

LINC Commission Meeting

October 17, 2011

Lights On! Afterschool



Join LINC as we celebrate the safe, healthy and educational after school care programs in our schools.



Thur., Oct. 20



Visit www.kclinc.org/LightsOn for a current list of Lights On Afterschool events at LINC programs.



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, Oct. 17th, 2011 | 4 – 6 pm
Kauffman Foundation
4801 Rockhill Rd.
Kansas City, Mo. 64110

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Announcements
- II. Approvals
 - a. **September minutes (motion)**
- III. Superintendent's Reports
- IV. LINC President's Report
- V. Community Health Planning
 - a. Dr. Rex Archer – KCMO Health Dept.
- VI. Other
- VII. Adjournment



THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – SEPT. 19, 2011

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
Steve Dunn
Herb Freeman
Tom Gerke
Rob Givens
Anita Gorman

Tom Lewin
Rosemary Lowe
Sandy Mayer (for Mike Sanders)
Mary Kay McPhee
Richard Morris
David Ross
Gene Standifer
Bailus Tate

A motion to approve the July 18, 2011, LINC Commission meeting minutes was passed unanimously.

Superintendents' Report

- **John Tramel** (Community Development Specialist, Independence School District) reported on construction plans for two new elementary schools.
- **Everlyn Williams** (Associate Superintendent, Hickman Mills School District) will succeed **Marge Williams** as superintendent when she retires at the end of the school year.
- **Terry Ward** (School Board Member, North Kansas City School District) reported the free and reduced lunch student population is expected to surpass 50% this year.
- **Jack Craft** reported the Missouri Board of Education is expected to decide this week on the accreditation status of the Kansas City, Mo. School District.
- **Lane Lucas** (Communications Coordinator, Grandview School District) reported the district's free and reduced lunch student population is about 70%.

President's Report

LINC Caring Communities sites will participate in this year's national Lights On Afterschool celebration, Oct. 20.

The following videos were shown:

- Lights On Afterschool promotional video
- Video on the Phillips Caring Communities Health and Nutrition Fair, Sept. 17.
- KSHB news story on rising poverty and the increase in the number of students receiving free and reduced lunch in the Hickman Mills School District.

Finances

LINC Treasurer **David Ross** presented the LINC fiscal year 2011-2012 budget plan (attached) and recommended it be approved.

A motion to approve the LINC fiscal year 2011-2012 budget was passed unanimously.

LINC Commission

A motion to elect Tom Lewin to the board was passed unanimously.

Lewin thanked the board.

LINCWorks

Mo. Family Support Division (FSD) regional administrator Marge Randle introduced FSD staff who are involved in LINCWorks, the Kansas City area welfare-to-work initiative: **Jennifer Roberts, Pam Burrell, Kami Macias, and Robin Leikam.**

A video segment from a PBS News Hour story on unemployment was shown.

LINCWorks co-chair **Terry Ward** gave an overview of LINCWorks' progress toward achieving the work participation rate of 25% and the demographic characteristics of the LINCWorks participant population.

A video of four LINCWorks participants who shared their stories was shown.

LINCWorks director **Tom Jakopchek** reported on the development of operational strategies to engage Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participants in LINCWorks, get them involved in work activities, and help increase the state's work participation rate.

Full Employment Council president **Clyde McQueen** reported on the challenges of finding work opportunities for clients who have little work experience or education during a period when there aren't enough jobs.

Gary Allen, U.S. Administration for Children and Families Region VII office, reported LINC has been selected to participate in Promising Pathways, a national federal initiative to provide technical assistance and gather evidence-based information about best practices from 10 initiatives that work with TANF clients.

Libraries

LINC Communications Director Brent Schondelmeyer introduced **R. Crosby Kemper III**, Director, Kansas City Public Library, and **Steven Potter**, Director, Mid-Continent Public Library

The directors reported on the libraries' efforts to meet growing demand, create new ways to engage with the community and build collaboration among the various regional library systems.

The meeting was adjourned.

