

LINC Commission Meeting

May 21, 2012



Grandview School District Superintendent Dr. Ralph Teran reads with students. Every 2nd and 3rd grader in the Grandview district received two free books. Nearly 10,000 new books were donated by Rosen Publishing, Inc. for students of the Center, Hickman Mills, Grandview and Kansas City school districts.



Roger Rosen of Rosen Publishing shows a sample of new books to Kansas City Public Schools Board President Airick Leonard West, Rep. Jason Holsman and Kansas City Mayor Sly James.



 **LINC**
Local Investment Commission
3100 Broadway, 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, May 21, 2012 | 4 – 6 pm
Kauffman Foundation
4801 Rockhill Rd.
Kansas City, Mo. 64110

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Announcements
- II. Approvals
 - a. April minutes (motion)
- III. Superintendent's Reports
- IV. Progress Reports
 - a. Rosen book donation
 - b. Summer Food Demonstration Project
 - c. Summer School
 - d. Missouri Star Schools
- V. Finance Committee
 - a. Acceptance of IRS Form 990
- VI. Other
- VII. Adjournment



THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – APRIL 16, 2012

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

Bert Berkley
Jack Craft
Steve Dunn
Tom Gerke
Rob Givens
Bart Hakan

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

Rowland introduced international visitor **René Clarijs** (from the Netherlands) and Missouri Family and Community Trust (FACT) Director **Bill Dent**.

Superintendents' Report

- **Marge Williams** (Superintendent, Hickman Mills School District) reported she has appreciated the opportunity to develop the district's partnership with LINC, which began at Santa Fe Elementary and has grown to include the whole district.
- **Everlyn Williams** (Deputy Superintendent, Hickman Mills School District) invited all to join in upcoming celebrations recognizing Marge Williams, who will retire at the end of the school year, as an outstanding educator.
- **Mark Enderle** (Superintendent, Fort Osage School District) reported the district is looking forward to partnering with LINC around summer programs. The district program is expecting to serve around 200 students this summer.
- **Todd White** (Superintendent, North Kansas City School District) reported the district is planning for its summer program to accommodate 45%, or 9,500 students, of its student population.
- **Bob Bartman** (Superintendent, Center School District) reported that current economic conditions highlight the importance of LINC to school districts. He also reported Center High School has been selected for state Gold Star School status.
- **John Tramel** (Family Services Director, Independence School District) reported the district is working on keeping students focused on MAP testing and is planning its budget for summer school programs.

LINC President **Gayle A. Hobbs** reported the LINC staff is working on a plan for before and after summer school programs and all-day summer camps.

A motion to approve the March 26, 2012, LINC Commission meeting minutes was passed unanimously.

LINC Treasurer **David Ross** delivered the Finance Committee report:

- The summary budget vs. actual report shows a loss as predicted
- The LINC FY2010-2011 990 will be completed soon and distributed to Commissioners to review
- The LINC Governance manual is undergoing further development
- The Finance Committee is developing its annual report
- Commissioners are requested to fill out and return Conflict of Interest forms

FACT Director **Bill Dent** presented thanks from the FACT board to **Bert Berkley**, who is

resigning from the state board. **Bailus Tate** has been nominated to succeed Bert on the board.

Gary Allen, U.S. Administration for Children and Families, introduced a presentation on Promising Pathways, an initiative of ACF-Office of Family Assistance to provide technical assistance to help organizations serving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients develop and share evidence-based practices. LINC was one of ten innovative or promising organizations selected nationally.

Bill Brumfield of ICF International reported on the Promising Pathways selection process that identified LINC as an innovative organization on the basis of its good data and results and strong leadership. Opportunities are being developed for LINC to receive further technical assistance and to serve as a mentor for a new Promising Pathways site.

Brumfield presented awards and recognition to organizations and individuals participating in Promising Pathways including:

- **Allyson Campbell**, Missouri Division of Family Services
- **Marge Randle**, Division of Family Services (Kansas City Region)
- **Clyde McQueen**, Full Employment Council
- **Landon Rowland**, Local Investment Commission/LINCWorks
- **Bart Hakan** and **Terry Ward**, LINCWorks cochairs

Hobbs introduced a LINC-produced video featuring the success stories of LINCWorks participants **Genesha, Karen, Vanessa** and **Reva**. Following the video the participants and their LINCWorks case managers – **Nanci Saulsberry, Andrea O’Neal, Lisa Stephenson** and **Fiona Island** – reported on their experiences working together to move from welfare to skills and work.

LINCWorks co-chair **Bart Hakan** introduced a discussion of the LINCWorks initiative to help TANF participants move from welfare to work. LINCWorks Director **Tom Jakopchek** gave an overview of the progress that LINCWorks has made toward increasing participants’ involvement in work activities since October 2010. LINC Communications staff **David Buchmann** reported on the development of a logic model for LINC’s efforts to support people who are seeking to leave TANF and join the workforce. LINC Communications Director **Brent Schondelmeyer** reported on communications strategies to help LINCWorks better engage with clients and share results with the community.

Discussion followed.

Dutch journalist and youth policy expert **René Clarijs** reported his observations of LINC during this second, extended visit to LINC following an earlier visit in 2004. A video of Clarijs is available at www.kclinc.org.

The meeting was adjourned.

Sat., Apr. 28, 2012

Attendance records, not curfew, seen as anti-truancy tactic

Students' attendance records could be checked, and parents could find themselves appearing in court.

By JOE ROBERTSON

The Kansas City Star

Forget the daytime curfew.

Kansas City law officers and educators have agreed on another approach to bring the weight of the law on chronic truants and their parents.

An amended ordinance expected to go before the City Council next week makes a hammer out of school attendance records, instead of compelling police to find a child in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Authorities wouldn't need to catch children out of class. Schools would be able to deliver attendance records to the city prosecutor's office. Police would issue tickets and parents would be summoned to municipal court.

"We wanted to get away from going around and scooping up kids who may or may not belong in school," City Prosecutor Lowell Gard said.

Everyone seems happy with the revised ordinance, which, when it was a day curfew proposal, had raised a storm of concerns over civil liberties, constitutional issues and the innocent movements of home-schooled children.

City Councilman Scott Wagner has worked for months trying to forge a deal on behalf of school districts — particularly Kansas City and Hickman Mills — that want effective legal authority to pressure parents whose children persistently miss school.

"After all this effort, I think we've got something that will work for everyone and still provide the teeth police and schools have asked for," Wagner said. "...We can send a message to parents that we expect kids to be in school."

Truancy concerns have mounted, particularly at Central, East and Northeast high schools in Kansas City where the district is looking at many ways to reverse alarming attendance rates of 75 to 80 percent.

A police sweep in the district's Northeast neighborhood last fall rounded up 52 truant students.

Under the new proposal, the court could issue fines up to \$500, but city officials said parents probably would initially get warnings to get their children in school. There would also be opportunities in many cases to attend parenting classes or counseling before receiving a fine.

Schools aren't just relying on the ordinance, either. The Kansas City Public Schools is seeking grant funding to restore its truancy officer positions and is developing plans to open an alternative school this fall. It has marshaled volunteers to help run phone banks calling on families and making home visits where absences have become a concern.

In the past, the school district has occasionally teamed up with police to run truancy sweeps, rounding up students into a school building and then making a parent come to get them. But parents left with no citations or warnings. The next day, many students would simply skip school again.

The problem, Kansas City Superintendent Steve Green said, is that the district had no salient threat it could use when talking to parents and students caught in a sweep.

The state's compulsory attendance statute is weak, Gard said. It puts the burden on prosecutors to prove that a child who is not attending public school is not getting an education elsewhere.

The proposed ordinance shifts the burden to the parent. Green said it would provide "a substantive consequence after all our other interventions are exhausted."

With the ordinance, schools can issue truancy complaints targeting problematic students and not rely on casting imperfect nets with police sweeps.

