

3 - 5 pm

LINC Commission Meeting

September 21, 2009



Students enjoy activities during the first week of the LINC Caring Communities Before and After School Program in the Kansas City, Mo. School District.

Foreign Language Academy (top and lower left) and Longan (lower right)



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, Sept. 21, 2009 | 3 – 5 p.m.
Kauffman Foundation
4801 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, Mo. 64110

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Announcements**
- II. Approvals**
 - a. July minutes (motion)**
- III. LINC President's Report**
- IV. Finance Committee**
 - a. LINC 2009-10 Budget (motion)**
 - b. Auditor Request for Proposals report**
- V. Caring Communities**
 - a. New Superintendents**
 - i. KCMSD – Dr. Jeffery McDaniels (Chief of Staff)
 - ii. North Kansas City - Dr. Kendra Johnson (Assoc. Superintendent)
 - iii. Fort Osage – Dr. Mark Enderle (Superintendent)
- VI. Other Reports**
- VII. Weathering the Financial Storm – Last episode**
- VIII. Adjournment**



THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – JULY 27, 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
Judy Hunt
Rosemary Smith Lowe
Sandy Mayer (for Mike Sanders)
Frank Salizzoni
Gene Standifer

Rowland made the following announcements:

- Three of our partner school districts have new superintendents: **Dr. Mark Enderle** in the Fort Osage School District, **Dr. Todd White** in the North Kansas City School District, and **Dr. John Covington** in the Kansas City, Mo. School District. The new superintendents will be invited to attend a future LINC Commission meeting.
- LINC Commissioner **Rosemary Smith Lowe** has been named one of the top 25 influential Kansas Citians by the Kansas City Globe newspaper.
- Federal Reserve Chairman **Ben Bernanke** recently held a Town Hall meeting in Kansas City. LINC Commissioners **Jack Craft** and **Rob Givens** attended the meeting and questioned Bernanke on how to prevent the foreclosure process from diminishing home values and on the possible negative effect of new regulations on small financial institutions.

LINC staff **Brenda Mitchelson** introduced **Gary Allen** of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, who recognized the partners involved in the Community Work Support initiative. Allen presented awards to **Marge Randle** on behalf of the Dept. of Social Services Family Support Division, **Brenda Mitchelson** on behalf of LINC, and **Gayle A. Hobbs, Terry Ward** and **Bart Hakan** on behalf of LINC.

A motion to approve the June 15, 2009, LINC Commission meeting minutes passed unanimously.

Gayle A. Hobbs gave the LINC President's report:

- Welcome to new LINC office staff: **Dan Horton**, Chief Information Officer; **Nanci Saulsberry**, CWS Case Manager; **Thomas Del Greco**, Americorps Vista Volunteer; and **Joe Walker**, Communications.
- Stage budget cuts in the Missouri Children Division have resulted in decreased funding for Educare; funding for the Independence Child Welfare initiative is at risk.
- Harlem Children's Zone planning is under way. LINC is working with others on this initiative.
- Kansas City Council member **Terry Riley** held a back to school rally last Saturday. There was a large turnout at the event, at which LINC was represented.
- The second of two LINC job fairs will be held tomorrow. LINC is hiring front line staff to work at several new LINC Caring Communities sites.

- Deputy Director **Candace Cheatem** reported on the end-of-year Educare conference held recently at the Kauffman Foundation. Participation in Educare trainings and accreditation numbers were higher than ever.

Sharon Cheers introduced Kansas City Public Library Deputy Executive Director for Operations **Cheptoo Kositany-Buckner**, who reported that the library is seeking contributions for the renovation of the Lucile H. Bluford Branch.

Hobbs reported on LINC's preparations for the beginning of the new school year at 37 new LINC Caring Communities sites in the Kansas City, Mo. School District. In addition to 37 site coordinators, LINC has also hired part time staff for 20 sites with Before & After School programs.

