

Kansas offers incentives to improve kids' routes to school

The Kansas Department of Transportation is looking for applications for *Safe Routes to Schools Projects*.

"This federally funded program will provide 100 percent reimbursements to cities, counties, school districts, and other entities to provide infrastructural and non-infrastructural improvements that encourage children to walk or bicycle to school more safely," said Lisa Koch, coordinating the project.

Three types of funding options are available.

The first option, she said, is a Phase I program that will provide reimbursements for school district-local public authority collaborations to create a *Safe Routes to School Plan*.

"This plan will identify areas in need of engineering improvements and will identify what type of education, enforcement, and evaluation programs would work best," Koch said.

The second option is a Phase 2 Infrastructure project. School district-local public authority collaborations that currently have a *Safe Routes to School Plan* are eligible for this program.

"The Phase 2 Infrastructure project funding provides reimbursements to collaborations for engineering improvements to the school zone area that improves the ability of children to walk or bicycle to school more easily and safely," she said.

The third option is the Phase 2 non-infrastructure program.

School district-local public authority collaborations that currently have a *Safe Routes to School Plan* are eligible for this program. This program provides reimbursements to collaborations for education, engineering, and enforcement activities.

The state mailed applications to local public authorities and school districts for submitting proposals within the three categories.

Koch said, proposals must be submitted to the Kansas Department of Transportation by Aug. 25, with selected projects announced in October 2006.

For questions, call (785) 296-8593 or write: Bureau of Transportation; 700 SW Harrison; Topeka, KS, 66603-3754.

Student News

LINDSBORG — Bethany College has named 162 students to its spring 2006 Dean's Honor Roll.

To be recognized, a student must be full-time with a semester grade point average of at least 3.50 on a 4

point scale, according to Dr. Eugene Bales, Bethany academic vice president.

Students from northwest Kansas include Crystal Mannebach, of Colby; Amanda Donahey, Ashton

Lofgreen, of Norton and Tessa Howard of Sharon Springs.

Bethany College, established by Swedish Lutheran immigrants in 1881, is a college of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Demand for mental health services climbing at colleges

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Nearly half of all college students suffer some degree of depression, experts say, and college counseling specialists in Missouri and Kansas are having a hard time keeping up with demand for their services.

"It is a crisis because it has mushroomed on the campuses more rapidly than we were totally prepared for," said Marita Barkis, director of the counseling center at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

The American Medical Association is calling for increased mental health services on college campuses to address the issue.

"Existing campus counseling and health services are often overburdened due to inadequate resources as severe mental health conditions increase among students," AMA board member J. James Rohack said in a news release.

Counselors say students are under growing pressure to perform so they can get higher-paying jobs; many who have never experienced failure suffer their first setbacks in college; and some students whose mental illness prevented them from attending college before are being allowed in because of advances in medicines to treat their problems.

“There is a lot of pressure on young people, high expectations and it is very competitive.”

Marita Barkis,
University of Missouri -Kansas City

"Stress is a big factor," Barkis said. "There is a lot of pressure on young people, high expectations and it is very competitive."

Richard Kadison, chief of mental health services at Harvard University, said people need to be more aware than nearly one in two college students will suffer from depression at some point while in school.

"Parents, faculty and students need to be educated and promote healthier lifestyles," he said. "College administrators are missing the point on how important it is to have adequate resources to help students stay healthy."

A study three years ago at Kansas State University found that the number of students seeing school counselors for depression had doubled over a 13-year period, while the number of students with suicidal thoughts had tripled over that same

span. "Think about how competitive and organized all children have become from a very early age with sports and everything — get this experience, get that experience, things that used to be free play are now structured and high stakes," Barkis said. "When we played stickball in the street, if you struck out, so what, it was just for fun. Not anymore."

Sherry Benton, assistant director of the counseling center at Kansas State, said mechanisms need to be put into place so that students are able to afford treatment for mental issues.


"One really useful thing to do would be to require students to have health insurance so that it can be factored into their financial package and at least when people get quite ill, they can afford to get help," Benton said.

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