"This (using attendance records) allows continuous enforcement," said City Councilman John Sharp, who helped craft the new approach. "It will not be a drain on police manpower. It is much more effective, and it protects civil liberties."

Home-schooling families, which had vigorously opposed a daytime curfew, will likely approve of the new ordinance, said Brad Haines of Families for Home Education.

They had argued that their children, while outdoors or on a field trip, might get caught up in a sweep — or be in fear of getting caught.

Changing the ordinance "protects the reputation of the police as someone children can respect and trust and not fear that they will get their parents in trouble," Haines said.

If the amended ordinance is enacted, it won't take effect until Aug. 15. School officials intend to use it only with chronic cases. Districts could still conduct sweeps, and they would be able to use the new ordinance to warn or cite parents.

"What hopefully will happen is that schools will be able to rely on sweeps less," Wagner said.

The aim right now, he said, is to make it clear to parents and students who persist in truancy "that the city is going to do something."

To reach Joe Robertson, call 816-234-4789 or send email to jrobertson@kcstar.com.

Wednesday, Apr 25, 2012

Hickman Mills superintendent always 'determined to beat the odds'

**As she prepares to retire after 12 years as superintendent,
Marge Williams is confident about the district's children.**

By JOE ROBERTSON
The Kansas City Star

So much was hard in the 12 years Superintendent Marge Williams has led the Hickman Mills School District, so the reassurance of 11-year-olds felt good.

Symington Elementary students did great on the just-finished state tests, the four fifth-graders told her.

"How do you know?"
Williams asked.

"We checked and checked,"
Taylor Brown said, smiling
broadly, "and checked
again."

This is the fun part, making
classroom visits. Not many
more left, at least as
superintendent, since
Williams is retiring at the end
of the school year.

Twelve years of plying
against the current of more
and more families in
hardships, a crumbling retail
market in its neighborhoods,
declining enrollment and relentless pressure on the district to perform.

"This is a good school," another Symington fifth-grader, Kesa Redd, said.

She knows all about the goal Williams has laid on the district as she prepares to leave. Kesa knows about the "12 in 2012" campaign.



The district has battled under the state's latest performance review cycle to keep its full accreditation. As it approached this year's coming ruling on its status, Hickman Mills bounced back on its report card last year to reach nine of the state's 14 standards.

If it sustains those nine, that would be enough to keep full accreditation.

But the Symington children know that the district is determined to shoot higher and make 12.

"I know we're going to get there," Kesa said.

This is the feeling Williams hoped for when she accepted the superintendent's job in 2000.

"I wanted us to beat the odds."

It's why she stayed in urban education. A Kansas City native who came out of Central and Westport high schools, she was determined since she was a child to be a teacher.

"I used to capture my little brother," she said, "and make him my student."

Then came summers visiting her aunt in Detroit who was a teacher. The aunt became her mentor and sponsor, providing the tuition for her to attend Lincoln University in Jefferson City.

Her parents, who worked at the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant in Jackson County, gave all they could, including letting her have the family car, a wide-bodied Buick Electra 225.

She earned certifications in K-8 and special education, teaching in Kansas City while getting her master's degree, and then a doctorate.

In Hickman Mills, she was principal of the special education residential schools at Crittenton and Spofford, then an associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction before then-Superintendent Jerry Cooper made her deputy.

Then came her turn at the top.

She knew what she was getting into, she said, and the road has been steep.

In the past 10 years, the percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches rose from 51 to 82 percent.

Enrollment has eroded from more than 7,500 to 6,100.

The giant commercial engine in and surrounding the former Bannister Mall collapsed, with one plan after another promising to revive it, only to fly away somewhere else.

"We'd get close to something," she said, remembering promises of Bass Pro Shops and the Sporting Kansas City soccer stadium. "I'd go to sleep and wake up and it's gone."

While assessed value of property statewide rose 77 percent over the past decade, Hickman Mills' dropped 5.5 percent.

State test scores have lagged below the state average, representing the district's greatest challenge.

Its attendance rate, 93.4 percent, dropout rate, 3 percent, and graduation rate, 89.1 percent, have remained mostly level with the state averages.

The district's success is particularly important to its south Kansas City community, which has often felt isolated, and even neglected, by the rest of the city.

The community continued to support its schools through the difficult times. The administration and school board carefully picked when it asked voters for bond and tax tax increases.

Three times under Williams' tenure, the district went to voters and three times voters said yes for the schools.



This is what she is leaving to her deputy superintendent, Evelyn Williams — a school system she hopes is poised to get its 12 standards and more.

It's the students, through it all, led by their teachers and principals, who have kept the community's confidence, Williams said.

When Williams looks up from her desk, the biggest photograph

framed on the wall shows a row of graduates in caps and gowns, some with tears in their eyes, at Ruskin High School's graduation last May.

It was the first ceremony for the combined high school that had absorbed Hickman Mills High School — a consolidation that came with great emotional pain for the community.

The picture showed the graduates together, intermingled in gowns of Ruskin's blue and gold, and Hickman's orange and white.

The union that so many had feared could not happen had occurred with remarkable accord.

"I depended on them," she said. "Those kids made that decision.

"They were going to beat the odds."

To reach Joe Robertson, call 816-234-4789 or send email to jrobertson@kcstar.com.

Sunday, Apr 15, 2012

Schools take on hunger, even after school

By LAURA BAUER
The Kansas City Star

A small meal waits for students after school at Garfield Elementary: a cup of yogurt, string cheese, a bag of grapes, graham crackers.

It's enough protein and nutritious fuel to get kids in the after-school program through their homework, enough to tide them over until a more complete meal later.

As fourth-grader Ja'Niah Devers puts it: "It helps you think harder and be healthy."

But for some at this school, where 96 percent of the students receive free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch, this light supper may be the only thing they eat until they return to the school cafeteria the next morning.

Garfield is one of 18 schools in the Kansas City district that now serve a third meal each day to students attending after-school activities such as tutoring programs. The district started offering the supper to students in October and expanded the program in January to include nearly 1,700 students — 10 percent of the district.

Faculty and staff at Garfield know some of the students often don't have enough food at home and rely on the school for most of their nutrition.

"Families say it's such a burden off of them when they pick their children up and know they've already eaten," said Maria Grimoldi, site coordinator for the Local Investment Commission (LINC) after-school program at Garfield, which serves roughly 100 kids the light supper. "We have several homeless families. This helps them."

More schools across the country are offering similar programs, using funds available through the federal Child & Adult Care Food Program.

The menu rotation in KC's program, funded through state and federal reimbursements, includes hoagies, peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches, fried chicken and Cobb salad, along with fresh fruits or vegetables.

"It's not meant to take place of dinner at home," said Garfield principal Doug White. "But for some of our kids, we know it does."

In Missouri, an estimated one in four children doesn't have enough food at home to lead a productive, healthy life, according to Feeding America, a national hunger-relief organization. Teachers and school social workers keep food on hand to give students who come to school hungry.

The supper program, criticized by some as schools doing the job of parents, is just one more way of helping struggling families, district officials say.

“We knew there was a need, and we wanted to address that need,” said Andrea Wilhoit, dietitian with Kansas City Public Schools. “If we can help, why not? If we can do better together than we can separately, then why not?”



‘Always heartbreaking’

It didn’t take long for Chester Palmer to see the need at Satchel Paige Elementary, where he’s been principal for two years.

Early on, he’d see students rush into school late. Too late to get breakfast in the cafeteria. Sometimes, students would come to his office, knowing he keeps cereal

bars for hungry students.

Other times, parents would stop in to see him.

“They’d come to me crying, ‘I didn’t have anything to give them this morning,’ ” Palmer said.

“They’d say, ‘Would you please allow them to eat in the cafeteria?’