A video on the LINC return to KCMSD was shown.

A video on Hands of Hope, the volunteer effort to clean up five KCMSD schools, was shown.

A video on the LINC "mobilization effort" – preparation of new staff for working at the new sites – was shown.

LINC Caring Communities team leaders introduced new site coordinators to the Commission. LINC Commissioners introduced themselves to the new staff.

The meeting was adjourned.

Wednesday, Jul 29, 2009

NKC's new superintendent faces challenges on many fronts

By JILL SEDERSTROM
Special to The Star

With a struggling economy, a new elementary school opening this fall and a goal to increase the graduation rate, North Kansas City School District's new superintendent will have his hands full.

But according to Todd White, who took over the position earlier this month, it's the challenges that he's looking forward to most about the job.

"I look forward to the challenges because I think they create the opportunity for kids," he said.

White plans to tackle upcoming challenges with the help of district staff and the board of education. Despite the change in leadership, he said, the district's first priority remains finding ways to help kids succeed.

White began his new role as superintendent at the beginning of July, but he isn't new to the district or the role of superintendent.

Before arriving at the North Kansas City School District, White served for seven years as the superintendent of Harrisonville Schools. He decided to make the move to North Kansas City in 2007 because he was looking for a new challenge and accepted a position as associate superintendent.

"The opportunity seemed right," White said.

One year later, the school board promoted White to the role of deputy superintendent and announced he would be taking over as superintendent when former Superintendent Tom Cummings retired this summer.

Board President Spencer Fields said when the school board was looking for a successor for Cummings, it was looking for many of the same skills the former superintendent held. They were able to find many of those skills in White and believe he'll be able to successfully lead the district for many years.

"He's an engaging individual, he's upfront, he's transparent, he doesn't hold anything back," Fields said.

White said having the succession plan in place allowed him to work closely with Cummings and district staff over the last few years to make the leadership transition as smooth as possible.

"It doesn't feel new and I credit that to the board and Tom," he said.

Fields also agreed that the succession plan has given White and district staff a chance to get to know each other before the transition took place.

“He’s gotten the benefit of really understanding our district and understanding all the great things we have (and) understanding our challenges,” Fields said.

White said his first month in office has almost been “business as usual” and said he’s been spending his time continuing work on the district’s school improvement plan, budget and strategic plan.

As far as the budget, White said Cummings, the school board, and the district’s chief financial officer had already done a great job putting the district in a financial position where they can “weather the economic storm.”

He added that as the district moves forward they will continue to focus on the best use of taxpayer dollars to ensure a high-quality education. The district already has established ways in the budget to maximize efficiencies—whether it’s reducing utility costs or more effectively using district personnel.

The other major challenges White will face are improving the district’s graduation rate and improving the academic and testing performance of various subgroups within the district as part of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation.

White said the district plans to address the graduation rate by modifying district programming and shifting responsibilities at the administrative cabinet level. Assistant Superintendent Leigh Ann Knight is now in charge of 21st Century Learning, including e-campus courses, school-to-career programs and summer learning.

Associate Superintendent Kendra Johnson will work to help address issues related to subgroup performance and will oversee many of the student services programs. She also will organize all the district’s academic interventions to help students who are struggling.

White said an important aspect of his leadership style is to avoid micro-management and allow teachers and administrative staff to do what they do best.

“You put people, the very best people, in the very best places for them to succeed,” he said.

When he isn’t at work, White enjoys spending time with his wife of 25 years and three children and said he also loves hunting, fishing and woodworking.

“If I wasn’t doing this I think I would be a general contractor,” he said. “I love to build things.”

But for now, White is happy to be in education and said he’s eager for the new school year to begin.

“I love the first day of school,” he said. “You re-live all the excitement you had as a child.”