Local Investment Commission
SUMMARY BUDGET 1
For The Twelve Months Ended June 30, 2012

23-Aug

	<i>Final FY10 Budget (appr 7/09)</i>	<i>Final FY11 Budget (appr 7/10)</i>	<i>Original FY12 Budget (draft 7/11)</i>
<u>Caring Communities</u>			
Restricted Revenues			
Current Year Funds	11,801,322	10,138,397	9,122,840
Use Of Prior Year Restr. Funds, Offset By Unused Current Funds, & Other	572,295	1,156,295	130,000
Subtotal - Current Year Caring Communities Funds	12,373,617	11,294,692	9,252,840
Expenses			
Site Support-Paid Invoices	11,459,868	10,145,944	9,444,619
Community Partnership - Infrastructure	1,199,172	1,390,812	1,050,689
Accruals (incurred but unpaid)+Summer Camps/B&A	0	0	264,300
Subtotal - Current Year Caring Communities Expenses	12,659,040	11,536,756	10,759,608
Revenues less Expenses: Caring Communities Profit<Loss>	(285,423)	(242,064)	(1,506,768)
<u>All Other Initiatives & Activity</u>			
Revenues			
Current Year Funds (incl unrestricted administrative fees earned)	4,349,633	6,084,209	8,022,638
Investment Activity (incl unrealized) Gain<Loss>	350,000	500,000	400,000
Use Of Prior Year Restr. Funds, Offset By Unused Current Funds, & Other	630,000	170,000	200,000
Subtotal - Current Year Other Funds	5,329,633	6,754,209	8,622,638
Expenses			
Other Initiatives - Paid Invoices	5,042,140	6,808,232	7,893,314
Non-Caring Community Accruals	0	0	0
Subtotal - Current Year Other Expenses	5,042,140	6,808,232	7,893,314
Revenues less Expenses: Other Profit<Loss>	287,493	(54,023)	729,324
Total Revenues	17,703,250	18,048,901	17,875,478
Total Expenses	17,701,180	18,344,988	18,652,922
ORGANIZATION-WIDE NET ESTIMATED CHANGE IN FINANCIAL POSITION: Profit<Loss>	2,070	(296,087)	(777,444)

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Purpose - mgmt reporting

Monday, Oct 10, 2011

Can the KC School District save itself? Yes, state says

By JOE ROBERTSON
The Kansas City Star

The state folks who recommended that the Kansas City School District lose its accreditation decided they had no choice but to light that dangerous fire.

The district was meeting only three of 14 standards, down from four the year before.

They knew the move to strip accreditation effective Jan. 1 would inflame expectations that the district could eventually be taken over or splintered into neighboring districts and charters — actions that Education Commissioner Chris Nicastro neither anticipates nor desires.

It was simply time to force the equation: Can this district, with its current leadership, reach the state's standard?

Nicastro and her school improvement team think the answer is yes.



"They need to do a lot in a short period of time," said Tony Stansberry, the state's regional director working with Kansas City. "I do think they have the expertise to do it."

The stakes in selling and executing the turnaround plan can hardly be any higher now, said parent leader Fred Hudgins.

"Here's the big picture," he said. "If this district implodes, it's going to have a ripple effect

throughout the suburbs and to the Johnson County side as well. This is an economic thing."

The race is on over the next few months to stem a potentially disastrous exodus of families who could get an opportunity for school transportation to neighboring districts depending on events unfolding in Jefferson City and the courts in early 2012.

"Parents are scared because they don't know what 'unaccredited' means to their schools and their children," Hudgins said.

But the notion of sending their children away from their neighborhoods every day by school bus to Independence or Raytown doesn't seem like a good option either, he said.

"Most want to stay," he said. "They want to work it out."

At the state board's December meeting, the commissioner intends to present a detailed plan on how Kansas City will reach its goal. Nicastro is holding a town hall meeting at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at Paseo Academy, 4747 Flora Ave., to bring the community into the planning. She will be hearing ideas on establishing a citizen advisory panel.

They want everyone concerned to help hash it out.

Winning public confidence must go beyond contending that there is a plan to achieve the missing standards on the district's report card, said Jim Nunnally, whose community work with the district included starting the teen radio talk show "Generation Rap" on KPRS-FM.

