



DeLaSalle Education Center

Kansas City, MO | Mark Williamson, executive director

Grades Served: 9-12 ■ **Enrollment:** 250 ■ **Year Chartered:** 2010 - 2011

Instructional Strategies: Alternative education, workforce development

Student Demographics: 84% Black; 12% Hispanic; 3% White; 94% FRL eligible; 13% Special education

A Mission to Serve

The DeLaSalle Education Center (DeLaSalle) provides an alternative education option to students ages 14 to 20 living in Kansas City, Missouri. The charter school's goal is straightforward: help each and every student achieve academic success. DeLaSalle's philosophy, "we accept students as they come to us and we work with them where they are," is put into practice through personalized education, holistic services, and experiential learning of workforce skills.

DeLaSalle is the only charter high school in Missouri dedicated exclusively to serving the high-risk, urban core student, and it also offers mental health, addiction recovery, parenting, and concentrated remediation supports within the school. In addition to traditional end-of-course and standardized exams, DeLaSalle measures student success through academic growth, progress toward treatment goals, and attendance rates. Students are allowed to enroll at any time throughout the year, and are empowered to define personal goals and set their own learning pace to complete the required 24 credits and pass exams to earn their high school diploma.

From Vision to Reality: How CSP Funds Enabled DeLaSalle Education Center to Open

The additional in-school supports that DeLaSalle provides its students cost more than \$20,000 per student per year. About 60 percent of that cost is covered by government funding and the school must raise the additional funds to cover the gap.

DeLaSalle received \$300,000 through the federal Charter Schools Program (CSP). Executive Director Mark Williamson explained, "One of the things we know about our students is that they are very tech savvy, and they

STATEWIDE IMPACT

- 41% of graduates pursue secondary education (32% while working full-time; 24% while working part-time)
- 16% of DeLaSalle students enter the workforce after graduation
- 2% of DeLaSalle graduates enter the armed forces

"Nobody expected me to graduate at all. I have the statistic kind of neighborhood. Everybody in my neighborhood except for my older brother dropped out of school. Everybody thought that I would be the same way because of my past. I can have a million other accomplishments that people can try to take away from me, but I'm going to have a paper that says I've graduated from DeLaSalle."

— K'Von, senior



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Photo credit: DeLaSalle Education Center



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learn well using technology. When we looked around our school, we were really thread bare in computers and Smart Boards and the technology that we really wanted to have to use in academic instruction. The CSP grant came our way, and literally overnight, that changed. We were able to add laptops and desktops and Smart Boards, and we were able to expand the use of our online learning software because then we had the hardware to support that. It's been a really big plus for us."

Looking to the Future

The students at DeLaSalle have myriad opportunities to apply their academic studies to real-world skills and situations. The Student Press is a full printing facility housed within the school, and the students handle all aspects of the business operation—from design to printing, and from buying supplies to shipping the product. The DeLaSalle Healthy Lifestyles Program teaches culinary, nutritional, and household skills. A certified Culinary Arts instructor guides students in the school's culinary arts classroom through turning food grown at the school's garden into healthy dishes.

Heard in the Halls: Teacher, Parent, and Student Perspectives



"The most rewarding part of my job is just to see the change in students. I believe that my job is to create better students and better people."—Vincent Wright, social studies teacher

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"I just feel like it's a family. We're all a big family, working towards one goal: to see these kids succeed, graduate, move on and be productive citizens."

—Mary Ghasemi, blended learning teacher



"I have a four-year-old son, so DeLaSalle helps me a lot when it comes to resources, like getting things I need for him—clothes, diapers. They even brought me a dresser the other day. They also help me with my attendance and just anything."

—Ladanity, senior



"The relationships that staff build with the students is critical to our success. It's not just the teachers. It's the admissions folks, it's our chief development officer, it's the folks in fundraising, it's the folks in the business office. Everybody engages with the kids, and it's a pretty amazing thing."

—Mark Williamson, executive director

IN THE COMMUNITY

- The Student Press, a student operated commercial printing enterprise, provides for the printing services for local businesses, the Kansas City charter school community, and non-profit organizations.
- The Culinary Arts Program is a career education approved program designed to prepare students for careers in the food service industry.
- Actors from the Kansas City Repertory Theatre volunteer with DeLaSalle students twice a week, which culminates in a final student performance at the Spencer Theater on the University of Missouri, Kansas City Campus.
- The DeLaSalle English Department partners with the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art to engage DeLaSalle students in Visual Thinking Strategies, an evidence-based instruction method that improves the learner's critical thinking and literacy skills through the structured observation and discussion of artwork.



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