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<http://www.kansascity.com>

On the Mark

By Kelly Evenson - kelly.evenson@examiner.net

The Examiner

Posted Jul 21, 2009 @ 11:40 PM

Independence, MO — It has been six months since Mark Enderle was hired to lead the Fort Osage School District following the retirement of Larry Ewing.

“My first day of work has been long anticipated,” he said. “The months have gone quickly, and it has been a smooth transition, but it has been long anticipated.”

Enderle officially took the reigns of the Fort Osage district July 1. Since that time, the former Superintendent of the Fulton School District has been “learning the ropes” as he would say, gathering all the information he can about the Fort Osage School District. In addition to meeting staff and teachers, he has been trying to familiarize himself with the curriculum, procedures and finances of the district he will lead into the future.

“I am basically starting from scratch,” he said. “I came from a district where I knew almost everything. I wasn’t an expert, but I knew all about the nooks and crannies of the Fulton School District. It is almost like I will be learning right along with the other 5,000 students this year. That has been the hardest thing.”

Enderle was with the Fulton School District for 24 years, serving as superintendent since 1998. He said it is hard to explain why he chose to come to Fort Osage, other than he had a good feeling about the position.

“I felt like it was the right thing to do and the right place to be,” he said. “I just had an intuition that this position. I had a positive feeling that was related to it.”

Gary Thompson, president of the Fort Osage Board of Education, said Enderle was by far the best candidate. He said the board of education, along with the rest of the Fort Osage staff, are pleased about what Enderle will bring to the district.

“I think he is a good fit because of his experience and his record of accomplishment at Fulton,” he said. “We hope that he can continue and build on the success we have here at the Fort. We are excited and optimistic about Dr. Enderle as our choice and are looking forward to what he can do for us in the future.”

Enderle said his initial goal is to “learn as much as he can, as quickly as he can.” He said he has no plans for any major changes at Fort Osage, but wants to learn about the district’s culture and environment.

“I have ideas and things I can bring to Fort Osage,” he said. “But initially, my responsibility is to learn how things operate here.”

Like most school districts in Missouri, Enderle said Fort Osage’s biggest challenge in the coming months is finances. With decreasing assessed valuations, declining state tax revenues and a poor economy, he said making sure the Fort Osage School District remains financially fit will be difficult.