"I want to know what's going on in the field," he said. "I want the progress to be pristine — that we understand it, that the way to get there is *this*."

'We're here to learn'

The district currently meets state standards in student participation in advanced courses and career education courses, and in placing graduates from its school-to-career programs.

It still stands short of meeting any of the six standards for student performance on state tests, and other measures such as ACT performance, graduation rate and attendance.

Former Superintendent John Covington had a plan. With the help of a community process, he produced an ambitious transformation plan during the 2009-10 school year promising a wave of classroom improvements, including new teacher-written curriculum, a revolution in how students are grouped, and the expectation that students would have individual learning plans to serve their unique needs.

The district and its board addressed the severe systemic shortcomings raised by the state in 2008 before beginning the joint turnaround plan.

But the 2010-11 school year became overconsumed by drastic moves to correct severe imbalances in the district's budget and operations. The district closed 40 percent of its schools in the summer of 2010, cut 1,000 jobs, eliminated thousands of vendor contracts and cut a total of \$50 million from its budget.

The move to consolidate middle school grades in the high schools proved to be a difficult transition, especially at Southwest Early College Campus.

Even before his sudden resignation Aug. 24, Covington acknowledged that the district hadn't kept the necessary focus on the many classroom reforms under way. He repackaged them in a plan he called Transformation Phase II that he unveiled less than a month before he left.

Interim Superintendent Steve Green has picked it up where Covington left off.

"The system has been in place," he said. "The longer we go with it, the stronger it gets. It was a sustainable model that was built for this district."

Teachers and principals carry on as well.

"We've got to keep them rolling," Faxon Elementary School teacher Geraldine Matthews said last week.

She surveyed her room of children ranging from ages 6 to 9 with pieces of the transformation plan evident all around them.

Closest to her, 7-year-old Lynna Pollard was helping 8-year-old Jaimien Roberson plug words into a program in their new netbooks — small laptop computers wired to the Internet.

Every child in Faxon got one. That's part of the technology plan. The computers will play a role in carrying out the individualized learning plans. And the sight of the two children teaming together plays into the plan, too. This is Kansas City's "student-centered learning" revolution.

“See how they help each other learn?” Matthews said. “That’s what’s so exciting. They might hear about superintendents and school boards, but we’re not going to take them off their focus. We connect them to what we’re here for. We’re here to learn.”

Faxon has ground to make up, like most of the district’s schools, Principal Angela Underwood said. Faxon is one of 10 schools pioneering the student-centered model that groups students not by grade level but by skills they prove they’ve learned. After the first year, most students were working at skill levels below the projected levels for their age.

But Underwood expects students to advance in year two. The teachers and parents do, too, she said.

Parents came to the school with a lot of concerns after the news of lost accreditation, but Underwood said not one had asked about transferring.

“Nothing has changed in our mission and goals,” she said. “We’re all in agreement of what our purpose is here. ... We know what needs to be done. We can’t worry about superintendents and accreditation.”

Bar moving higher

The simple math of the road to accreditation requires that the district meet at least six of the 14 standards by 2014 to earn provisional status and stave off the law that would trigger state intervention. At least one of those would have to be a state test performance standard.

The district needs to reach nine to have a chance at full accreditation.

There is also a strong possibility that the targets will be moving. The state is working on a fifth version of its Missouri School Improvement Plan. The proposal is in a public comment period and may be approved by the state board in December. The new standards would take effect two years after their approval. That means Kansas City, if it goes down to the wire in 2014, would have to meet standards that are intended to raise the bar across the state.

The district should be able to keep the three standards it currently owns, said Mary Esselman, the district’s assistant superintendent over assessment and accountability. The district should make enough overall improvement in test scores to earn a bonus standard.

Then she thinks the district can meet the mark in several other standards.

Because performance standards are based on a five-year average, some standards will be very hard or impossible to reach in the next one or two years, Esselman said.

The district is banking on improved execution of its student-centered instruction, now in its second year. It’s banking on the track record of Teach for America, the national organization that recruits top college graduates and trains them to serve as teachers. Kansas City has more than 150 of their recruits in its classrooms.

