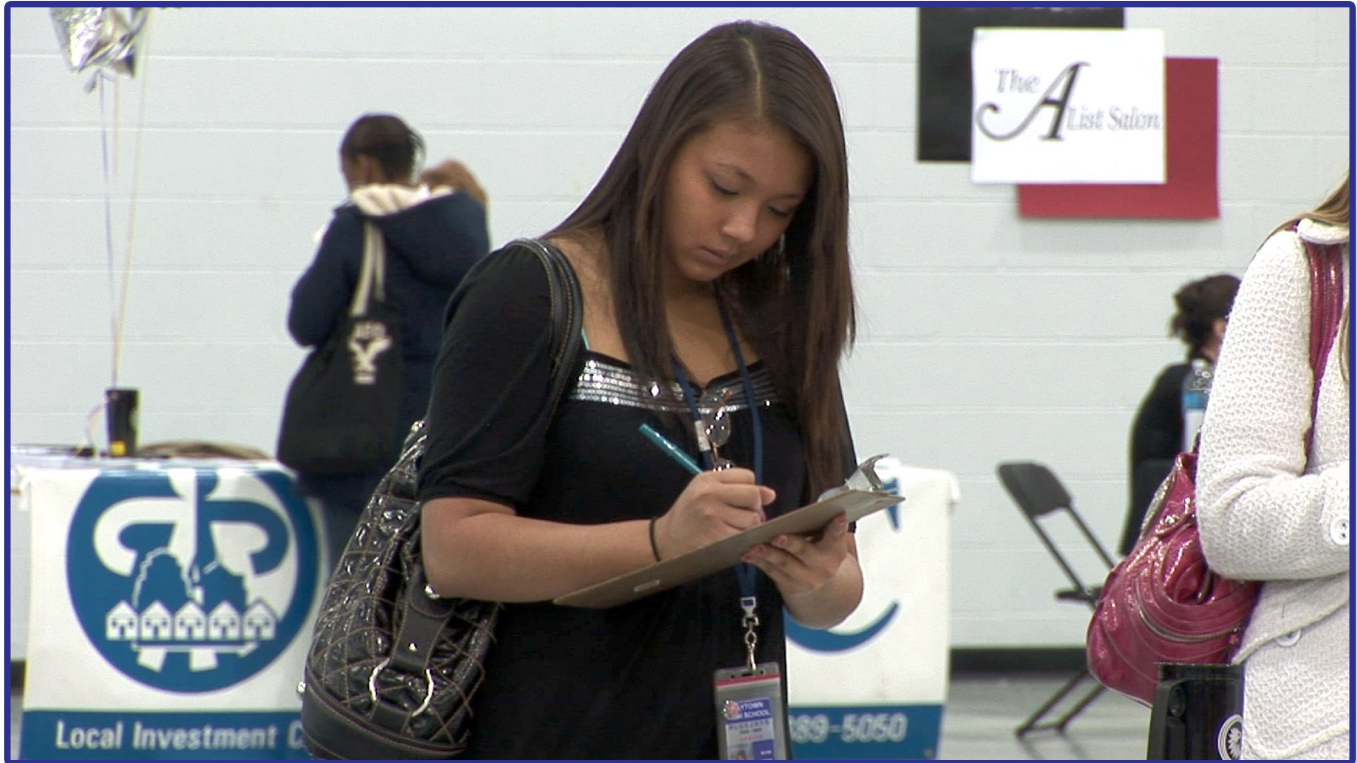


LINC Commission Meeting

March 16, 2009



A student from Raytown High School fills out an application at the 2nd Annual High School Seniors Job and Career Fair held on Feb. 27. Over 1,800 students from 6 Kansas City area school districts attended.



3100 Broadway, Suite 1100 - Kansas City, MO 64111 - (816) 889-5050 - www.kclinc.org

Local Investment Commission (LINC) Vision

Our Shared Vision

A caring community that builds on its strengths to provide meaningful opportunities for children, families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, attain their highest potential, and contribute to the public good.

Our Mission

To provide leadership and influence to engage the Kansas City Community in creating the best service delivery system to support and strengthen children, families and individuals, holding that system accountable, and changing public attitudes towards the system.