“I see the need of our students. And it’s always heartbreaking to know some students are going without.”

Before the supper program, students enrolled in the LINC after-school program would get a small snack of cookies and milk.

They’d eat that and want more. Often they’d want to take some home for later.

“It’s a lot better now,” said Jason Ervin, LINC site coordinator at Satchel Paige. “We don’t have as many kids saying, ‘I’m hungry, I want more.’ ”

When there are leftovers, food a student didn’t touch, it goes on the “share table” in the middle of the cafeteria. Anything there is free game.

“For them to want to go to the share table and eat more, that means they need it,” Ervin said. “And that’s good that we have it.”

Nutrition education

The goal is not only to feed hungry students but also to introduce proper nutrition. In many households, where money for food is tight, a main staple is cheaper, high-calorie junk food.

Meals in the supper program introduce fruits and vegetables that kids may not get at home. Students learn to like salads, or at least try them.

Ellen Cram, director of child nutrition for Kansas City Public Schools, sees the need to teach students that food that’s good for them also tastes good.

“That tray of food is my blackboard where I am teaching nutrition education,” Cram said.

At Garfield Elementary, Grimoldi walks through the cafeteria during supper and cheers on kids eating fruit and vegetables. She’s seen children unsure how to bite into an apple, and children who love the accolades she gives for eating carrots or other vegetables.

One student recently stopped her and said, “I want a high-five! Look, I’m eating celery.”

Earlier this week, Grimoldi walked up to first-grader Emoni Smith. “What do I call you?” Grimoldi asked the student.



“Healthy girl,” Emoni said, smiling wide. “... I like the salad, yogurt, carrots and celery.”

Second-grader Diana Diagne couldn’t get enough of the day’s fresh fruit.

“I think the grapes are healthy,” she said. “They help you see in the dark and have energy, too.”

The goal is to add more students to the supper program next year.

What the district is doing is just another example of how it takes

many in a community to provide food to families in need, said Ellen Feldhausen, spokeswoman for Harvesters, the food bank that serves the Kansas City area. Harvesters sponsors a Kids’ Cafe program that also serves a light meal after school to about 1,700 students.

“We applaud the school districts for stepping up to help feed their students after school,” Feldhausen said. “When young children don’t get sufficient healthy food, the consequences for their health, development and ability to succeed in school can be serious and long-lasting.”

Statewide, 23 school-based sponsors provide supper to Missouri children. As many as 145,000 suppers are served monthly, according to the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

Cram knows that some people think schools shouldn’t be responsible for feeding children every meal. In some districts, where only a small percentage of students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals, the help may not be needed.

But that’s not the case in the Kansas City district, where roughly 85 percent of students qualify for government-subsidized meals.

“It may not be our responsibility,” Cram said, “but it’s hard to ignore when you see the need. Students can’t learn at a deep level when they’re hungry.”

Independence district unifies before, after care

Saturday, Apr 21, 2012

It has been four years since the schools in western Independence became part of the Independence School District.

In that time, test scores and attendance have risen, graduation rates have soared and most of the schools are bursting at the seams with students.

But when the transition occurred, Independence School District officials decided to keep the before and after school programs in the hands of the Local Investment Commission, also known as LINC. While the programming is similar in both the LINC programs and the school district's program, Kids' Safari, it was always the district's hope to bring the programs at Fairmount, Three Trails, Korte and Sugar Creek elementary schools as well as Nowlin Middle School under the Kids' Safari banner.

Now, after an almost \$2 million federal grant, that is a reality.

"We are elated to finally be able to make this transition," Independence Superintendent Jim Hinson said. "The change will not affect the programs much. The curriculum is pretty much the same in both the LINC and Kids' Safari programs."

The Independence School District will take over the programs this fall. Hinson said the change will not affect the family school liaisons or the Caring Community programs, which will all remain at the schools.

"There is no problem with our relationship with LINC. We are actually looking at ways that we can expand our relationship with them," Hinson said. "We had told them during the transition that this was going to be our plan, that we wanted to eventually take control of the programs. We have just been waiting for the grant money to make that happen."

Hinson said the two main changes to the programs will be to staff and supplies. He said the staff will no longer be from LINC, but hired by the school district. It will also impact the amount of supplies and materials in a positive way, making more available to the programs.

As far as the impact to parents in regards to tuition and fees, Hinson said that is a more difficult question and the answer relies on the state. He said if everything remains the same with state funding, parents will see no impact in before and after school costs. Fees will remain the same as with LINC.

However, if the Missouri Legislature decides to do away with the Child Development Block Grant, as they are now discussing during the current session, the school district would have to decide if they were going to absorb the additional costs or pass a fee increase on to parents.

"It would be a huge hit for LINC to lose that funding, but it would also impact the school district. LINC uses those funds entirely for its before and after school programs," he said. "We use the funds to supplement our costs at some of our sites. Hopefully, we would be able to absorb those costs so that it would not impact parents. We will have to wait and see what happens."

Tuesday, May 15, 2012

Despite deep cuts, KC school district is still strained

Kansas City Public Schools still spends significantly more per pupil than nearby districts.

By JOE ROBERTSON
The Kansas City Star

It wasn't enough.

After all the pain Kansas City Public Schools endured in millions of dollars of budget cutting, the district still spends significantly more per pupil in four key outside-the-classroom areas than neighboring districts do.



Since The Star examined state financial reports four years ago, Kansas City has closed half its schools, trimmed thousands of jobs and eliminated hundreds of contracts while reducing annual expenditures by \$125 million.

That included cutting \$10 million in annual building operation.

Cutting \$9 million in transportation.

Cutting \$6 million in administrative costs, and more than \$1 million a year in legal fees.

In those four categories combined, the district cut costs by 30 percent over the past four years. The other districts on average increased spending by 14 percent in the same categories.

The problem, though, is that Kansas City's average daily attendance fell 39 percent over the same difficult stretch.

Consequently, the district's combined per-pupil costs in those spending categories remained the highest and far above the average costs of the area's other nine largest Missouri districts: North Kansas City, Lee's Summit, Independence, Blue Springs, Liberty, Park Hill, Raytown, Hickman Mills and Raymore-Peculiar.

The average of the other districts rose 7 percent, from \$2,222 to \$2,387 per pupil, while Kansas City's per-pupil costs rose by 14 percent, \$3,811 to \$4,362.

"It's pretty obvious our per-pupil costs are high," Superintendent Steve Green said. But Kansas City, like St. Louis, has extra demands above most other districts, he said.

For instance, special programs for high-needs students require more administrators. Schools need more security. The benefits of closing schools will be lagging until the district's repurposing process sells more schools.

“A lot of the costs are a direct result of the population we serve — the degree of difficulty,” Green said.

St. Louis cut \$25 million in the same out-of-classroom categories since 2007, but also lost students, seeing its per-pupil costs in the four categories combined rise from \$4,302 to \$4,691 — both more than Kansas City.

While Kansas City’s budget fixes have played a key role in the district’s quest to regain public confidence, the continued outward migration of families shows how far it has to go.

The mounting budget imbalances revealed four years ago would actually worsen before they got better.

When former Superintendent John Covington arrived in 2009, the district’s administrative costs were rising, despite the dropping enrollment, to a high of \$27.5 million.

Its plant operation costs would peak in 2010 at \$39.1 million. And legal fees averaged \$3.4 million a year — three times more than even larger districts — before finally dropping to \$1 million in 2011.

The cuts Kansas City made between 2010 and 2011 were brutal and necessary, according to several independent accounts, including the state auditor and the state education department.

But the ramifications ran deep, said Tony Stansberry, the state’s regional school improvement supervisor.

The turmoil in closing so many schools and shuffling so many students and programs disrupted classrooms and probably contributed to a drop in state test performance a year ago, he said.

“I would’ve liked to have seen them focused more on student achievement,” Stansberry said. “I thought they were.”

