

NEWS RELEASE

North Kansas City Schools Launches Pearson Benchmark Assessment Series

Missouri District Adopts Pearson School Systems Online Assessment Tool to Measure, Manage and Maximize Student Achievement

MESA, Ariz., & KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Feb. 22, 2006 – A high achieving and nationally recognized school district, North Kansas City Schools (NKCS) announced today that it has selected Pearson Benchmark as the comprehensive, Web-based assessment tool for its 17,300 students. Benchmark will allow teachers and administrators in the district's 29 schools to measure, manage and maximize student achievement through testing, reporting and analysis of data.

Janet Herdman, executive director of NKCS Information & Technology Services, said her district recognizes the educational and professional value of technology as a means of access to student data, a tool to develop student abilities and as a business tool for the district. For nearly 10 years, NKCS has used SASI from Pearson School Systems as its student information system, last school year adding Pearson Inform to the system for managing and analyzing student achievement data and performance. Adopting Pearson Benchmark now provides educators with an easy-to-use, always updated assessment tool that complements the district's existing student information infrastructure.

“We're in an accountability mode today. With data in a concise, easy-to-use format, we are more able to make informed decisions,” said Herdman. “We chose Pearson Benchmark because it will allow us to centrally store, manage, update and secure all of our critical data. It puts the information we need at our fingertips – to evaluate our school improvement plans and to ensure that our students achieve at the highest possible levels.”

Technology and the student-specific data it generate for NKCS have had a positive impact on student learning and achievement. Despite the socio-economic challenges faced by a third of its students, the district has shown consistent growth in test scores across the district for several years. In fact, the state of Missouri named it a

“Distinction in Performance” school district in 2005 because it met 12 of the 12 performance standards set by the state. Overall, NKCS students consistently score above state and national averages on standardized exams, with many students recognized through the National Merit Scholars, Bright Flight and Missouri Scholars programs. Scores on MAP, the mandatory Missouri state assessment, exceed state averages in nearly every tested content area.

“Our partnership with North Kansas City Schools has helped us to develop our student information and assessment products to best meet school districts’ instructional needs,” said Mike Evans, president, Pearson School Systems. “We look forward to continuing to work closely together as the district makes Pearson Benchmark its primary tool for managing student assessment.”

About Pearson Benchmark

Pearson Benchmark allows districts to take multiple measures of student performance against standards at any time throughout the school year. With the data collected over time, teachers and administrators can monitor student progress against standards, address deficiencies and recheck mastery. The result is more targeted instruction, shorter assessment cycles, more effective teaching delivery and better student results. Pearson Benchmark provides a new core set of capabilities, including the ability to quickly and accurately assess student progress against standards, use the data to diagnose student learning needs and target instruction to address those needs.

About Pearson School Systems

Pearson School Systems (PSS) is changing the face of K-12 student performance and information management through its offering of tightly integrated, mission-critical district enterprise solutions. Through its innovative, digital solutions, PSS is dedicated to helping schools perform and students succeed. Its product lineup includes SASI, the comprehensive student information system; Pearson Centerpoint, the multi-platform, Web-based student information and performance management system; CIMS[®], the comprehensive finance, human resources, and student information system; Pearson Inform, the achievement data analysis and decision support tool; and Pearson

Benchmark, the customizable, Web-based district benchmark testing solution. Pearson School Systems is a business of Pearson Education, the world's leading integrated education company, which in turn is a part of Pearson, the international media company. For more information, please visit: www.pearsonschoolsystems.com.

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