improvement are under way in such areas as teacher training, performance assessment and rewards. These worthwhile efforts could, over time, lead to incremental improvement. However, overcoming decades of dysfunctional organizational performance in time to affect the reaccreditation timeline seems unlikely. One observer was astonished that these widely accepted improvement measures had not been put into effect years ago. Hope is held out that accreditation points sufficient to achieve provisional accreditation are within reach. However, the public needs to understand that most if not all of the 4 to 6 points discussed do not demonstrate real academic achievement, i.e. that children are really learning. Instead they refer to types of courses offered, adjustments in measuring attendance, etc. Even the bonus point for academic achievement does not really demonstrate achievement at significant levels but rather some improvement in substandard scores. Meanwhile, senior staff continues to leave, and students are already leaving or seeking to be on waiting lists to enroll in surrounding districts.

Do the Right Thing for Kids continues to believe strongly that merely achieving a marginal level of provisional accreditation is totally unacceptable. We do not believe that marginally educated children should be the goal, even if it gets the adults in the system off the hot seat.

Some continue to place emphasis on community involvement as a means for school district improvement. As a grassroots citizens organization itself, Do the Right Thing for Kids certainly believes strongly in citizen engagement. However, there is no substitute for strong classroom teaching supported by an effective educational organization and good leadership. These elements have been lacking for many years as the district has been weighed down by special interests. We continue to support legislation that allows neighboring effective, accredited school

districts to play a strong role in educating the children who live within the current boundaries of the Kansas City Public School District.

View the agenda/minutes of this meeting at: [http://www.boarddocs.com/mo/kanscsd/Board.nsf/  
Public](http://www.boarddocs.com/mo/kanscsd/Board.nsf/Public)