It’s counting on more parent involvement, more community support, better communication — looking for intensified ways to pursue these goals that are already imbedded in the district’s transformation plan.

“Yes, it can be done,” Nunnally said. “But that’s not the right question. The better question is, ‘Are we willing to do what is necessary to allow it to be done?’ ”

The standards

The Kansas City School District is meeting three of the state’s 14 standards. It needs to meet at least six to be performing at a provisionally accredited level, and nine to reach a fully accredited

level. This list numbers 15 standards, because it includes a bonus available for improvement in test scores.

CURRENTLY MET

1. Advanced courses. 36 percent of eligible students enrolled in advanced courses. The district needs to reach 37 percent to maintain the standard.
2. Career education courses. 10 percent of eligible students earned career education credits. The district needs to reach 11 percent to maintain.
3. Career education placement. 91.8 percent of graduates completing career education were placed. The district needs to reach 92.9 percent to maintain.

WITHIN REACH

4. Bonus standard for state performance test achievement. To gain the bonus, the district needs to increase its index score in at least four of the six test performance categories or meet the criteria of the state's statistical growth model.
5. Math performance, grades 3 to 5. The current index score is 716.1. The district needs to reach 735.8.
6. Communication arts performance, grades 6 to 8. The current index score is 714.7. The district needs to reach 735.6.
7. Communication arts performance, grades 9 to 11. The current index score is 763.1. The district needs to reach 766.1.
8. Math performance, grades 9 to 11. The current index score is 706.8. The district needs to reach 726.3.
9. College placement. 52.2 percent of district graduates entered college. The district needs to reach 56.3 percent.

DIFFICULT TO REACH

10. Communication arts performance, grades 3 to 5. The current index score is 709.2. The district needs to reach 777.8.
11. Math performance, grades 6 to 8. The current index score is 700.9. The district needs to reach 745.5.
12. ACT performance. 17.4 percent of district graduates performed at or above the national average. The district would need to reach 41.8 percent.
13. Graduation rate. The district's graduation rate is under appeal. In 2010 the rate was 65.2 percent. Because of five-year averaging, the district can only approach the goal.
14. Attendance rate. Attendance was 90.7 percent in K-8, 84 percent in 9-12, and 89.1 percent for all grades. The district would have to reach 95 percent in each and overall.
15. Subgroup performance on state tests. None of the district's 16 student subgroups met the federal No Child Left Behind standard.

Persistence



Pays

Off

This is the story of two high schools: One was a “dropout factory.” The other is seeing remarkable success, and many of its recent graduates are the first in their families to attend college. What makes the story remarkable is that the two schools are the same—or, at least, they have occupied the same building. The school is Van Horn High School in Independence, MO, an inner-ring suburb of 115,000 located east of Kansas City, MO.

It might be wrong to call the present Van Horn the same school as its predecessor because so much has changed. The school was transferred to another school district in July 2008, resulting in the complete turnover of its faculty members and administrators. Whereas Van Horn once served students not only from Independence but also from throughout Kansas City, the school now serves children who live only in the immediate vicinity, which mostly comprises older neighborhoods that have significant poverty and changing demographics. One constant, however, is that the community was always present in the school, hoping, working, organizing, and fighting for the school, the families, and the neighborhood.

The story illustrates what a community school—fully embraced and properly understood—can become when it effectively connects with students, families, social services, and neighborhood revitalization.

The community and a local nonprofit join forces to turn around a low-performing school.

Community Support

The Local Investment Commission (LINC), a Kansas City–based nonprofit, has been involved with Van Horn High School for more than 15 years, working to make the school a center of the community. From the outset, LINC was dedicated to bottom-up, citizen engagement through the development of site councils composed of parents, neighbors, teachers, and principals—a key feature of providing guidance, leadership, and boots on the ground at each of its community schools.

Early on, the Van Horn site council was committed to focusing on the community. It formed its own nonprofit community development corporation, built a \$4 million senior housing complex (the largest investment in the neighborhood in years), and worked to provide health services for students and the neighborhood. But despite the success of the community work, comparable success inside the school was elusive. One community leader said, “There was nothing to pull the students together as a student body. Things that were done were done by the community, around the community.”