Our Guiding Principles

1. **COMPREHENSIVENESS:** Provide ready access to a full array of effective services.
2. **PREVENTION:** Emphasize “front-end” services that enhance development and prevent problems, rather than “back-end” crisis intervention.
3. **OUTCOMES:** Measure system performance by improved outcomes for children and families, not simply by the number and kind of services delivered.
4. **INTENSITY:** Offering services to the needed degree and in the appropriate time.
5. **PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT:** Use the needs, concerns, and opinions of individuals who use the service delivery system to drive improvements in the operation of the system.
6. **NEIGHBORHOODS:** Decentralize services to the places where people live, wherever appropriate, and utilize services to strengthen neighborhood capacity.
7. **FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS:** Create a delivery system, including programs and reimbursement mechanisms, that are sufficiently flexible and adaptable to respond to the full spectrum of child, family and individual needs.
8. **COLLABORATION:** Connect public, private and community resources to create an integrated service delivery system.
9. **STRONG FAMILIES:** Work to strengthen families, especially the capacity of parents to support and nurture the development of their children.
10. **RESPECT AND DIGNITY:** Treat families, and the staff who work with them, in a respectful and dignified manner.
11. **INTERDEPENDENCE/MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Balance the need for individuals to be accountable and responsible with the obligation of community to enhance the welfare of all citizens.
12. **CULTURAL COMPETENCY:** Demonstrate the belief that diversity in the historical, cultural, religious and spiritual values of different groups is a source of great strength.
13. **CREATIVITY:** Encourage and allow participants and staff to think and act innovatively, to take risks, and to learn from their experiences and mistakes.
14. **COMPASSION:** Display an unconditional regard and a caring, non-judgmental attitude toward participants that recognizes their strengths and empowers them to meet their own needs.
15. **HONESTY:** Encourage and allow honesty among all people in the system.



Monday, March 16, 2009 | 4 – 6 p.m.
Kauffman Foundation
4801 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, Mo. 64110

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Announcements**
- II. Approvals**
 - a. February minutes (motion)**
- III. LINC President's Report**
- IV. LINC Finances – Quarterly Report**
- v. LINC Welfare to Work**
- VI. Adjournment**



THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – FEB. 23, 2009

The Local Investment Commission met at the Kauffman Foundation, 4801 Rockhill Rd., Kansas City, Mo. Chairman **Landon Rowland** presided. Commissioners attending were:

Bert Berkley
Sharon Cheers
Jack Craft
Herb Freeman
SuEllen Fried
Rob Givens
Anita Gorman
Bart Hakan

Rosemary Smith Lowe
Sandy Mayer (for Mike Sanders)
Mary Kay McPhee
Richard Morris
Margie Peltier
Gene Standifer
Bailus Tate

Rudy Summerville introduced **James** and **Barbara Boyd** and student **Brian Mena**. They reported on Caring Communities efforts at William Chrisman High School including the student groups Students Without Borders and Teens Against Tobacco Use, which are aimed at achieving LINC's core result of "Youth prepared for a productive adulthood."

Rowland reported on two events related to foreclosures in the Kansas City area:

- On Feb. 22 KCPT aired Foreclosure Revisited, a half-hour special updating a program from last fall. The special can be watch on the LINC website.
- On Feb. 26 the Hope Now Alliance will hold a free foreclosure counseling event at Bartle Hall. Loan services will contact area homeowners who are delinquent on their mortgages and meet fact-to-face to discuss options. Other counseling organizations will attend also.

Rowland introduced **Sandy Mayer** with the office Jackson County Executive Mike Sanders. She will represent Sanders, an ex-officio LINC Commission, at this and future LINC Commission member, at LINC Commission meetings.

A motion to approve the minutes of the Jan. 26, 2009, LINC Commission meetings was passed unanimously.

A motion to approve changes to the LINC bylaws as recommended by the LINC Finance and Audit Committee, and to approve the LINC governance manual as recommended by the LINC Finance and Audit Committee, was passed unanimously.

Barry Mayer of the Kansas City Crime Commission (KCCC) gave an overview of the commission's various efforts to support area law enforcement agencies. Mayer reported on the Second Chance Foundation, KCCC's new initiative to do research on helping ex-offenders, lobby the legislature for new laws, and raise money for groups that already help inmates get jobs, education and housing.

