

**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Southwest Missouri Schools, Organizations to Emphasize
“Graduation Matters” November 15-21**

Graduation matters. That’s the message being communicated within the Joplin School District and throughout Southwest Missouri during American Education Week, November 15-21, 2009. The area-wide effort aims to encourage students to graduate from high school and to educate students, parents and community members about the importance of completing high school.

“Graduation Matters week is an important first step as we take the lead in addressing our regional dropout problem,” says Superintendent of Joplin Schools, Dr. C.J. Huff. “By heightening awareness through engaging our parents, community agencies and business partners we can create change in our communities so that a common focus exists emphasizing the importance of high school graduation.”

Officials in participating districts are encouraging their schools, local businesses and organizations to get involved by posting the “Graduation Matters” slogan on their marquees and through other creative means. Several area banks will provide visiting customers with printed messages that provide statistics about issues faced by high school dropouts – lower wages, higher unemployment and increased risk of incarceration.

Each Joplin school has planned various methods and activities to underscore the “Graduation Matters” message to the students in their building – placing signs at classroom doors indicating the students’ graduation year, writing and poster contests, bulletin board messages, slideshow presentations, and more. A photo opportunity for one school activity is below.

McKinley Elementary School

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Monday, November 16, 2009

Cap and Gown Day: Faculty will dress in graduation caps and gowns during the school day.

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Joplin Schools – A Leader in Education

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