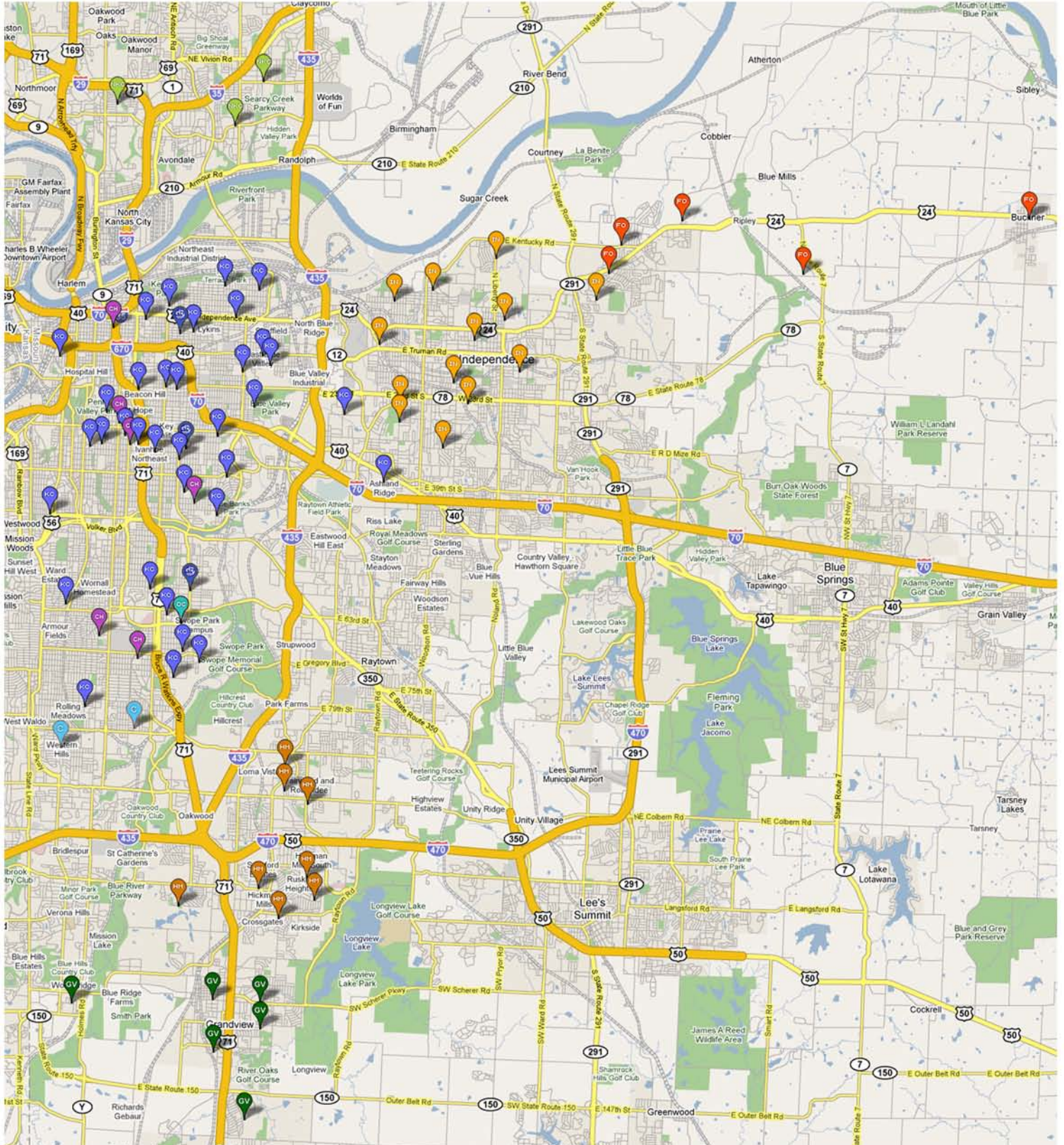
“The hardest thing for us right now is the economy,” he said. “We are going to be very challenged to meet the needs of the students given the current resources.”

Regardless, Enderle said he is looking forward to the start of the new school year and meeting the families of the Fort Osage School District.

“There is nothing like the first day of school, and I have always felt that excitement. Next to the kindergarten students, I think that I am going to be the most excited person in Fort Osage on the first day,” he said. “What I think I am looking forward to most is the family atmosphere. From the very first time I interviewed here, I have heard about the Fort Osage family. I am looking forward to being part of that family.”

LINC Caring Communities

- NKCC North Kansas City
- HM Hickman Mills
- GV Grandview
- C Center
- OC Other Contracted
- KC Kansas City, MO
- IN Independence
- FO Fort Osage
- CH Charter Schools
- LINC Sites



LINC Caring Communities School Enrollment and Demographics

The table shows the school enrollment and demographic information for the LINC Caring Communities school sites. Figures are based on 2008 enrollment data reported to the Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education. New enrollment figures will be reported later this month and available later this year.

District	Enrollment		Free Lunch		Ethnicity				
	Number	%	Number	%	Black	Hispanic	White	Asian	Indian
Kansas City	11,275		9,605	85.2%	7,211	2,809	1,022	196	37
Charter	2,106		1,585	75.3%	1,994	27	71	9	5
Hickman Mills	3,196		2,464	77.1%	2,471	245	430	46	4
Grandview	1,749		1,173	67.1%	843	265	616	20	5
Center	592		485	81.9%	408	34	148	1	1
Independence	6,140		3,899	63.5%	1,020	941	3,963	181	35
Fort Osage	1,871		855	45.7%	130	128	1,548	51	14
North Kansas City	2,769		1,290	46.6%	360	344	1,844	169	52
Total	29,698		21,356	71.9%	14,437	4,793	9,642	673	153
<i>% of Total</i>					<i>48.6%</i>	<i>16.1%</i>	<i>32.5%</i>	<i>2.3%</i>	<i>0.5%</i>