Susie Edwards of the Missouri Department of Corrections Re-Entry Unit gave a presentation on the Missouri Re-Entry Process, a multi-agency partnership that prepares prisoners for re-entry into the community. The process focuses on the offender's needs from day one of incarceration, throughout the term of incarceration, to transition out of prison, and after release.

SuEllen Fried reported on Reaching Out from Within, a volunteer-led, inmate-run effort to promote nonviolence among prisoners.

Gayle Hobbs reported on recent discussions between LINC and the Kansas City, Mo. School District. The district has requested that LINC bring the Before & After School program to district elementary schools in the fall and later to middle schools.

Richard Morris reported that LINC and other partners will host a High School Job Fair this Friday. This is the second year that LINC has been a sponsor for the event.

The meeting was adjourned.

Community Work Support initiative

This section provides general background information about a LINC welfare-to-work initiative known as Community Work Support.

LINC received a grant from the Missouri Dept. of Social Services to support this effort.

Background

The Local Investment Commission applied for and received a grant from the Missouri Dept. of Social Services to provide case management services to families and individuals on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Past experience suggested that case management was critical to helping people get and stay on jobs. The case management component was not available in the community for several years.

As the grant application stated:

“Barriers may be individual, or they may be geographic, such as a lack of transportation services for southern and eastern Kansas City. One stunning finding from focus groups (conducted with TANF participants in the Kansas City community) is the report regarding advocates/case managers/consultants: that someone ‘in their corner’ made all the difference for them. Participants reported needing someone to help them navigate complicated bureaucratic systems, or simply be an ear to turn to. It is for these reasons we choose to work with the sanctioned and at risk of sanction population. They are perhaps the ones that need us the most.”

The program objective is easy to understand but difficult to achieve – all the more so given the economic crisis:

- Program participants need assistance to attain and stay in compliance, that is, to move towards sustainable employment; and
- Missouri needs to operate at a fifty percent or better participation rate to avoid penalties from the federal government.

The program works this way:

- **identify** sanctioned and at risk of sanction TANF participants
- **provide** intensive strengths-based case management in removing/managing potential barriers to successful participation in state-defined countable work activities
- **connect** participants to a pool of supportive services and resources; and
- **assist** participants in maintaining compliance with work activities or face removal from cash assistance.

LINC received the grant in the summer of 2007 and selected three agencies, Jewish Vocational Service, Community LINC and LINC to serve as intensive case managers for this project. Given the short time between actual funding and expected results, these agencies were prepared to engage in intensive case management work in July 2007.

Data has been collected in several key areas:

1. Referrals of sanctioned/ conciliation contacts to case managers,
2. Attempts including success and failure of contacts,
3. Case management activities,
4. Length of time between referral and lifting of sanction, engagement in countable work activity, and removal from cash assistance,
5. Referrals for supportive services and by type,
6. Attendance/completion of education, trainings, counseling or other supportive services,
7. Hours of service provided by case management or supportive services,
8. Demographic information,
9. Monthly, quarterly, 6-month, and end of year reports,
10. Vouchers distributed and expended,
11. Number of participants gainfully employed, and
12. Community attendance in LINCWorks (critical to success of project).

Results to Date

There still is a strong belief that case management is important, but economic decline has made job placement exceedingly difficult. Well-qualified individuals are losing employment and competing in the job market with individuals who may have poor employment records and substantial barriers to employment (transportation, child care, domestic violence, etc.)

We continue our work, gauging progress and reviewing issues of program implementation to see if better results can be achieved.

Our local Family Support Division, headed by Regional Director **Margaret Randle** continues to offer support to the CWS project by responding to inquires from the CWS staff, attending meetings and sharing information in an effort to assist local families in the program.

A new policy, effective October 2008, permits FSD to offer temporary employment benefits of \$50 a month for 6 months to individuals that have gone to work and closed their cash due to employment.

