



UpLink®

GREATER

Kansas City BUSINESS

ISSUES AND INSIGHTS FOR THE KANSAS CITY AREA COMMUNITY

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Growing METS in KC Schools (And we're not talking about the baseball team...)



Mentor Yue Cui, a student in the Department of Pharmacology at the University of Kansas Medical Center, explains her work to students Kiran Jagtiani, Ali Corbin, and Riley Sloan.

Did you know that American K-12 students come in number 27 (just in front of Latvia) in mathematics literacy of 15 year olds? Or that American students earn proportionately fewer degrees in math, engineering, technology, or science (METS) than their global counterparts? (The U.S. is number 16; just behind Singapore, Italy, and Germany.)

There's growing concern about the ability of students to compete in an increasingly-global world. That's why The Chamber is one of the Founding Partners of a new Kauffman Foundation initiative called UpLink. The foundation's \$5.4 million grant to YouthFriends to administer UpLink is already bearing fruit. Chamber members are encouraged to participate.

UpLink is a community hub connecting area businesses with teachers and students who want to further their education in METS. (Visit the UpLink hub online at www.yf-uplink.org to learn more.) UpLink is focusing on three key components during this first year of the program: YouthFriends, connecting 500 METS professionals with students in area schools; LaunchPad, providing 50 students with METS internships and job shadowing opportunities; and TeacherTech, offering nearly 20 METS-related paid externships for teachers this summer.

American Century Investments and Bayer Animal Health are just two Chamber member companies participating in TeacherTech. "At American Century, we have two financial literacy curricula for anyone who wants to learn or teach financial education," says Scott Oberkrom, Community Investment Consultant. The company has hired a teacher trained in curriculum development to review and update those programs. "We're really excited about participating in TeacherTech," Oberkrom says. "With her help, we can develop training programs that will 'train the trainer.'"

Bayer Animal Health, meanwhile, has a teacher working on a research and development project over the summer. "As corporate citizens," Bob Walker, Bayer's Director of Communications says, "we have a vested interest in promoting education in the community, giving students a reason to pursue these careers and ultimately have them stay in the region and find meaningful, valuable work."

"While there is a focus on METS, UpLink is about connecting students, teachers, and schools with business on a broad basis," says Lisa Adkins, President of YouthFriends. "So often you hear business say 'what can I do about education?' There are a lot of things you can do to be part of the solution, and all those choices are contained within the hub."



THE CHAMBER

Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce

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