



The United Methodist Church  
GREAT PLAINS AREA

SCOTT J. JONES  
Resident Bishop

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July 15, 2014

Dear Friends,

God calls us to love our neighbors and transform the world. One of the best opportunities available to each local church is to form a partnership with a public school in your community. We also need to be advocates with our state legislatures for better funding and better policies to support our public education system. Please join us for the Big, Hairy, Audacious Education Caravans coming near you.

We United Methodists care about educating all the children of all the people.

Toward that end, we invite you and all of the members of your congregation to attend one of six public education events in July and September. Locations, dates and special guests include:

**Kansas**

- Garden City First UMC, July 29, 1106 N Main St. (Superintendent Dr. Rick Atha)
- Iola Wesley UMC, July 30, 301 E Madison Ave. (Allen County Community College President Dr. John Masterson)
- Topeka First UMC, July 31, 600 SW Topeka Blvd. (Superintendent Dr. Julie Ford)(Will be webcast at [greatplainsumc.org/livestream](http://greatplainsumc.org/livestream))

**Nebraska**

- Scottsbluff First UMC, Sept. 29, 2002 4th St. (TBD)
- Kearney First UMC, Sept. 30, 4500 Linden Dr. (TBD)
- Lincoln Saint Paul UMC, Oct. 2, 1144 M St. (TBD) (Will be webcast at [greatplainsumc.org/livestream](http://greatplainsumc.org/livestream))

I will welcome participants at each one. You will hear vital information from educators and inspiring stories from congregations engaged in transforming ministry. There will be practical suggestions for your church's ministry. We will close with pie and ice cream as well! It should be a fun and inspiring evening. The Topeka and Lincoln events will be webcast so persons who cannot attend in person can participate over the internet. (A group in your church could watch together if travel is not possible).

We would like to know you are coming, so please register at [greatplainsumc.org/education](http://greatplainsumc.org/education). This is a time for us to make a difference in the lives of children and youth in our communities. Please get involved.

Grace and peace,

Scott J. Jones



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

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## **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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