Program Activity Since Program Inception (Oct. 07)

Current Status for Clients by Provider

Provider	Sanction Lifted		Cash Closed		Other Status						Totals			
	Reason Not Known	Employed	Reason Not Known	Employed	Employed	Other	Work Activity - 20 hours	Work Activity - 30 hours	Work Activity - 40 hours	Conciliation		Exempt	Medical Waiver	Excluded
Community LINC	472	8	28	14	38	30	30	25	8	4	18	13	1	1
Jewish Vocational Service	426	105	179	14	73	33	24	7	0	7	8	11	0	7
LINC	277	58	64	9	6	7	9	5	0	0	1	0	2	3
Totals:	1175	213	58	37	117	70	63	37	8	11	27	24	3	11

Contacts Made

Face to Face	Left Message	Attempted Home Visit	Wrong Number	Mailing	Transported to FEC	Transported to FSD/DS	Email	Mental Health	Motivation	Physical Health	Transportation	Other	Totals
Community LINC	856	172	71	992	128	64	186	1	61	35	153	7	508
Jewish Vocational Service	580	665	183	1782	125	17	148	7	106	31	107	14	371
LINC	361	466	159	1053	16	1	136	4	22	4	52	3	280
Totals:	1797	1303	413	3827	269	82	470	12	189	77	312	24	1159

Barriers Reported/Found - In Process

Childcare	Domestic Violence	Drug/Alcohol Abuse	Education/Skills	Emergency Assistance	Housing	Language	Legal	Mental Health	Motivation	Physical Health	Transportation	Other	Totals
Community LINC	96	6	32	64	46	1	25	26	8	35	153	7	508
Jewish Vocational Service	63	3	18	46	22	1	28	22	6	31	107	14	371
LINC	60	3	29	29	30	0	32	7	4	4	11	52	280
Totals:	219	12	96	139	98	2	85	55	18	77	312	24	1159

Barriers Reported/Found - Completed

Childcare	Domestic Violence	Drug/Alcohol Abuse	Education/Skills	Emergency Assistance	Housing	Language	Legal	Mental Health	Motivation	Physical Health	Transportation	Other	Totals
Community LINC	21	3	7	27	16	0	10	9	1	6	69	12	185
Jewish Vocational Service	17	2	4	68	14	3	11	20	4	16	54	7	221
LINC	14	1	2	25	10	0	7	1	1	3	32	2	98
Totals:	52	6	10	120	40	3	28	30	6	25	155	21	504

Barriers Reported/Found - Non-Compliant

Childcare	Domestic Violence	Drug/Alcohol Abuse	Education/Skills	Emergency Assistance	Housing	Language	Legal	Mental Health	Motivation	Physical Health	Transportation	Other	Totals
Community LINC	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	1	5	0	14
Jewish Vocational Service	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	4	0	13
LINC	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Totals:	5	1	0	1	3	0	0	5	1	3	9	0	28

Clients with IEPs	Revised IEP with FEC	Engaged with FEC	Client Employed w/out FEC Services	Interested in College/ Training Program	Would like to work on GED	Not Interested in CWS Services	Invalid Phone Number	Invalid address/ Vacant	No longer needs TANF benefits	Totals
Community LINC	106	10	191	82	47	29	84	88	29	726
Jewish Vocational Service	196	18	212	95	41	47	158	305	24	1135
LINC	38	7	30	21	44	11	52	40	5	0
Total:	340	35	433	165	136	87	294	433	58	1861

March 9, 2009

Gov. Nixon announces plan to provide health care for 35,000 Missouri parents at no cost to taxpayers

ST. LOUIS - **Gov. Jay Nixon** is visiting community health centers across Missouri this week to announce a landmark agreement with the **Missouri Hospital Association** to provide quality health care to nearly 35,000 additional parents - at no increased cost to the state's taxpayers.

Under an agreement spearheaded by Gov. Nixon, the Missouri Hospital Association will voluntarily contribute an additional \$52.5 million a year to provide health care to parents in Missouri; these dollars will come from the funds Missouri hospitals currently receive for providing uncompensated care to uninsured patients. This investment by the MHA would allow the state to draw down about \$93 million in additional health care matching funds from the federal government. Together, these funds would provide coverage for an additional 34,800 parents in Missouri.

Currently, Missouri parents must make less than about 20 percent of the federal poverty level to be eligible for coverage under the state program. To take advantage of this landmark opportunity, the Missouri General Assembly would need to increase the eligibility threshold to 50 percent of the federal poverty level in the Fiscal Year 2010 budget. This is the only legislative action required to provide health care to these parents under this agreement because no taxpayer General Revenue dollars are needed.