But the impact of Covington’s transformation plan hit hard. The dip in test scores put the provisionally accredited district’s status in jeopardy. After Covington abruptly left for Detroit in August, the state school board acted on Education Commissioner Chris Nicastro’s recommendation and declared the district unaccredited effective Jan. 1.

“The things that were done (to fix the out-of-balance budget) needed to be done,” Stansberry said.

He was speaking from the latest monthly presentation by the state and the district in their joint campaign to get the district performing at an accredited level.

“They had to fix that first,” he said.

Covington, recognizing the academic ground that was lost, reloaded for 2011-2012 with his “Transformation Phase II” — a plan and a name that is carrying on under Green.

In every direction, however, the district is waging its battle against budget extremes.

The district’s local tax levy, unmoved in 17 years, is now the lowest among the top 10 districts at \$4.95.

It is next to the lowest in local tax dollars received per pupil, but garners more grants and federal dollars in support of its large population of low-income students, the highest percentage in the area.

Overall it has the most revenue to spend per pupil, but has to spend millions of dollars more than the other districts on special education and on English language learners.

Its eroding enrollment, coupled with the number of special programs, saddles Kansas City with a much lower ratio of students per administrator than the other districts.

Districts closest to Kansas City with low ratios are Hickman Mills and Raytown — districts that are either flat in enrollment or losing students and also have comparatively high populations of low-income and special education students.

Under these circumstances, the district had to rein in out-of-classroom costs like the over-the-top legal fees, board President Airick Leonard West said.

The district has created an in-house litigation team, reducing some of the fees it was paying outside law firms, West said. It also is fighting more cases rather than agreeing to expensive settlements.

“As long as there was the perception that we would provide inappropriate payouts and as long as we primarily relied on external counsel for our litigation needs, we were always going to have exorbitant legal expenses,” West said.

Those were unnecessary costs, he said, that drained away funds the district needed to support some of its key reform strategies, like providing pre-kindergarten classrooms and early college credit programs.

Chief Financial Officer Al Tunis has presented a preliminary budget for 2012-13 that proposes \$13 million in operation reductions as part of an overall projection to cut \$21 million in expenditures.

He guaranteed the district, for the third straight year, will execute a balanced budget that does not draw on reserves.

“We are a financially stable district,” he said.

It will be important to find cuts outside of classrooms, especially with plans to add alternative school programming and to invest more in supporting federal grant programs for turning around low-performing schools, Tunis said.

The district is holding public meetings to talk about bus routes and to consider going to three morning bell times to save as much \$1.5 million a year.

Green also has been reducing the size of the central office administration team.

The district is hoping for some relief. Its enrollment decline has been leveling, and Tunis is projecting it will at least remain flat next year, and possibly grow — depending in part on the shuffling enrollment between competing charter schools.

Some major charter schools are closing, but others are opening or expanding.

It also would help if the district could boost its levy from the lowest in the area, but that would require the voters’ trust — something that Green knows still has to be earned.

“The degree of difficulty is not going to change,” he said. “But if we gain more efficiencies providing more opportunities for our students...I hope we build a strong case for a district that is regaining public confidence.”

To reach Joe Robertson, call 816-234-4789 or send email to jrobertson@kcstar.com.

ENROLLMENT 2006-2007

Kansas City	24,449
North Kansas City	17,553
Lee's Summit	16,742
Blue Springs	13,502
Independence	10,718
Park Hill	9,765
Liberty	9,120
Raytown	8,742
Hickman Mills	6,949
Raymore-Peculiar	5,638
Average (minus KC)	10,969

ENROLLMENT 2010-2011

North Kansas City	18,530
Lee's Summit	17,524
Kansas City	15,826
Blue Springs	13,905
Independence	13,680
Liberty	10,703
Park Hill	10,198
Raytown	8,537
Hickman Mills	6,131
Raymore-Peculiar	5,910
Average (minus KC)	11,679

AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE 2006-2007

	(Pct of enrollment)
Kansas City	94.4
North Kansas City	91.9
Lee's Summit	92.9
Blue Springs	96.1
Independence	99.2
Park Hill	94.3
Liberty	97.5
Raytown	99.8
Hickman Mills	101.5
Raymore-Peculiar	99.8
Average (minus KC)	10,533

AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE 2010-2011

	(Pct of enrollment)
North Kansas City	95.2
Lee's Summit	95.3
Kansas City	88.8
Independence	99.5
Blue Springs	96.7
Liberty	97.7
Park Hill	95
Raytown	96.2
Hickman Mills	92.3
Raymore-Peculiar	95.4
Average (minus KC)	95.9

NOTES: KC's poor attendance rate shown in difference between ADA and enrollment.

TAX LEVY 2007-2008

North Kansas City	5.89
Lee's Summit	5.86
Liberty	5.64
Hickman Mills	5.54
Blue Springs	5.34
Park Hill	5.3
Independence	5.08
Raymore-Peculiar	5.04
Kansas City	4.95
Raytown	4.64
Average (minus KC)	5.37

TAX LEVY 2011-2012

Hickman Mills	6.32
Raytown	6.32
Lee's Summit	6.11
Liberty	6.1
North Kansas City	5.89
Blue Springs	5.73
Independence	5.58
Park Hill	5.41
Raymore-Peculiar	5.04
Kansas City	4.95
Average (minus KC)	5.83

NOTES: Kansas City's unchanged. Also unchanged were Ray-Pec and North KC. Other districts increased, the biggest being Raytown and Hickman Mills.

LOCAL TAX DOLLARS PER PUPIL 2007-2008

North Kansas City	8,019
Park Hill	7,345
Lee's Summit	6,099
Liberty	5,182
Blue Springs	5,163
Independence	4,153
Raytown	4,019
Raymore-Peculiar	3,873
Hickman Mills	3,722
Kansas City	2,783
Average (minus KC)	5,286

LOCAL TAX DOLLARS PER PUPIL 2011-2012

Park Hill	8,351
North Kansas City	6,981
Lee's Summit	6,408
Blue Springs	5,463
Liberty	5,267
Raytown	4,889
Hickman Mills	4,370
Raymore-Peculiar	4,268
Kansas City	3,995
Independence	3,910
Average (minus KC)	5,545

	EXPENDITURES PER PUPIL 2006-2007	pct of revenue federal	EXPENDITURES PER PUPIL 2011-2012	pct of revenue federal	
Kansas City	13,912	14	Kansas City	14,556	24
Hickman Mills	10,221	8	Hickman Mills	11,561	18
Liberty	9,418	3	Park Hill	10,335	6
Park Hill	9,093	4	North Kansas City	9,508	9
Independence	9,073	12	Raytown	9,216	13
North Kansas City	8,753	5	Liberty	9,122	9
Lee's Summit	8,631	3	Lee's Summit	9,058	8
Raytown	8,319	7	Independence	8,902	18
Blue Springs	8,303	4	Blue Springs	8,446	10
Raymore-Peculiar	7,470	4	Raymore-Peculiar	7,799	10
Average (minus KC)	8,809	5.6	Average (minus KC)	9,327	11

NOTES: Federal dollars, including stimulus, increased Title I for free-and-reduced lunch students, supporting some of the increase in spending

	AVERAGE TEACHER SALARIES 2006-2007	AVERAGE TEACHER SALARIES 2010-2011
Park Hill	53,782	59,288
Independence	50,516	52,526
Lee's Summit	49,649	51,875
Blue Springs	49,503	51,798
Liberty	47,940	51,002
North Kansas City	47,076	49,841
Kansas City	45,910	48,548
Hickman Mills	45,656	47,808
Raytown	43,239	45,422
Raymore-Peculiar	41,689	45,150
Average (minus KC)	47,672	50,251