Brenda Newsome
ACECC



Janis Bankston
ACECC



Ebonie Hawthorne
Askew



Rodney Copridge
Attucks



Alex Furlow
Banneker



Beverly Beard
Border Star



Liliana Jimenez
Border Star



Darryl Bush
Carver



Laurel Sharpe
Faxon



Alex Petersen
Foreign Language Academy



Gloria Pendergrass
Franklin



Rachel Crouch
Garcia



Rosisella Villegas
Garfield



Pam Ealy
Gladstone



Heather Bryant
Hartman



Shaniece Garlington
Holliday



Raul Lopez
James



Terry Washington
Knotts



Richard Fisher
Ladd



Nkosi Halim
Longan

nators in KCMUSD



**Nickia
McMurtrey**
Longfellow



**Casey
Stephens**
McCoy



**Terry
Nooner**
Melcher



**Steven
Bradford**
Moore



**Crusita
Fuentes**
Northeast



**Shaun
Hayes**
Paige



**Hope
Huff**
Phillips



**Adrian
Wilson**
Pinkerton



**Freddie
Cheirs**
Pitcher



**Sheila
Marshall**
Richardson



**Rita
Slatton**
Rogers



**Rochelle
Owens**
Swinney



**Mark
Hash**
Trailwoods



**Gena
Ross**
Troost



**Jerome
Williams**
Weeks / King



**Dorothea
Kelley**
West Rock Creek



**Kelley
Harden**
Wheatley



**Ellen
Schwartz**
Whittier



**Jaelean
Wofford**
Woodland

Demographic Data, 2004-2008

KANSAS CITY					
Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Enrollment	28,319	27,190	25,766	24,449	22,479
Asian (Number Percent)	558 2.0	492 1.8	476 1.8	456 1.9	428 1.9
Black (Number Percent)	19,287 68.1	18,208 67.0	16,861 65.4	15,743 64.4	13,959 62.1
Hispanic (Number Percent)	4,249 15.0	4,523 16.6	4,711 18.3	4,730 19.3	4,761 21.2
Indian (Number Percent)	70 0.2	75 0.3	58 0.2	62 0.3	67 0.3
White (Number Percent)	4,155 14.7	3,892 14.3	3,660 14.2	3,458 14.1	3,264 14.5
Free/Reduced Lunch (FTE)* (Number Percent)	22,443 80.4	21,548 80.6	19,988 79.5	18,916 79.9	17,728 80.5

*January Membership Data is used as the denominator when calculating the percent.

[Source:](#) Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education
Core Data As Submitted by Missouri Public Schools

Data as of October 24, 2008
Posted to the Web October 27, 2008

Demographic Data, 2004-2008

HICKMAN MILLS					
Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Enrollment	7,250	7,094	6,920	6,949	6,902
Asian (Number Percent)	87 1.2	97 1.4	78 1.1	69 1.0	92 1.3
Black (Number Percent)	5,366 74.0	5,361 75.6	5,250 75.9	5,524 79.5	5,465 79.2
Hispanic (Number Percent)	298 4.1	321 4.5	349 5.0	364 5.2	405 5.9
Indian (Number Percent)	21 0.3	17 0.2	23 0.3	25 0.4	20 0.3
White (Number Percent)	1,478 20.4	1,298 18.3	1,220 17.6	967 13.9	920 13.3
Free/Reduced Lunch (FTE)* (Number Percent)	4,281 60.4	4,497 64.9	4,803 69.3	5,188 74.5	4,921 74.0

*January Membership Data is used as the denominator when calculating the percent.