"Ensuring that our workforce has access to quality, affordable health care is vital for turning our economy in the right direction," **Gov. Nixon** said. "To provide for their children, parents must be healthy enough to get to work and perform on the job. But today, too many parents are going without the medical care they need, or they're turning to emergency rooms instead of a traditional doctor's office. As a result, families with health insurance are picking up this tab with higher premiums and co-pays. I commend the leaders of Missouri's hospitals for partnering with me to reach this landmark agreement, and I look forward to working with the legislature to take advantage of this historic opportunity to increase access to health care without raising taxes on Missourians. By putting Missouri families first, we can extend health care to more than 34,000 parents in Missouri and drive down the cost of coverage for all Missourians, without spending a single extra dollar from the state's General Revenue. This is an opportunity we can't afford to miss."

"Gov. Nixon understands the critical role of health care in jumpstarting our economy," said **Marc Smith, president of the Missouri Hospital Association**. "But right now, too many Missourians don't have access to the health care they need, and those who do have coverage are paying too much for it. By using the funds our hospitals receive for uncompensated care to provide coverage for more parents, we'll help more Missourians access primary care physicians, decrease wait times in our emergency rooms and move our economy in the right direction. Together, Missouri's hospitals and our state leaders are poised to make a real investment in the

health and economic future of our people. Let's take the first step now by providing coverage to 34,800 additional parents."

"The link between health care and economic development is clear," said **Timothy McBride, a health care economist**, professor and associate dean for public health at Washington University in St. Louis. "Our economy is struggling, but this proposal will enhance economic growth, create or retain hundreds of jobs and drive down the cost of medical care for all Missourians. This will happen because this innovative partnership between Missouri's hospitals and state government will reduce the number of uninsured Missourians, reducing the burden of uncompensated care for Missouri's health providers and reducing cost-shifting to Missourians with insurance."

Under this agreement, health care eligibility for Missouri parents would change as follows:

For a family of this size:	The current eligibility level is:	Under Gov. Nixon's agreement, the eligibility level would become:
A single mother with two children	About 20 percent of the federal poverty level, or about \$3,700 a year	50 percent of the federal poverty level, or about \$9,155 a year
A family of four (two parents and two children)	About 20 percent of the federal poverty level, or about \$4,410 a year	50 percent of the federal poverty level, or about \$11,025

According to the 2008 "Cover Missouri" report by the Missouri Foundation for Health, more than 720,000 Missourians currently are living without health insurance, placing a considerable burden on Missouri's hospitals and emergency rooms. The costs of caring for these uninsured Missourians are passed along to those with coverage in the form of higher premiums and co-pays. Based on data studied prior to the 2005 health care cuts, Missouri families were paying between \$110 and \$291 more a year in premiums because of the cost of providing care for the uninsured. Estimates made before the 2005 cuts predicted that in 2010, Missourians would be paying an additional \$225 to \$609 a year to provide care to the uninsured. Following the 2005 cuts, however, the number of uninsured Missourians rose significantly, so those initial estimates are likely lower than the actual premium increase Missouri families will see by 2010 without action to reduce the number of uninsured individuals in the state.

Wednesday, Mar 11, 2009

Hickman Mills district plans \$5.5 million in budget cuts

By DONALD BRADLEY
The Kansas City Star

In a scene likely playing out across the country, Hickman Mills School District officials stood in front of a school Wednesday and announced nearly \$5.5 million in budget cuts.

An associate superintendent called the economic crisis a “perfect storm” for districts everywhere as they struggled to get budgets in line with sharp dips in revenue caused by housing foreclosures and decreased property assessments.

“With the exception of federal funding, all our revenue sources are going down,” Mitch Nutterfield, associate superintendent of business, said during a news conference in front of Ruskin High School. “This is a reflection of our economic times and what we’re doing is going on everywhere.”

Inside the building at the same time, Superintendent Marjorie Williams met with the district’s nearly 640 teachers. She described the crisis as the worst she had seen in her 35 years in education.

In Hickman Mills, a working-class area in south Kansas City, two ZIP codes have seen 295 and 283 foreclosures. District officials said those are the highest in the metropolitan area and among the top 500 in the country.

The \$5.5 million represents only about 5 percent of the district’s overall budget, but students and families next school year are likely to notice reductions in classroom supplies, transportation, nutrition programs and even athletics.

