



Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Resolution

Establishing the Great Plains Conference Public Education Partnership

Financial implications: Yes

Rationale: United Methodists in Kansas and Nebraska have historically supported public education knowing that strong public schools are crucial to the health and vitality of our communities and churches. While support for education fits within our mission, we acknowledge that public educators often work with little community support.

Whereas, public schools have faced budget cuts and other challenges in recent years, forcing educators to do more with less, and

Whereas, improving the educational environment for Kansas and Nebraska children, will support other efforts to reduce poverty and improve social and physical well-being for all students, and

Whereas, children living in poverty, special-needs children and homeless children face additional struggles navigating their way through school systems, and

Whereas, public school students frequently lack the mentoring and support they need to mature into healthy, well-adjusted young adults who are equipped to contribute to the work force or to have successful college careers.

Therefore be it resolved:

That the Great Plains United Methodist Conference create an initiative to strengthen public education in Nebraska and Kansas, beginning July 15, 2014, and continuing through July 15, 2016 (and beyond).

Therefore be it further resolved that all United Methodist churches in the Great Plains Conference be invited to join the “Great Plains Public Education Partnership,” which invites the church’s commitment to:

1. Strengthen an existing or establish a “hands-on” partnership with a local public school or schools;
2. Encourage and equip members to contact their state legislators to advocate for public education; and
3. Attend a conference-sponsored regional event supporting public education.

Therefore be it further resolved that the annual conference confirm the steering committee appointed by Bishop Scott Jones, with representatives from both Nebraska and Kansas, to guide this area-wide initiative. The steering committee is comprised of two members of the Mercy and Justice Team, professional educators, conference staff and others with needed expertise and interest.

Implemented by: Steering Committee and Mercy and Justice Team

April 15, 2014

Submitted on behalf of the Mercy and Justice Team by Pat Longstroth and Stephanie Ahlschwede, members of the Mercy and Justice Team

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