AVERAGE ADMINISTRATOR SALARIES 2006-2007

Park Hill	96,735	Park Hill	103,644
Independence	90,047	Blue Springs	95,666
North Kansas City	89,305	Lee's Summit	95,303
Lee's Summit	88,809	Independence	94,318
Liberty	88,720	North Kansas City	93,271
Hickman Mills	86,187	Raytown	92,448
Raytown	85,598	Hickman Mills	91,874
Blue Springs	85,154	Raymore-Peculiar	86,824
Kansas City	80,586	Kansas City	85,303
Raymore-Peculiar	78,299	Liberty	82,294
Average (minus KC)	87,650	Average (minus KC)	92,849

AVERAGE ADMINISTRATOR SALARIES 2010-2011**RATIO STUDENTS PER ADMINISTRATOR 2006-2007**

Park Hill	287	Blue Springs	273
Blue Springs	273	Lee's Summit	254
Lee's Summit	241	Independence	240
Raymore-Peculiar	226	North Kansas City	238
Liberty	222	Liberty	236
North Kansas City	220	Park Hill	232
Independence	203	Raymore-Peculiar	209
Hickman Mills	192	Raytown	207
Raytown	188	Hickman Mills	178
Kansas City	149	Kansas City	165
Average (minus KC)	228	Average (minus KC)	230

RATIO STUDENTS PER ADMINISTRATOR 2010-2011

NOTES: Districts with declining enrollment (KC and Hickman Mills) trend to the bottom. Growing school districts trend to the top.

PERCENT OF INSTRUCTION EXPENDITURES DEDICATED TO SPECIAL EDUCATION AND CULTURALLY DIFFERENT COMPENSATORY EDUCATION/ TOTAL COST IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS

	2006-2007	2010-2011
Kansas City	28	29
North Kansas City	50.9	31.6
Hickman Mills	21	28
Independence	21	27
Raytown	9.8	13.1
Lee's Summit	19	23
Park Hill	10.9	24.3
Blue Springs	9.3	21
Raymore-Peculiar	18	22
Liberty	16.5	15.1
Average (minus KC)	18	20
	9.7	12.4
	15	16
	3.8	4.5
	10	15
	4.8	11.3
	17	15
	10.6	8.8
		21
		13.7

NOTES: KC leads districts with high minority/ FRL/ ELL populations who spend disproportionate costs on specialized programs. Generally the burden increased for everyone since 2007.

TRANSPORTATION COSTS PER PUPIL/TOTAL COST IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS

	2006-2007	2010-2011
Kansas City	957	938
Independence	22.1	13.2
North Kansas City	572	626
Blue Springs	6.1	8.5
Lee's Summit	524	581
Park Hill	8.4	3.3
Liberty	510	561
Raymore-Peculiar	6.6	3.2
Hickman Mills	487	533
Raytown	7.6	9.4
Average (minus KC)	482	518
	4.4	5
	4.3	6.7
	2.6	4.8
	3.2	7
	3.1	3.1
	480	509
	5.1	5.7

NOTES: Kansas City has made large cuts in costs, but still much higher per pupil than other districts. Built-in problem would be that smaller enrollment is still scattered over the same district boundaries.

LEGAL COSTS PER PUPIL/AVG ANNUAL COST 2003-2007		LEGAL COSTS PER PUPIL/TOTAL COST 2010-2011	
Kansas City	96 2.4 million	Kansas City	74 1.04 million
Hickman Mills	41 282,398	Hickman Mills	39 223,365
Independence	24 257,631	Independence	31 426,880
Blue Springs	23 186,743	Park Hill	21 199,810
Park Hill	20 177,884	Blue Springs	19 253,641
Raytown	16 134,758	Lee's Summit	17 281,039
Liberty	15 120,560	Liberty	13 132,966
Lee's Summit	13 187,583	Raytown	13 106,975
Raymore-Peculiar	8 42,219	North Kansas City	11 197,053
North Kansas City	6 93,648	Raymore-Peculiar	9 51,916
Average (minus KC)	18 164,824	Average (minus KC)	19 208,183

NOTES: KC's 2011 totals represent a significant cost reduction. ASBRs from 2007 to 2010 showed KC's contracted legal costs had soared even higher , averaging \$3.4 million a year, costing \$174 per pupil.

EXECUTIVE, BUILDING AND BUSINESS ADMIN COSTS PER PUPIL		EXECUTIVE, BUILDING AND BUSINESS ADMIN COSTS PER PUPIL	
AVG ANNUAL COST 2003-2007		TOTAL COST 2010-2011	
Kansas City	1,104 25.5 million	Kansas City	1,361 19.1 million
Park Hill	991 8.9 million	Park Hill	1,360 13.2 million
Raymore-Peculiar	894 4.5 million	Hickman Mills	951 5.4 million
Hickman Mills	792 5.5 million	Raytown	822 6.8 million
Independence	723 7.8 million	North Kansas City	771 13.6 million
North Kansas City	663 10.6 million	Independence	769 10.5 million
Raytown	654 5.6 million	Raymore-Peculiar	685 3.9 million
Lee's Summit	630 9.3 million	Lee's Summit	676 11.3 million
Blue Springs	578 7.3 million	Liberty	671 7 million
Liberty	460 3.7 million	Blue Springs	555 7.5 million
Average (minus KC)	709 7 million	Average (minus KC)	807 8.8 million

NOTES: KC's costs rose through 2009 where it peaked at \$27.5 million and \$1,589 per pupil. Costs have fallen since then. Districts of declining enrollment tend to have higher costs than growing districts.

OPERATION OF PLANT COSTS PER PUPIL/TOTAL COST 2006-2007		OPERATION OF PLANT COSTS PER PUPIL/TOTAL COST 2011-2012			
Liberty	1,994	15.8 million	Kansas City	1,991	28 million
Kansas City	1,647	38 million	Park Hill	1,355	13.1 million
Park Hill	1,202	11.1 million	Raytown	1,228	10.1 million
Independence	1,182	12.6 million	Independence	1,223	16.6 million
Raymore-Peculiar	1,015	5.1 million	Hickman Mills	1,099	6.2 million
Hickman Mills	966	6.8 million	Lee's Summit	1,072	17.9 million
North Kansas City	922	14.9 million	Liberty	1,009	10.6 million
Lee's Summit	919	14.3 million	North Kansas City	997	17.6 million
Raytown	896	7.7 million	Blue Springs	944	12.7 million
Blue Springs	863	11.2 million	Raymore-Peculiar	822	4.6 million
Average (minus KC)	1,106	11.1 million	Average (minus KC)	1,083	12.1 million

NOTES: KC's costs peaked in 2010 at \$39.1 million, \$2,360 per pupil, so 2011 was a drop of more than \$10 million. But enrollment decline has overall still increased the cost per pupil.

TOTAL COSTS COMBINED TRANSPORTATION, LEGAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND PLANT OPERATION IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS

	2007	2011 difference
Kansas City	88	61.3
North Kansas City	34	40.8
Lee's Summit	31.4	36.2
Independence	26.8	36
Blue Springs	25.3	27.2
Park Hill	24.6	31.5
Liberty	23.9	22.5
Raytown	16.5	20.1
Hickman Mills	15.8	15
Raymore-Peculiar	12.2	11.9
Average (minus KC)	23.4	26.8

Housing Costs, Zoning, and Access to High-Scoring Schools

Jonathan Rothwell

“Limiting the development of inexpensive housing in affluent neighborhoods and jurisdictions fuels economic and racial segregation and contributes to significant differences in school performance across the metropolitan landscape.”