Specifics on what will be cut have yet to be worked out.

Teacher salaries will be frozen. More than \$1 million will be saved through attrition, retirement and non-renewals in the teacher ranks.

The decision whether to lay off other teachers won’t be made until the district, which has about 7,000 students, learns how much property tax money and federal stimulus dollars will be coming its way.

But if layoffs were to happen, “Class sizes could go up,” Nutterfield said.

There is no talk of closing schools as is the case in other districts. Grandview school officials are discussing closing High Grove Elementary.

Wednesday, Mar 11, 2009

Jackson County property values drop less than expected

By MICHAEL MANSUR
The Kansas City Star

Jackson County property values have dropped for the first time in perhaps decades, county officials confirmed Wednesday.

The drops are significant — residential property in Jackson County is down nearly 7 percent, according to estimated values released Wednesday to *The Kansas City Star*.

Overall, the county's total tax base of \$42 billion has dropped nearly 4 percent, after commercial values are figured into the totals.

But that's clearly not low enough for some — 1,600 property owners have filed appeals even though they don't know yet how much their values have dropped.

Jackson County Executive Mike Sanders, who reviewed the numbers for the first time on Wednesday, said he wasn't surprised and even a little bit optimistic.

Sanders said he expected a bigger drop. Commercial property values, though, held fairly steady.

With the nation's economy in dire straits, county officials and the tax jurisdictions, including school districts and libraries, had braced for months for at least 10 to 12 percent reductions in residential property values.

"The good message in these Jackson County numbers is that the county is a lot more stable than a lot of other markets around the country," Sanders said.

The Kansas City Public Library, which receives nearly 90 percent of its revenue from Jackson County property taxes, had prepared for cuts of up to 12 percent.

But the news Wednesday that its revenues would be reduced by 3 percent relieved some concern, said Debbie Siragusa, the library's chief financial officer.

The library should weather the coming budget, she said, by freezing positions and cutting some operating expenses. Nonetheless, she said, "It will impact us, and we will feel it sharply."

The Kansas City School District is considering up to \$52 million in cuts. But the news from Jackson County — which estimated the school district property tax would decline by 3.1 percent — was better than had been expected, said Jan Tolliver, the district's interim chief financial officer.

She said that might reduce the district's cuts to \$40 million.

Tolliver noted the district doesn't have the flexibility to increase its levy rate, as other school districts can, because it's restricted from doing so by federal court order.

Jackson County's declining property values are similar to others recently announced in the metropolitan area. Johnson County, for example, recently released its 2009 property value data, finding the total tax base could decline by 3 percent.

As in Jackson County, the overall tax base hasn't fallen in Johnson County for years. The last reduction there was in 1993, but that was because of a change in the way property was assessed. Before that, no one could remember the last time the steadily growing county had seen a reduction in property values.

In Wyandotte County, the decline is expected to be from 3 to 11 percent.

Jackson County officials said they did not know the last time property owners had seen values decline. But they speculated it had to be decades.

Jackson County Assessor Curtis Koons said the county would release maps of the declining values by neighborhood in coming weeks.

But generally, the areas hardest hit by declining residential values were the Northeast, the central core and Hickman Mills and Raytown. That explains why some tax jurisdictions are hit harder than others.

Raytown and the Raytown School District are being hit hardest by the 2009 falling property values, according to the county figures. Residential values there fell 16 percent; overall, values were down slightly more than 10 percent.

Jackson County officials cautioned that the numbers released Wednesday may vary after the county later adds personal property values and the impact of tax appeals.

Even so, many Jackson County property owners are already saying, in effect, that the declines are not enough to satisfy them.

More than 1,600 property owners have filed appeals of their 2009 assessments — even though they won't receive them until May 1, Koons said.

Koons said about 6,000 appeals were filed in 2007, the last time county officials reassessed values. "This year we expect to see 25,000," he said.

As a result, Koons said the county may have to extend the time to consider appeals.

Koons said some of the early appeals were the result of the exploding number of foreclosures. Often, after foreclosure, the homes are sold for much less than they previously were assessed by the county. So the new owner naturally is going to appeal the assessment, he said.

But other appeals are from people who expect that the county will not lower their assessment as much as they would like. "There are a number of people getting in line early," Koons said.