For many years the Kansas City (MO) School District had used Van Horn as an alternative school, with students being bused considerable distances. Few cocurricular activities were offered, and all athletic games (even homecoming) were held off school grounds. The school’s once-vibrant fine arts programs died off, as did industrial arts education.

Van Horn High School

INDEPENDENCE, MO

GRADES 9–12

ENROLLMENT 825

COMMUNITY Suburban

DEMOGRAPHICS 65% White, 18% Hispanic, 14% Black, 3% Asian; 70% free or reduced-price lunch

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM 1 principal, 1 associate principal, 1 assistant principal, 1 activities director

FACULTY 70 staff and faculty members

Even so, the community still fought for the school. Twice there were publicly announced plans to close Van Horn, but both times, the neighborhood, the community, and the alumni rallied to keep the school open. The community leader recalled, “They knew if they lost the high school, they were sunk.”

The failure of the school became well-known when it was designated a “dropout factory” in a 2007 national study by the Center for the Social Organization of Schools at John Hopkins University in cooperation with the Associated Press, which disseminated the results. The study listed high schools that had an “average promoting power” of less than 60% over a three-year period (the graduation classes of 2004, 2005, and 2006). According to the report, the graduation rate at Van Horn

was 34%, the second-lowest rate among Missouri’s 458 high schools; statewide 19 high schools made the dropout factory list (Center for Social Organization of Schools, 2007). Although portions of the study received some criticism, including its overall report and the validity of the data and methodology, the news media coverage at the time confirmed what the community already knew: students at Van Horn were not doing well.

That same year, community members, led by religious leaders, revived on-again, off-again efforts to transfer seven schools (Van Horn, a middle school, and five elementary schools) from the Kansas City School District to the adjacent Independence School District. In November 2007, voters in both school districts approved the transfer. The change brought renewed focus, effort, investment, and community attention to all the schools and a clear articulation of what a school means to families and neighborhoods.

Independence School Superintendent Jim Hinson told the community,

There are activities at the school that encourage [not only] parents and families of those students, but also neighbors of those schools who may no longer have children at the school, to be actively engaged with that school where, hopefully, neighborhood activities occur as well. (Independence, MO, School District & Hinson, 2010, p. 17)

He added, “Families and parents understand that schools are more than places where their child receives an education; they are also places where parents and families can receive

Key Features of Successful Community School High Schools

- Lead partner organization
- Community school coordinator
- Robust, reciprocal partnerships
- Focused leadership
- Essential programs and services
 - After-school, weekend, and summer programs
 - Academic support
 - Mentoring
 - College and career preparation
 - University partnerships
 - Culturally relevant programs
 - Parent engagement
 - Health services and education
 - Youth and community nutrition
- Shared results: graduation

Source: Axelroth, R. (2009). The community schools approach: Raising graduation and college going rates—Community high school case studies. Washington, DC: Coalition for Community Schools, Institute for Educational Leadership.

“Everyone has told me that if I go to college I will get a higher paying job and it will [be] beneficial for my future, but nobody told me how I was going to get there.”

services and assistance and resources that they need” (Independence, MO, School District & Hinson, 2010, p. 18).

Turning the Corner

In its first year as part of Independence School District, Van Horn’s student population fell to less than 600, but it has grown every year since. The school’s programming underwent an even more dramatic transformation. Today there is a stronger academic focus, more cocurricular activities, and extensive community involvement.

There are visible changes in the physical plant. Three weeks before the start of the 2008–09 school year, more than 2,000 volunteers worked at the transferred schools painting, landscaping, and cleaning in an effort the district called “Extreme School Makeover.” In 2009, voters approved a districtwide \$85 million districtwide bond issue to purchase new heating and cooling systems, new artificial turf for the now-utilized athletic fields, and exterior improvements.

The new school climate has enabled Van Horn to realize more of the key features of successful community-school high schools that were identified by the Coalition for Community Schools, such as reciprocal partnerships; after-school, weekend, and summer programming; and health services (Axelroth, 2009). Community support has grown; new partnerships have been created and existing partnerships expanded; and the high school is acknowledged as the

center of a major community revitalization that includes new residents, construction of new in-fill housing, greater city investment, and new opportunities.