Findings

An analysis of national and metropolitan data on public school populations and state standardized test scores for 84,077 schools in 2010 and 2011 reveals that:

- **Nationwide, the average low-income student attends a school that scores at the 42nd percentile on state exams, while the average middle/high-income student attends a school that scores at the 61st percentile on state exams.** This *school* test-score gap is even wider between black and Latino students and white students. There is increasingly strong evidence—from this report and other studies—that low-income students benefit from attending higher-scoring schools.
- **Northeastern metro areas with relatively high levels of economic segregation exhibit the highest school test-score gaps between low-income students and other students.** Controlling for regional factors such as size, income inequality, and racial/ethnic diversity associated with school test-score gaps, Southern metro areas such as Washington and Raleigh, and Western metros like Portland and Seattle, stand out for having smaller-than-expected test-score gaps between schools attended by low-income and middle/high-income students.
- **Across the 100 largest metropolitan areas, housing costs an average of 2.4 times as much, or nearly \$11,000 more per year, near a high-scoring public school than near a low-scoring public school.** This *housing cost gap* reflects that home values are \$205,000 higher on average in the neighborhoods of high-scoring versus low-scoring schools. Near high-scoring schools, typical homes have 1.5 additional rooms and the share of housing units that are rented is roughly 30 percentage points lower than in neighborhoods near low-scoring schools.
- **Large metro areas with the least restrictive zoning have housing cost gaps that are 40 to 63 percentage points lower than metro areas with the most exclusionary zoning.** Eliminating exclusionary zoning in a metro area would, by reducing its housing cost gap, lower its school test-score gap by an estimated 4 to 7 percentiles—a significant share of the observed gap between schools serving the average low-income versus middle/higher-income student.

As the nation grapples with the growing gap between rich and poor and an economy increasingly reliant on formal education, public policies should address housing market regulations that prohibit all but the very affluent from enrolling their children in high-scoring public schools in order to promote individual social mobility and broader economic security.

Kansas City, MO-KS metro area

Why school access matters

This report finds that anti-density zoning laws – local regulations that discourage inexpensive housing – lead to inflated housing costs near high-scoring schools, relative to housing costs near low-scoring schools. This housing costs gap drives economic segregation across schools and a higher test score gap between the schools attended by low-income and middle/high income students. Research shows that low-income students are more likely to succeed in higher-scoring schools, so reducing the financial and regulatory barriers to residential and school integration should be a priority.

Kansas City's school access rankings

ZONING RESTRICTIONS

58 out of 100

The metro area has the 58th most restrictive zoning, based on the prevalence of land-use law firms in the state. Restrictive zoning discourages inexpensive housing, driving economic segregation.

ECONOMIC SEGREGATION

35 out of 100

43% of low-income students would have to change ZIP codes to achieve an equal distribution across schools, ranking the metro area the 35th most economically segregated.

HOUSING COST GAP

55 out of 100

Housing costs near high-scoring elementary schools are 2.1 times higher than housing costs near low-scoring schools, ranking the metro area the 55th highest on this measure.

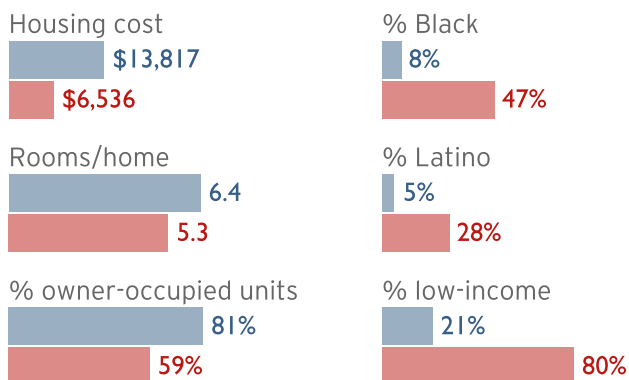
TEST SCORE GAP

43 out of 100

The average middle/high-income student attends a school that ranks 23 percentage points higher on state exams than the school an average low-income student attends, ranking the metro area the 43rd highest on this measure.

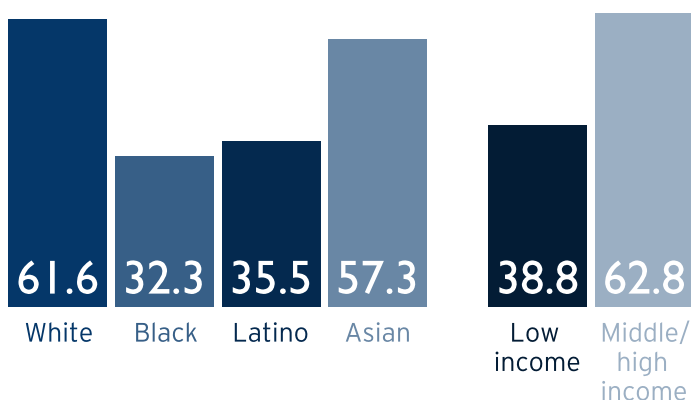
Kansas City school comparisons

These charts compare the average top quintile school (blue) and the average bottom-quintile school (red) in Kansas City across six categories. Quintiles are based on scores of standardized tests taken between 2010 and 2011.



Kansas City test scores by group

School percentile rankings in Kansas City for the average student, broken down by race and income. School test scores are adjusted by state average and ranked nationally.



Data notes

Notes: Housing data for schools are based on Census data from hypothetical attendance zones near schools. Housing costs are based on a weighted average of rental and ownership costs.

Source: From Brookings publication, "Housing Costs, Zoning, and Access to High-Scoring Schools." Data are derived from Brookings analysis of data from GreatSchools, the National Center for Education Statistics, various state education agencies, the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, and lawyers.com. See report for details.

Repurposing Schools Gives Life to Vacant Buildings

BY: [Dylan Scott](#) | May 7, 2012

As student populations and school budgets have shrunk, classes are emptying out of school buildings, consolidating into others and leaving their former homes as vacant lots in neighborhoods nationwide. According to the [National Centers for Education Statistics](#), more than 1,900 public schools (out of nearly 99,000) closed during the 2010-2011 school year.

Municipalities and school districts are then left with huge assets in an anemic real estate market, unable to draw property taxes or any other revenue while forced to spend money to prevent those empty buildings from falling into disrepair.

So, some have taken action: district-wide initiatives in Kansas City, Mo., and Tulsa, Okla., have aimed to turn these abandoned school sites into financial opportunities that will simultaneously improve the surrounding neighborhoods.

Kansas City has closed nearly 40 schools in

recent years, and city officials estimate those properties could be worth up to \$15 million. Tulsa shuttered 14 schools last year and district leaders also see those buildings as assets potentially worth millions. An entry into the National Invitational Public Policy Challenge (in which *Governing* was a sponsor) produced a plan to repurpose closed schools in Philadelphia (the city [plans to vacate](#) 64 in the next few years) and bring in up to \$20 million.

There are sometimes administrative hurdles to clear before local authorities can act: according to the [National Clearinghouse of Educational Facilities](#) (NCEF), laws in some states (such as North Carolina) require the state to have a “first-look” option on a building to be sold, while others (such as Wisconsin) call for a review of historical significance before a facility is sold or demolished.

After those considerations are cleared, cities and districts must decide what to do with the unoccupied schools. They could lease or sell to another educational body, such as a charter or private school; lease or sell to a private company or government agency for purposes unrelated to education; or even demolish the building and simply sell the land.



The exterior of Askew Elementary School in Kansas City, Mo. The school district plans to sell the school within the next year. Photo: Kansas City Public Schools

Each scenario presents its own challenges, from a practical and political perspective. Before the recession, many districts would try to retain empty properties with the hopes of re-filling them later, Judy Marks, NCEF's director, told *Governing*. But the economic downturn, and the accompanying fiscal strains, made that less feasible. Still, officials must be sensitive to neighborhood concerns when deciding to shutter a school and what to do next.

"Closing a school building in a community is always a traumatic affair," Marks said.

The Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) Repurposing Initiative and Tulsa's Project Schoolhouse represent one path forward for localities confronting this problem. After consolidating student bodies and vacating school buildings in recent years, these cities are putting those schools on the market, searching for potential buyers who will reuse the properties for projects that will benefit the community.