[Source:](#) Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education
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Demographic Data, 2004-2008

GRANDVIEW					
Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Enrollment	4,229	4,184	4,120	4,078	3,903
Asian (Number Percent)	39 0.9	40 1.0	35 0.8	42 1.0	36 0.9
Black (Number Percent)	2,241 53.0	2,250 53.8	2,369 57.5	2,415 59.2	2,295 58.8
Hispanic (Number Percent)	322 7.6	326 7.8	367 8.9	404 9.9	425 10.9
Indian (Number Percent)	20 0.5	19 0.5	17 0.4	14 0.3	15 0.4
White (Number Percent)	1,607 38.0	1,549 37.0	1,332 32.3	1,203 29.5	1,132 29.0
Free/Reduced Lunch (FTE)* (Number Percent)	1,941.00 47.2	2,323.00 56.2	2,314.90 56.6	2,341.00 60.3	2,390.10 62.6

*January Membership Data is used as the denominator when calculating the percent.

[Source:](#) Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education
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Demographic Data, 2004-2008

CENTER					
Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Enrollment	2,497	2,372	2,424	2,349	2,346
Asian (Number Percent)	32 1.3	28 1.2	32 1.3	41 1.7	30 1.3
Black (Number Percent)	1,569 62.8	1,497 63.1	1,563 64.5	1,515 64.5	1,519 64.7
Hispanic (Number Percent)	120 4.8	140 5.9	139 5.7	154 6.6	163 6.9
Indian (Number Percent)	6 0.2	5 0.2	5 0.2	3 0.1	2 0.1
White (Number Percent)	770 30.8	702 29.6	685 28.3	636 27.1	632 26.9
Free/Reduced Lunch (FTE)* (Number Percent)	1,431 58.6	1,491 62.1	1,442 59.8	1,418 62.4	1,418 59.9

*January Membership Data is used as the denominator when calculating the percent.

[Source:](#) Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education
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Demographic Data, 2004-2008

INDEPENDENCE					
Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Enrollment	11,059	10,920	10,935	10,718	10,707
Asian (Number Percent)	289 2.6	313 2.9	342 3.1	321 3.0	357 3.3
Black (Number Percent)	729 6.6	778 7.1	897 8.2	964 9.0	1,019 9.5
Hispanic (Number Percent)	607 5.5	662 6.1	754 6.9	803 7.5	894 8.3
Indian (Number Percent)	108 1.0	111 1.0	108 1.0	84 0.8	70 0.7
White (Number Percent)	9,326 84.3	9,056 82.9	8,834 80.8	8,546 79.7	8,367 78.1
Free/Reduced Lunch (FTE)* (Number Percent)	4,083 37.5	4,967 46.1	5,137 47.7	4,821 45.7	4,841 47.3

*January Membership Data is used as the denominator when calculating the percent.

[Source:](#) Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education
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Demographic Data, 2004-2008

FORT OSAGE					
Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Enrollment	4,859	4,852	4,877	4,861	4,838
Asian (Number Percent)	126 2.6	144 3.0	127 2.6	130 2.7	127 2.6
Black (Number Percent)	256 5.3	290 6.0	314 6.4	311 6.4	318 6.6
Hispanic (Number Percent)	159 3.30	184 3.80	205 4.20	275 5.70	262 5.40
Indian (Number Percent)	37 0.8	44 0.9	41 0.8	47 1.0	43 0.9
White (Number Percent)	4,281 88.1	4,190 86.4	4,190 85.9	4,098 84.3	4,088 84.5
Free/Reduced Lunch (FTE)* (Number Percent)	1,833 38.9	1,977 40.0	2,091 8.9	2,090 43.6	1,941 40.5

*January Membership Data is used as the denominator when calculating the percent.

