

DIGEST

BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

Five area schools win federal education award

Five St. Louis area schools were named No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools last week by U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings.

They are St. John Lutheran School in Ellisville; St. Peter Catholic School in St. Charles; Metro Academic and Classical High School and McKinley Classical Junior Academy, both in St. Louis; and in the Metro East, Ellis Elementary School in O'Fallon, Ill.

Across Missouri, Spellings recognized a total of nine schools. They are among 320 chosen nationwide.

The No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools program honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools. Blue Ribbon schools are selected based on one of two criteria, either dramatically improving performance on state tests when at least 40 percent of their students are from disadvantaged backgrounds, or scoring in the top 10 percent on state or national tests regardless of the background of students.

MISSOURI HOUSE

Special panel to review reporting of child abuse

The Missouri House formally organized a special committee last week to review how effectively school districts, government agencies and the public report allegations of child abuse and sexual misconduct.

The Interim Committee on Student and Child Protection is headed by Rep. Jane Cunningham, R-Chesterfield. Rep. Brian Nieves, R-Washington, has been named vice chairman of the committee.

Legislation forming the committee was passed earlier this year, after Associated Press news coverage of sexual

misconduct by public school educators in several school districts in Missouri.

The interim committee is seeking testimony on how government agencies and public school employees have or have not worked to protect children from abuse and sexual misconduct.

For more information, contact Cunningham's office at 573-751-1186.

ILLINOIS PRESCHOOL

Program will add sites and expand services

Illinois Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich announced last week that Preschool for All would expand to include 30 new sites this year and that 50 current sites would be expanding their services.

The expansion will bring the total number of 3- and 4-year-olds served to more than 90,000.

The state's spending on preschool has doubled since 2003, according to the governor's office.

Preschool for All supports preschool programs in public and private schools, child care centers, licensed family child care homes, private preschools, park districts, faith-based organizations and other community-based agencies. The program requires that preschools be staffed by qualified teachers who hold teaching certificates in early childhood education and provide at least 2½ hours a day of educational programs.

To find out if a child is eligible for the program, call 1-800-649-1884. The list of new and expanding 2008-2009 Preschool for All grantees can be found at http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/pdf/pfa_awards_contact_list.pdf.

SPOTLIGHT T.E.E.N.

Teen group to present play about gangs, life

Spotlight T.E.E.N. (Theatre Educating and Entertaining Now) is offering a limited engagement of its show WASTED, by

Margeau Baue Steinau, this fall.

The show is being offered Nov. 3-14 to schools and organizations serving teens.

WASTED is the story of three young men whose lives are dramatically altered after an act of gang violence. In addition to a performance, Spotlight T.E.E.N. programming also includes a post-show workshop with the actors, who are all students in Division of Youth Services residential programs, and an educator's guide.

Spotlight T.E.E.N. has been nominated for a Kevin Kline Award and received a grant in 2008 from the State Farm Youth Advisory Board for excellence in addressing societal issues affecting teens. The company also receives funding from the Regional Arts Commission and the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis.

For more information, visit www.spotlighttheatrestlonline.org or call 314-412-6848.

LADUE SCHOOLS

District goals include finances, achievement

Ladue School District's goals for the new year focus on student achievement, responsible financial planning and the building of positive communication. Goals were approved by the Board of Education last week.

Academic goals include narrowing the achievement gap between African-American and other students and providing consistent education at each district elementary school.

Financial planning goals include making decisions on the future of the early childhood center, built before World War II, and the 1960s administration building. The buildings could be replaced for about \$14 million, but measures short of replacement are also an option, an early study shows.

The district has about 3,600 students this fall, about 150 above a year ago. The official fall enrollment will be recorded as of Sept. 24.