KCPS has closed 39 schools. Eight have been held for future use, and one has been refurbished to serve as a professional development center for the city's teachers. That leaves 30 schools to be sold as part of the Repurposing Initiative. 1.8 million square feet. 130 acres. Up to \$15 million in real estate value.

Shannon Jaax, the initiative's director, came from the city planning office to lead the effort in January 2011. Over the next six months, she and her staff held neighborhood meetings to familiarize residents with their plans and gather input about what kind of uses they should target in potential sellers.

"We integrated community participation in every level of decision-making," Jaax said. "We

hope that will lead to ultimately better results for the long-term use at the sites."



The exterior of Seven Oaks Elementary School in Kansas City, Mo. A deal is in the works to sell the school to a developer, who will refurbish it as affordable senior housing. Photo: Kansas City Public Schools

The school district then solicited proposals for three buildings that were deemed ready to be sold; all three have been sold as of May 2012. Two were purchased by charter schools, and the other will be renovated as affordable senior housing. Final sales figures are not yet public for two schools, but one, Longan Elementary

School, sold for \$1 million. About \$250,000 will pay off the leftover bonds on the property, and the

remaining \$750,000 will go straight into the school district's coffers.

KCPS plans to put another 15 schools on the market by the end of the year, Jaax said. Ten more proposals have been received, including more conversions to charter schools and senior housing. For those sites that have garnered no immediate interest, the district is offering their facilities to community clubs and youth programs to use in the interim for a small fee. In the next six to nine months, Jaax said KCPS will evaluate the state of those properties and to decide whether to retain (or "mothball") them for future use or demolish the structures and start over.

Tulsa's Project Schoolhouse aims to address a similar need with a similar plan. Tulsa Public Schools closed 14 buildings last year. Much like the KCPS Repurposing Initiative, the district sought community buy-in before shopping newly vacant schools to potential buyers, said Chris Payne, a district spokesperson. One of the primary concerns heard from constituents, he said, was that they didn't want an empty building in their neighborhoods. [Studies](#) conducted for Philadelphia have estimated that vacant lots drive down surrounding property values by as much as 20 percent.

A school district acting as a property manager has some challenges: school officials must be acutely aware of the local real estate market to ensure they get the most out of their assets. "This is not a fire sale," Payne said. "We're not giving them away."

Tulsa has already sold two buildings to local private schools, including the Town & Country School, which serves special needs students. The University of Tulsa has expressed interest in Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, located near its campus. A professional development program for district teachers is moving from Fulton Learning Academy (which was sold to Town & County) to Roosevelt Elementary School. Tulsa Public Schools started out with a goal of saving \$5 million by closing schools, Payne said, and while it hasn't reached that goal, it has made progress: \$2.7 million saved through reduced maintenance and the revenue from sales.

The need for repurposing has already caught the attention of future policymakers: one of the entries in the National Invitational Public Policy Challenge, presented by a group of graduate students from the Fels Institute of Government at the University of Pennsylvania, offered a similar solution for Philadelphia, which is planning to close more than 60 school buildings in the next few years. The team of four looked at several existing programs, including the KCPS Repurposing Initiative, when developing their plan.

[Their model](#) is intended to be more efficient and financially self-sustaining. Authority to sell would be transferred from the school district to the city's redevelopment authority. More promising properties would be sold first and those funds are used to update less appealing assets -- a "portfolio" approach that ensures all assets are eventually sold, said grad students Sarah Besnoff and Aaron Tjoa, to *Governing*.

"It could work anywhere," Besnoff said, "and it makes sense for any vacant public buildings." The team has held meetings with city officials and state legislators to put its plan (or some version of it) into action.

They estimate the two-year selling and renovating process would earn up to \$20 million in additional revenue than simply marketing easy-to-sell properties and then maintaining or demolishing the others. With the Philadelphia School District facing a \$186 million shortfall next year, according to the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#), that additional income would be welcome.

Those financial incentives, and the reality that holding onto vacated buildings is fiscally untenable, have led more districts to consider these repurposing initiatives, said Reggie Felton, assistant executive director at the National School Boards Association. Acting as a real estate agent isn't a natural role for school districts, he said, but it's one they're willing to play for now.

"Districts generally don't want to get into the business of being a landlord," Felton said. "But it is a growing issue right now, and they're certainly going to take advantage of that opportunity."

This article was printed from: <http://www.governing.com/news/local/gov-repurposing-schools-offers-new-life-to-vacant-buildings.html>

2012-02-20

Brad Pitt's foundation to help redevelop Bancroft School

KEVIN COLLISON

The Kansas City Star

A bond forged in storm-ravaged New Orleans between actor Brad Pitt and a local architecture firm is bearing fruit in Kansas City — and may show the path forward to reusing dozens of empty schools.

The long-closed Bancroft School at 4300 Tracy Ave. will be renovated into affordable apartments and a community center with the aid of the Make It Right Foundation founded by Pitt, a Hollywood superstar with deep Missouri roots, and the creative talents of BNIM Architects, his helper in New Orleans.

“Brad Pitt is a frustrated architect,” said Bob Berkebile, a founding partner at BNIM. “If he wasn’t making millions as an actor, he’d be an architect.”

The \$14 million project calls for the existing 103-year-old brick school building to be converted into 29 affordable apartments with a 6,250-square-foot community center on the main floor. A new building with 21 apartments will also be developed.

The community area will house the office of the Manheim Neighborhood Association and provide space for outreach programs offered by Truman Medical Center. A foot patrol station for the Kansas City Police Department also will be part of the mix.

The development also will include a secure garage for 50 vehicles that will feature an environmentally friendly green roof.

The two-story school was closed a dozen years ago and occupies a 2.7-acre site. Currently, the Kansas City School District has 38 closed buildings scattered throughout the city, including 26 shut down two years ago in a major downsizing.

Backers of the Bancroft renovation say it could be a good model for how to redevelop other closed schools. The district had set a deadline of last week for proposals to reuse or “repurpose” its inventory of shuttered buildings.

“I hope it will inform the other repurposing projects,” Berkebile said. “We’ve submitted proposals for three schools.”

BNIM was one of several firms chosen by Pitt and the Make It Right Foundation in 2007 to create designs for affordable homes that could be built in New Orleans’ Lower 9th Ward, a neighborhood devastated by Hurricane Katrina. About 150 homes have been built so far.

One of BNIM’s architects on that New Orleans endeavor, Tim Duggan, wound up working for the foundation. That was the bridge to the Bancroft project, the first renovation done by

the foundation and only the second project outside New Orleans, the other being in Newark, N.J.

“Tim and BNIM got the attention of Make It Right that a catalytic development was needed for the Green Impact Zone,” Berkebile said. “It seemed like a perfect partnership.

“A lot has happened in the Green Impact Zone, but unfortunately there hasn’t been a lot of concrete development for both the residents and the community and investors from the outside.”

Pitt was out of the country, Duggan said, and unable to attend a Monday press event announcing the Bancroft development.

The entire project will be built to LEED Platinum environmental standards and marks the first major project to be built in the Green Impact Zone, which was designated and funded with the help of U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver about two years ago.

Cleaver described the Bancroft redevelopment as an excellent example of a public-private partnership working to revive a poor neighborhood.

“We welcome Make It Right to Kansas City and the Green Impact Zone, and we thank all of the many, many people who have worked so tirelessly to make this day a reality. This is one more step forward, a very big one, in keeping jobs, creating jobs and continuing to boost the local economy.”

Funding for the project includes federal historic tax credits, state low-income housing tax credits, state charitable contribution tax credits and \$2.3 million from the Make It Right Foundation. US Bank Community Development Corp. is assisting with the financing.

“I can tell you, on this day, mayors across the nation are jealous that here in the heart of Kansas City we will build a model of sustainable urban reinvestment,” Mayor Sly James said.