[Source:](#) Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education
Core Data As Submitted by Missouri Public Schools

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Demographic Data, 2004-2008

NORTH KANSAS CITY					
Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Enrollment	17,003	17,193	17,369	17,553	17,552
Asian (Number Percent)	542 3.2	587 3.4	654 3.8	701 4.0	752 4.3
Black (Number Percent)	1,339 7.9	1,563 9.1	1,853 10.7	1,965 11.2	2,175 12.4
Hispanic (Number Percent)	1,195 7.0	1,394 8.1	1,563 9.0	1,795 10.2	1,825 10.4
Indian (Number Percent)	147 0.9	166 1.0	200 1.2	217 1.2	216 1.2
White (Number Percent)	13,780 81.0	13,483 78.4	13,099 75.4	12,875 73.3	12,584 71.7
Free/Reduced Lunch (FTE)* (Number Percent)	4,987 30.0	5,602 33.4	6,189 36.6	6,322 37.2	6,714 38.7

*January Membership Data is used as the denominator when calculating the percent.

[Source:](#) Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education
Core Data As Submitted by Missouri Public Schools

Data as of October 24, 2008

Posted to the Web October 27, 2008

Sat, Aug. 29, 2009

Schools make special effort for homeless students

By **JOE ROBERTSON** - The Kansas City Star

By now, the way the numbers have blown up, there are probably more than 1 million homeless students like Dominique Hynes in our nation's schools.

That's up from 680,000 in 2007, and 795,000 in 2008. Area districts are seeing numbers continue to grow, too.

Hynes, a 17-year-old junior, rises about 5:30 a.m. to hop in the cab that picks him up at dawn at a teen shelter in Parkville. The ride to his familiar high school, Ruskin in south Kansas City, takes about 45 minutes.

Federal law requires schools to seek out children who might be homeless and pay extra transportation costs so they can remain anchored in a familiar school. They immediately qualify for free or reduced-cost lunch if they're not already enrolled.

As more people need help, schools are getting better at reaching families who might not realize they qualify for services.

The Kansas City School District spent \$250,000 last year transporting homeless students across district lines.

Hickman Mills pays between \$6,000 and \$8,000 a month in cab fares.

Kansas City, Kan., which helped more than 1,000 students with homeless services a year ago, has helped more than 400 in the opening days of the new school year.

"That's double, even triple what we usually see at the first of the year," said Staci Pratt, the district's liaison for homeless services. "I can't imagine the costs. It's going to be astronomical."

No one argues with the concept. School liaisons believe keeping students in their school is worth the rising costs.

Consider Dominique Hynes.

During summer school, when a favorite teacher said Hynes should try out for a theater role this fall, Hynes barely nodded, fearing he would be long gone by then.

But because Hickman Mills is paying his cab fare to get him back to Ruskin, Hynes was there when that same teacher looked for him Thursday. Tryouts for singing roles were that afternoon. The district rearranged his cab ride home, and Hynes was singing on stage.

"I didn't think I'd be here," the junior said. "I got to take a shot."

The cabdriver waiting on Hynes has been working for schools since 2001. Haile Mekuria knows all the shelters, like "the women-only shelter that way," he said, gesturing north. And the motels, like the one off U.S. 71 "that way," to the south.

The long list of districts whose students he has transported spans from Harrisonville to Kearney.

Deidre Anderson, who coordinates homeless services for Hickman Mills, said the dispatcher at Yellow Cab's school transportation division knows her voice at the first sound now.

For some of the longer rides, it can cost the district \$150 a day per student.

"But I know my kids are safe," Anderson said.

Hynes was beaming as he left Ruskin, and he embraced Anderson, saying, “She’s like my Superman,” before leaving in his cab.

“I see determination,” Anderson said as the car left. “I see a kid trying.”

The federal government is providing some relief to public school budgets.

Last year, some \$65 million was distributed to schools to help support homeless services mandated through the McKinney-Vento Act of 2001, as part of the No Child Left Behind Act, said Barbara Duffield of the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

This year, she said, stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act are pitching in an additional \$70 million.