Jackson County 2009 property values

Total: -3.7%

Residential only: -6.8%

Commercial: +.56%

Decline in total property values in some area school districts

Kansas City: -3.12%

Independence: -5.16%

Hickman Mills: -10.1%

Raytown: -10.18%

Lee's Summit: -.37%

Blue Springs: -3.83%

The New York Times

March 11, 2009

Obama Outlines Plan for Education Overhaul

By [DAVID STOUT](#)

WASHINGTON — [President Obama](#) called for sweeping changes in American education on Tuesday, urging states to lift limits on [charter schools](#) and improve the quality of early childhood education while also signaling that he intends to make good on his campaign promise of linking teacher pay to performance.

Having secured tens of billions of dollars in additional financing for education in the economic [stimulus package](#) and made clear his intent to seek more in his budget, Mr. Obama used a speech here to flesh out how he would use federal money and programs to influence policy at the state and local level.

His proposals reflected his party's belief that education at all levels was underfinanced in the Bush years and that reform should encompass more than demands that schools show improved test scores. But they also showed a willingness to challenge teachers' unions and public school systems, and to continue to demand more accountability.

The president said it was time to erase limits on the number of charter schools, which his administration calls "laboratories of innovation," while closing those that are not working. He said 26 states and the District of Columbia now had caps. Teachers' unions have opposed charter schools in some places, saying they take away financing for public schools, while supporting them in others.

Putting limits on charter schools, even in places where they are performing well, "isn't good for our children, our economy or our country," Mr. Obama said.

In his recent budget message, he said that he hoped to double financing for charter schools eventually, another campaign promise, and that the Department of Education would help create "new, high-quality charter schools" while supporting the closing of those guilty of "chronic underperformance."

He called on states to impose tougher curriculum standards, and in an echo of language often used by President [George W. Bush](#), he chided states that he said were "low-balling expectations for our kids."

Saying he would "cultivate a new culture of accountability in America's schools," Mr. Obama said states and school districts should weed out bad teachers.

But he also pledged to pursue programs that would provide more incentives and support for teachers and indicated he would back a program in up to 150 school districts that would reward teachers "with more money for improved student achievement."

The teacher-pay provision and his support for more charter schools could complicate Mr. Obama's ability to win support for his plan in Congress and in state legislatures, where teacher unions hold considerable sway with Democrats.

Mr. Obama acknowledged the partisan divisions about how to proceed, even as he appealed to all sides to compromise.

“For decades, Washington has been trapped in the same stale debates that have paralyzed progress and perpetuated our educational decline,” Mr. Obama said, in a speech here to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. “Too many supporters of my party have resisted the idea of rewarding excellence in teaching with extra pay, even though we know it can make a difference in the classroom. Too many in the [Republican Party](#) have opposed new investments in early childhood education, despite compelling evidence of its importance.”

Union leaders reacted cautiously to the speech. Dennis Van Roekel, president of the [National Education Association](#), said his union's 3.2 million members “welcome the vision” laid out by the president.

[Randi Weingarten](#), president of the 1.4-million-member [American Federation of Teachers](#), said her union embraced “the goals and aspirations” outlined by Mr. Obama. “As with any public policy,” Ms. Weingarten said, “the devil is in the details, and it is important that teachers' voices are heard as we implement the president's vision.”

While unions generally dislike linking pay to specific measures of performance like rising test scores, there have been some successful experiments around the country with plans that take account of performance, especially in districts where unions are deeply involved.

The address on Tuesday was the first step in laying out the president's agenda to improve schools, officials said, with more specifics to be outlined to Congress soon.

Mr. Obama noted that the recently enacted stimulus package called for spending some \$5 billion on the Early Head Start and Head Start programs — an investment that he said would be rewarded by lower welfare rolls, fewer health care costs and less crime, as well as better classroom performance. He said he would ask Congress to finance a program that would provide grants to states that improve their early childhood programs.

His speech elated advocates of charter schools. “With 365,000 students on charter waiting lists, there is no excuse for state laws that stifle the growth of these schools,” Nelson Smith, the president and chief executive of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, said in a statement.

Jeff Zeleny contributed reporting.



The Spring LINC Annual Chess Tournament was held Saturday, March 7th at the Kansas City Central Library. The LINC chess program continues to expand and has a great partnership with the Kansas City Library.