Rents will range from \$470 a month for a one-bedroom apartment to \$695 for a three-bedroom. The project also will include renovation of the historic auditorium, which will be used for resident and community functions.

Berkebile said the redevelopment of Bancroft School will restore the historic building’s place as an anchor to its surrounding community.

“This is a new kind of educational lever,” he said. “By reusing schools, it rebuilds human capacity into the neighborhood. Not just the new residences, but the community it serves.”

About 100 residents and reporters crowded into a dingy former classroom without power for a press conference attended by Cleaver and James to learn about the plan for the old school, which neighborhood leader Sandra Hayes described as an eyesore and target for vandals since its closing in 2000.

Last year, the neighborhood association began a clean-up project for the property that, along with police help, began to make a difference in the area. Hayes, the president of the Historic Manheim Neighborhood Association, said crime dropped 26 percent from 2010.

Now, the prospects of a complete redevelopment promises even more positive news.

“This project will help because it will become a community campus with the Truman Medical Center programs, senior activities, day care, job training, arts and crafts — that will change the whole fabric of the neighborhood,” Hayes said.

“Our community wants to take control back, and by doing that, we’re uplifting the community.”

Although Pitt wasn’t among those attending the announcement, Hayes was confident the popular actor would come by sometime.

“We’ll see him eventually,” she said. “This is his foundation.”

As for whether the redevelopment of Bancroft will launch further renovations of vacant schools, James pointed out the project had been the product of a unique set of circumstances.

“For this to happen elsewhere, we need other players, which are difficult to come by, but maybe this will be the catalyst to get us there.”

Revitalizing our Urban Neighborhoods through the Urban Neighborhood Initiative

Co-Champions: Terry Dunn, JE Dunn Construction and Brent Stewart, United Way of Greater Kansas City

Revitalizing the urban core one neighborhood at a time is the goal of this Big 5 initiative. The plan is to select an area east of Troost, working with the neighborhood and bringing appropriate resources to bear. United Way is partnering with The Chamber in this effort.

Progress to date (April 23, 2012):

- A news conference was held February 27 to announce the selection of the Troost Corridor as the Urban Neighborhood Initiative's first target area.
 - o Boundaries are: Troost on the west and Highway 71 on the east, from 23rd Street to 51st Street.
 - o The target area includes parts of several neighborhoods with strong partnership capabilities.
 - o Selection was made following two well-attended community information meetings, research and data review, and the receipt of 30 letters of interest from east side groups.
- At that same news conference, the formation of a nonprofit to oversee and operate the initiative was announced.
 - o Organized as the Urban Neighborhood Initiative, Inc., the mission of the new charitable entity is to build strong, collaborative partnerships to improve community health and safety, education and prosperity.
 - o The UNI board includes:
 - Terry Dunn, UNI Co-Champion, JE Dunn Construction
 - Brent Stewart, UNI Co-Champion, United Way of Greater Kansas City
 - Jim Heeter, The Chamber
 - Frank Ellis, The Chamber; Swope Community Enterprises
 - Dianne Cleaver, United Way of Greater Kansas City
 - John Bluford III, Truman Medical Centers
 - Michael Chesser, Kansas City Power & Light
 - Fr. Thomas Curran, Rockhurst University
 - John Derry, Kansas City Southern Industries
 - David Disney, Metropolitan Community College
 - Mayor Sly James, KCMO Mayor's Office
 - Chief Darryl Forte, KCMO Police Department
 - Gwen Grant, Urban League of Greater Kansas City
 - Rev. Wallace Hartsfield II, Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church,
 - Mark Jorgenson, Civic Council of Greater Kansas City; US Bank
 - David Lockton, Lockton Companies
 - Chancellor Leo Morton, University of Missouri-Kansas City
 - Roshann Parris, Parris Communications
 - Steve Roling, Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City, and
 - Rev. Eric D. Williams, Calvary Temple Baptist Church.
- March 6, a public meeting for residents and stakeholders in the target area was held. Organizers expected approximately 200 people; 400 showed up to discuss the needs and priorities within the corridor.
- Fundraising efforts for UNI, Inc. are underway and are being led by Mike Chesser, KCP&L.

Next steps:

- Continue community conversations with target area stakeholders.
- Develop action plan.
- Organize September Symposium, co-coordinated by Chamber & United Way
 - o Present draft plan to Corridor residents and stakeholders for review and input
 - o Identify existing target area assets, as well as human and financial resources,
 - o Symposium goal: to build regional support and community momentum toward the implementation phase of the UNI.
- Announce revitalization action plan by November 20, 2012.
- Implementation to begin December 2012.



For immediate release

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New York Publisher donates 10,000 books to area second and third graders in four school districts

Kansas City, Mo. - Second- and third-graders in four Kansas City, Mo. school districts will receive two books for their home library thanks to a major donation of 10,000 children's books by [Rosen Publishing, Inc.](#)

The New York-based independent publisher is making the books available to school children in the Kansas City, Hickman Mills, Center and Grandview school districts.

The donation of the books was made Monday by **Roger Rosen**, president and CEO of Rosen Publishing.

"Today's announcement is the first in a series of significant investments Rosen Publishing will make in communities across the country to help change the literacy landscape by increasing the number of books a child owns and at times providing the first book in that child's home collection," said Rosen.

"Studies have shown that book ownership can not only foster a life-long love of reading but also increase significantly the educational outcomes for children," added Rosen.

Donation of the books was publicly acknowledged by **Kansas City Mayor Sly James** at a Monday event held at the **Kansas City Central Library**. The value of book donation is \$175,000.

The mayor is actively encouraging the whole community to focus on helping children read at grade level. Mayor Sly's [Turn the Page KC](#) initiative will help prevent summer learning loss by promoting reading during summer.

Mr. Rosen acknowledged **State Rep. Jason Holsman** for his role in co-developing the concept for the book donation and for connecting the partners from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

The Local Investment Commission (LINC) - a Kansas City-area non-profit which works closely with the four public school districts - will distribute the books before school is out.

The book distribution will also include information about summer reading programs available at the [Kansas City Public Library](#) and the [Mid-Continent Public Library](#). Both library systems have strong summer reading programs.

The event was attended by school officials from the four districts along with leaders of the Kansas City Public Library and Mid-Continent Public Library which serve children and families in the four school districts.



We hope your family enjoys these new books for your very own home library!

Reading with family is a fun way for students to stay sharp over the summer so they can be ready for the coming school year. The more students read — with parents, relatives, friends, or just themselves — the better prepared they will be.

What is Turn the Page KC?

Turn the Page KC is an initiative of the Mayor’s Office to improve the reading skills and outcomes of third graders by engaging the community as volunteers.

Visit www.kcmayor.org for more information and to get involved.

What is the Local Investment Commission (LINC)?

LINC is a non-profit providing Before and After School Programs at over 60 school-based Caring Communities sites in the Kansas City area.

Through Caring Communities, LINC works with community members and organizations to promote citizen-led decision-making. Visit www.kclinc.org for more information.

Where did these books come from?

These books were donated by **Rosen Publishing** to all second- and third-grade students in the Center, Grandview, Hickman Mills, and Kansas City school districts.

Where can I get more summer reading information?

The Mid-Continent Public Library and Kansas City Public Library have summer reading programs starting soon.

Mid-Continent Public Library:

www.mymcpl.org
(816) 836-5200

Kansas City Public Library:

www.kclibrary.org
(816) 701-3400



Community Schools The App for 21st Century Education

This is how we think of schools today



Serving a single purpose
A binary, analog system of delivery:
Teachers teach
Students learn

This is a 21st Century Community School The *Smart* School



Community schools serve as the vehicle that enables school and communities to connect, collaborate, and create. Children gain access to more enriching and impactful educational experiences and health and social support. **Communities and schools leverage** their shared physical and human assets to help kids succeed. schools.