



FACT SHEET

November 25, 2009

“Graduation Matters in Missouri” Public Service Announcements

“Graduation Matters in Missouri” is a new slogan, released by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education at the 2009 Missouri Dropout Prevention Summit, to emphasize the importance of high school graduation at a time when the state’s dropout rate has been creeping upward; more than 12,000 Missouri students dropped out last year. Several communities have adopted this rally cry and are working to improve their graduation rates.

The 30-second “Graduation Matters” public service announcement features 18 Missouri students from the following schools: Hazelwood East High School, St. Louis; East Central College, Union; Missouri University of Science and Technology, Rolla; Moberly Area Community College, Moberly and Columbia campuses; and Kansas City Metro colleges.

The PSA was produced through a collaborative project with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Telecommunications Department, the Missouri Lottery, and the Missouri Connections Public Outreach Workgroup. Interviews were conducted with two PSA projects in mind, “Graduation Matters” and the Missouri Lottery’s motivational video about the Missouri A+ Schools program.

See the following links for more information about “Graduation Matters in Missouri”:

- [Web page](#)
- [News release](#)
- [PSA theater schedule](#)

Missouri Connections Public Outreach Partnership

This multi-agency workgroup is leading a statewide public outreach project to provide career planning information and resources for students, parents and job-seekers of all ages. The aim of the group, representing four state agencies and two non-profit organizations, is to build awareness of growing career opportunities in Missouri and stimulate interest in life-long career preparation.

Since June 2008, the workgroup has distributed a monthly news article to statewide media and targeted publications to inform the public about statewide employment projections, career and industry trends, and point to available resources.

The organizations contributing to the Missouri Connections Public Outreach Partnership project are:

- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education;
- Department of Higher Education;
- Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development;
- Department of Economic Development, Missouri Economic Research & Information Center;
- Missouri Center for Career Education; and
- Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The partnership projects are made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. Missouri earned a share of special incentive funding by exceeding performance levels under the Workforce Investment Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act.

Missouri Career Mentors

The video room in the “Career Exploration” area at www.missouriconnections.org currently features interviews of 18 Missouri Career Mentors. Developed for high school student audiences, the videos range from four to 12 minutes in length. The first series of Missouri Career Mentor interviews was conducted by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Missouri Connections Public Outreach Partnership last year in conjunction with development of the new video, “What’s Your Plan? Exploring the 16 Career Clusters.”

In each of the “mentoring” interviews, professionals representing their Career Clusters share their career path stories and offer advice for students. Mentors include an engineer, a forensic scientist, two registered nurses, a K-9 police officer, a math teacher/coach, an addiction counselor and more. Their stories emphasize their perspectives on the importance of their high school classes. They also offer suggestions about how to explore career interests.

Each interview is Web-streamed in the video room at www.missouriconnections.org. The Missouri Career Mentor interviews also are available on DVD and were distributed to school counselors and teachers at their fall conferences in early November. The videos can be incorporated into classroom curriculum and career exploration activities, and they can be viewed online by students and parents at home.

A second series is currently being filmed and produced at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and new interviews will be posted to the Missouri Connections video room early next year. Interviews conducted to date for this second series include a nuclear engineer, physical therapist, firefighter, an air quality specialist, and more.

Missouri Newspapers in Education

Newspapers in Education (NIE) is a program conducted by the Missouri Press Association through its educational foundation. It is a partnership between newspapers and schools in which teachers use classroom sets of newspapers as an educational resource in a variety of age and curriculum settings.

The Missouri Connections Public Outreach Partnership developed and made available to newspapers statewide two NIE series in conjunction with the Missouri Press Association’s NIE program. The first series is a four-part “College Road Map” series, based on information provided by the Missouri Department of Higher Education. Each part focuses on appropriate college-planning activities for students in middle school, high school, then the senior year. The fourth part provides tips for choosing a postsecondary school. The second series is a seven-part career exploration series, organized around the six career paths.

Facebook and MySpace ads

MissouriConnections.org, in addition to being an important tool students can use at school to prepare their personal plans of study, is also a resource that is available 24/7 to students and their parents as they explore careers, search colleges, and many other related activities. Reaching out to students as they are updating their Facebook and MySpace pages at home provides an opportunity to share information and convenient access to MissouriConnections.org. The visibility and convenient Web links increase awareness and availability of the education and career planning resource provided by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Missouri Connections Public Outreach Partnership targets students ages 13 through 24 in its social networking outreach efforts that began last fall. In the 2008-09 school year, more than 17 million impressions were made, and in October this year alone, more than 9 million impressions were made. The current ad series, which features the top five reasons to visit MissouriConnections.org, will conclude at the end of November.

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