But the resources fall short, Duffield said, especially when school social workers try to connect families with community help. School districts already dealing with steep revenue declines can’t fill the gaps.

“Schools are the barometer,” Duffield said. “They have to find a seat for everyone. And it’s frustrating when they find there are not enough other services out there.”

State officials in both Kansas and Missouri say they are getting calls for advice from many school districts that have not had to deal with homelessness before.

“Just this morning a small school district called me that had never seen this before in 30 years,” said Tate Toedman, Kansas’ coordinator of homeless services.

And the homeless liaisons at school districts say they are working with more families than ever whose parents never imagined that such hardship would befall them.

More than 20,000 students in Kansas and Missouri are estimated to be getting homeless help, up from 18,000 two years ago.

“So many parents are shocked,” Pratt said. “They say, ‘I’ve worked all my life.’ ”

Raymond Briscoe was a welder and Shannon Briscoe a cashier, both looking for work, when a Kansas City, Kan., official knocking on their door two weeks ago told them that no one was supposed to be living in their apartment building.

Their church helped them move into a \$215-a-week motel off Interstate 70. But they do not have the ability right now to pay the deposit of \$1,100 to \$1,500 that Shannon Briscoe said apartment managers require for them to move into a new home.

“I have no idea where we’re going to live,” she said.

Through it all, though, their two oldest daughters have continued to go to Coronado Middle School and they get their son to fifth grade at Hazel Grove Elementary, with the aid of a prepaid gas card from the Kansas City, Kan., district. At least school can be something reliable.

“I don’t want the kids to have to say we’re homeless,” she said. “They have their same friends. The teachers are helpful.”

Many of the school districts’ homeless liaisons see themselves as being on a mission.

They’re looking for families that might not realize they qualify for help — families that might not step forward on their own.

That includes high school students who think of themselves as old enough to make it on their own, who may leave home rather than be a burden to parents struggling to feed younger siblings.

Or many times they are the ones who are not taken in when a neighbor or family member lets the rest of a homeless family under their roof.

There are 250 such high school students in the Kansas City School District alone, said Felicia Safir, the district’s homeless liaison. She called them the “throwaway students.”

Kansas City tries to gather them in, she said, and help them with clothes and shelter. They tutor them and help them with college applications.

The Independence School District had 39 homeless students among the seniors in its three high schools last year, said homeless liaison Macha Greenleaf-Maple.

Twenty-nine of them graduated.

One of Independence's students moved nine times during the last school year. A year before that, a student moved 13 times.

"Can you imagine if they had changed schools every time?" Greenleaf-Maple said.

Schools don't want families struggling on their own, said Donna Cash, Missouri's coordinator of homeless services. Too many hide their movements to temporary homes, struggling to get their kids to their school, worried they'll be kicked out if they are discovered.

"Our homeless students have rights," she said. "The most important thing is to make sure these kids are identified so they get the services they are entitled to."

Growing numbers

Economic hardship and an increasing awareness of who should be considered homeless have inundated schools with students in need of services.

- Kansas numbers have doubled since 2007, from slightly more than 3,000 to *more than 6,000 in 2009*. The number of districts reporting homeless children also doubled, from 45 to 90.
- Missouri reported 13,600 in 2007. *Incomplete totals for 2009 have reached 12,000*, without yet getting totals from St. Louis, which will likely add 2,500 or more.
- The Kansas City School District *spent \$250,000 last school year transporting homeless students across school district boundaries*.
- Kansas City, Kan., which served 1,019 homeless students all last year, has *already served more than 400* in the first three weeks of the current school year.

Who is considered homeless?

Individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youths who are:

- Sharing the housing of other people due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Abandoned in hospitals.
- Awaiting foster care placement.
- Staying in a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation.
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in any of the circumstances described above.

Sources: National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, Kansas Department of Education, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, school districts Source: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001

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