But nowhere is the climate change more evident than inside the school. “We can do so much in the classrooms,” said Patrick Layden, an assistant principal who also teaches AP US Government and Politics. “We can do so much as administration and counselors. But we need that community support to not only change the school but also the city and the community.”

The most tangible evidence of Van Horn’s success is students going on to postsecondary education. Van Horn is in its third year of participating in the National College Advising Corps (NCAC), which works to increase postsecondary participation among high school students in low-income communities. During the 2011–12 school year, the program will expand to 350 high schools in 17 states and will serve approximately 105,000 students.

Through the Missouri NCAC program, the University of Missouri hires recent college graduates for a two-year commitment. Those graduates serve as full-time college access

Conditions for Learning

1. The school has a core instructional program with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations for students.
2. Students are motivated and engaged in learning—both in school and in community settings and during and after school.
3. The basic physical, mental, and emotional health needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed.
4. There is mutual respect and effective collaboration among parents, families, and school staff members.
5. Community engagement, together with school efforts, promotes a school climate that is safe, supportive, and respectful and that connects students to a broader learning community.

Source: Blank, M., Melaville, A., & Shah, B. (2003). Making the difference: Research and practice in community schools. Washington, DC: Coalition for Community Schools.

The Local Investment Commission (www.kclinc.org)

has one of the most extensive community schools efforts in the country and has a significant presence as an organizer of community schools in seven school districts.

Combined enrollment at its community schools (known as Caring Communities sites) is approximately 30,000 students as of 2010. The student demographics are 50% Black, 32% White, and 16% Hispanic. Of those students, 71.9% receive free and reduced-price lunch.

The Coalition for Community Schools (www.communityschools.org)

is hosted by the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL; www.iel.org) in Washington, DC, and offers some of the best information about building community schools—difficult work for which few principals and administrators have received professional development or academic training.

IEL also promotes leadership in education through its Educational Policy Fellowship Program (www.epfp.org), a 10-month leadership development program with multiple state programs across the country.

advisers who work closely with school counselors to develop peer-to-peer relationships with high school seniors to encourage them to pursue postsecondary education.

A College-Going Culture

The results at Van Horn are impressive: full-time enrollment is up, more students are going to college, and more students are staying in college. For the 2010–11 school year, of a total 675 students, 115 received assistance with a college application and 336 took a college campus tour, and students were accepted at 39 postsecondary institutions.

“The impact here has been pretty dramatic about getting kids into the mind-set that postsecondary options are actually an option,” said Layden. “A lot of our kids have really struggled with that because they come from households where not only did their parents not graduate from college, but also a lot of them didn’t graduate from high school.”

As one student who received college guidance said, “Everyone has told me that if I go to college I will get a higher paying job and it will [be] beneficial for my future, but nobody told



me how I was going to get there.” Van Horn is turning that around.

The long-term success of Van Horn is yet to be determined, but the story is instructive.

It is easy to lose the simple logic behind community schools among the myriad reforms, initiatives, and grant-inspired endeavors and to miss the fundamental nature of the work: schools and communities need each other in ways readily acknowledged, but rarely acted upon. No one grant or program is sufficient to achieve what is needed: students learning, stronger families, and stable neighborhoods. Communities cannot do it alone, nor can dedicated educators achieve it by themselves. **PL**

REFERENCES

- Axelroth, R. (2009). *The community schools approach: Raising graduation and college going rates—Community high school case studies*. Washington, DC: Coalition for Community Schools, Institute for Educational Leadership.
- Center for Social Organization of Schools, John Hopkins University. (2007). *What does promoting power tell us about the graduation gap?* Retrieved from <http://web.jhu.edu/csos/images/AP.html>
- Independence, MO, School District, & Hinson, J. (2010). *Inspiring greatness: A community's commitment to a brighter future*. Independence, MO: Author.

Brent Schondelmeyer (bschonde@kclinc.org) is the communications director for the Local Investment Commission and on the steering committee of the Coalition for Community Schools. He is the writer and producer of *Community Schools for All*, a video about the national community schools movement.