

GOVERNOR'S TOWN HALL MEETING

**RISING TO THE CHALLENGE:
Reducing Childhood Poverty & Improving
Childhood Outcomes in Kansas**



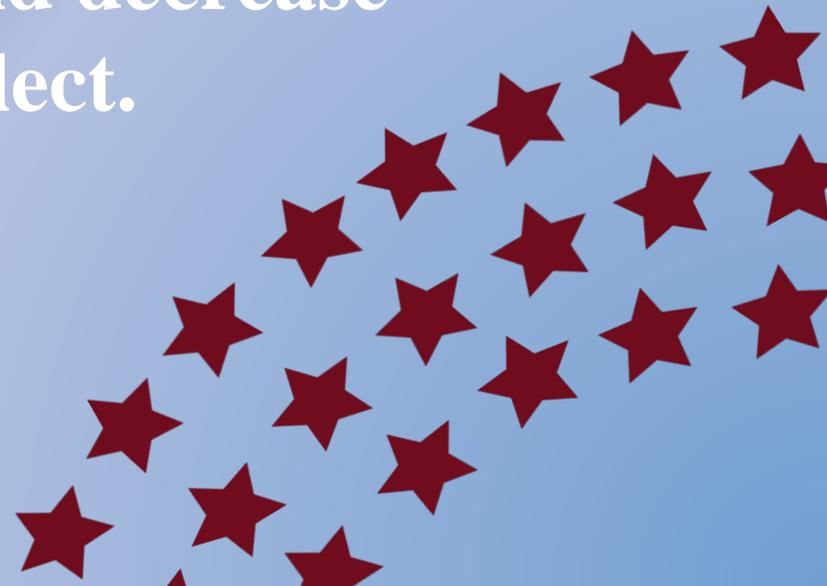
PURPOSE

- **Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) partnered to seek public input from stakeholders on strategies to reduce childhood poverty and improve childhood outcomes in November, 2011.**
- **Three Town Hall meetings were held across the state of Kansas**
- **Nearly 680 Kansans came together to discuss childhood poverty solutions**



INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of the town hall meetings was to gather insights and strategies to reduce childhood poverty, increase childhood educational outcomes, and decrease childhood abuse and neglect.



BASIC AGENDA: 1:30 – 4:30 PM

- **Welcome:** Gov. Brownback (KC)
SRS Secretary Siedlecki
Local Dignitaries
- **Invited Speakers: A Snapshot of Child Poverty in Kansas**
 - **KC:** Robert Rector, Heritage Foundation
Rev. Barry Feaker, Topeka Rescue Mission
 - **Wichita:** Robert Rector, Heritage Foundation
David Sandford, GraceMed Health Clinic
 - **Garden City:** Ron Haskins, Brookings Institute
Robert DeLeon, Salvation Army



BASIC AGENDA (CONTINUED)

- **Facilitated Small Group Breakout Sessions (25 min. each)**
 - Discussion Topic 1: Family Structure
 - Discussion Topic 2: Educational Outcomes
 - Discussion Topic 3: Child Abuse and Neglect
- **Closing Remarks: SRS Secretary Siedlecki**



Discussion Topic 1: Family Structure

Research shows the children of single parents and/or cohabiting parents are at a greater risk for a broad range of problems, from trouble in school to psychological stress, physical abuse and poverty, compared to children living in married two-parent families. What can we do to ensure that Kansas children grow up in healthy, married-parent families? With those findings in mind, what are your thoughts regarding family structure and its relation to child well-being?

Consider: What is the role of state government; what is the role of community organizations; what is the role specifically of faith-based organizations?



Discussion Topic 2: Educational Outcomes

Kansas Statewide Assessments for all students show an 11-year growth trend in reading and mathematics skills. Although our poorest children are also demonstrating an increase in proficiency levels, they continue to fall below statewide trends. What can Kansans do to help our low-income students succeed in their education?

Consider: What is the role of state government; what is the role of community organizations; what is the role specifically of faith-based organizations?



Discussion Topic 3: Child Abuse and Neglect

Most Americans believe, and professionals agree, that parents are in the best position to nurture, protect and care for their children. When parents are unable or fail to meet the needs of their children, what resources and solutions can Kansas use to offer these children?

Consider: What is the role of state government; what is the role of community organizations; what is the role specifically of faith-based organizations?



OUTCOMES: A SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT INPUT

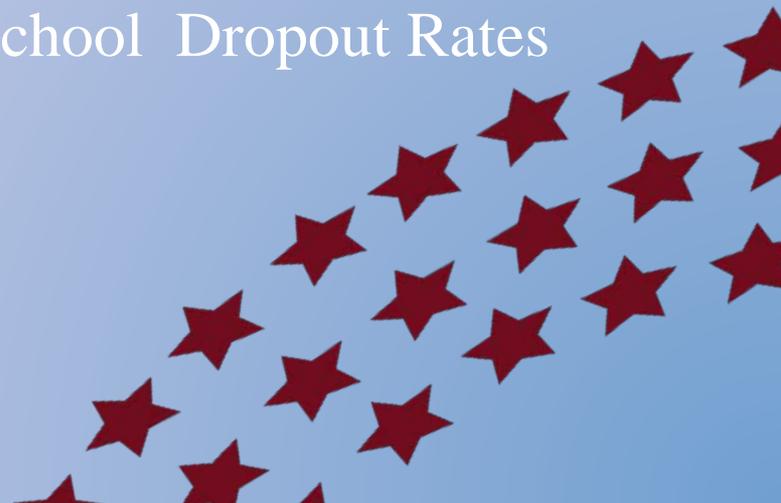
- **Four primary themes emerged:**

1. **Early Education, Prevention and Intervention**
2. **Collaboration and Partnerships**
3. **Access to Resources and Services**
4. **Family Support and Placement**



Theme 1: Early Education, Prevention and Intervention

- Refers to the desire for Kansas children to receive early education, ongoing support for higher education, addressing truancy and dropout rates. Discussion around Kansans receiving ‘healthy family’ education; including activities such as early marriage preparation and family preservation.
 - Sub-Themes:
 - Early Education for Kansas Children
 - Addressing Truancy and High School Dropout Rates
 - Healthy Family Education
 - Educational Supports
 - Education



Theme 2: Collaboration and Partnerships

- Captures how government, community and faith-based organizations could better assist Kansas families by working together, with the notion of “holistic support” and tighter inter-agency collaboration.
 - Sub-Themes:
 - Interagency Collaboration
 - Holistic Support
 - Roles of State Gov’t, Community Organizations, and Faith-based Organizations
 - Faith-based Organizations
 - Community Organizations
 - Tax Credits, Penalties, and Benefits



Theme 3: Access to Resources and Services

- Specifically refers to services that buffer families from the impacts of poverty. This could include, but is not limited to access to transportation, education, mental health, health care, childcare, technology, employment and culturally sensitive resources and services.
 - Sub-Themes:
 - Transportation
 - Education
 - Childcare
 - Services
 - Employment
 - Incentives



Theme 4: Family Support and Placement

- Focuses on options available to families when their children are removed from the home. Fatherhood, kinship care and grandparent placements were all included as possible options for Kansas children. The need for support systems for foster and adoptive families was also identified.
 - Sub-Themes:
 - Fatherhood Involvement
 - Kinship Care
 - Child Placement
 - Adoptive Parent and Foster Care Supports
 - Mandated Reporting



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Questions / Discussion

