

LINC Commission Meeting

January 27, 2014



Black History Month 2014

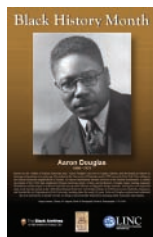
Celebrating the Arts



Eta Barnett



Count Basie



Aaron Douglas



Langston Hughes



Julia Lee



Charlie Parker



Gordon Parks

For Black History Month 2014 we remember African American musicians, writers and visual artists from Kansas City and the surrounding region who contributed significantly to the cultural life of the United States during the 20th century.

These artists helped America recognize itself as never before – to see itself in portrayals of black lives, hear itself in black modes of expression, and feel itself in their vital, creative pulse.

Their work helped American culture take flight as a global influence and continues to enrich not only the lives of their fellow Americans but those of people beyond its shores.

The Local Investment Commission (LINC) produced these educational posters in partnership with the Kansas City Public Library and the Black Archives of Mid-America. This effort celebrates and supports Black History Month from a local perspective.

This book, and books from prior years, can be downloaded at kclinc.org/blackhistory

 The Black Archives
of Mid-America in Kansas City



 **LINC**
Local Investment Commission
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, Jan. 27, 2014 | 4 – 6 pm
Kauffman Foundation
4801 Rockhill Rd.
Kansas City, Mo. 64110

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Announcements
- II. Approvals
 - a. **November minutes (motion)**
- III. School Plans for Unaccredited Districts
 - a. General Review
 - b. Documents
- IV. Superintendent's Report
- V. Summer Reading Report
 - a. Turn the Page KC Update – Munro Richardson
 - b. 2013 results – Leigh Ann Taylor Knight
- VI. Other Reports
 - a. Building the Gigabit City – Aaron Deacon
- VII. Adjournment

The February meeting is Monday, Feb. 24



THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – NOV. 25, 2013

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
Aaron Deacon
Steve Dunn
Herb Freeman
SuEllen Fried
Rob Givens
Anita Gorman

Bart Hakan
Tom Lewin
Rosemary Lowe
Sandy Mayer
Mary Kay McPhee
Richard Morris
David Ross
Bailus Tate

A motion to approve the Oct. 21, 2013, LINC Commission meeting minutes was passed unanimously.

Abe Cole of BKD LLP presented the LINC Fiscal Year 2012-2013 financial audit, A-133 audit, and IRS Form 990, which have been approved by the LINC Finance Committee.

A motion to approve the financial audit, A-133 audit, and IRS Form 990 was passed unanimously.

Superintendents' Report

- **John Ruddy** (Assistant Superintendent, Fort Osage School District) reported the district is again partnering with LINC around holiday family aid events as need has risen over the last few years.
- **Dennis Carpenter** (Superintendent, Hickman Mills School District) reported on the district's education foundation gala last week; the district will be holding strategic planning on Dec. 11-13 to seek community input on developing goals for the next five years.
- **Dale Herl** (Superintendent, Independence School District) reported the district is partnering with Ford Motor Co. to develop a Next Generation Learning Academy to prepare students for careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- **Jerry Kitzi** (Director, Office of Early Learning, Kansas City Public Schools) reported the district received a clean financial audit, its first in many years; is planning to reset school boundaries to maintain a community-school concept; and is planning to bring back middle schools in addition to early learning schools.
- **Todd White** (Superintendent, North Kansas City School District) reported on a recent superintendents meeting on school accreditation in relation to school transfers. The superintendents will present a plan to the state board of education. Discussion followed.
- **Pamela Pearson** (Executive Director, Genesis Promise Academy) reported area charter schools are working together along with bus companies and parents to develop a plan in response to school transfers arising from district nonaccreditation.
- **Dan Clemens** (Assistant Superintendent, North Kansas City School District) reported the district is developing a plan to add additional school days to the academic calendar at certain schools. The plan will be presented to the board in January.

LINC President **Gayle A. Hobbs** introduced a presentation on various LINC community organizing efforts. A video on the Social Actions Committee (SAC20), which was recently honored by the Kansas City, Mo., City Council, was shown.

LINC Community Organizer **Lee Bohannon** led a discussion on LINC's efforts to develop parent and neighborhood leaders by engaging them in one-to-one discussion around family and neighborhood needs in tandem with engagement in school-based services and activities. LINC staff participating included:

- **Jamie Braden**, Attucks Caring Communities Site Coordinator
- **Sheila Marshall**, Pitcher Caring Communities Site Coordinator
- **Jennifer Stone**, Sugar Creek & Fairmount Caring Communities Site Coordinator
- **Sean Akridge**, Site Supervisor
- **Janis Bankston**, Site Supervisor
- **Pam Ealy**, Site Supervisor
- **Steve McClellan**, Site Supervisor
- **Janet Miles-Bartee**, Site Supervisor
- **Candace Cheatem**, Deputy Director

Hobbs announced that **Tim Decker** has been named the Mo. Children's Division director, and **Phyllis Becker** has been named the Mo. Division of Youth Services interim director.

Hobbs reported that several LINC sites participated in the Girls on the Run Fall 5k on Nov. 5 at Arrowhead Stadium. A slide show of the event was shown.

The meeting was adjourned.



Background

Unaccredited schools and the Missouri school transfer law

The issues involving various plans for unaccredited Missouri school districts, and the potential effect of the Missouri school transfer law on Kansas City area school districts, are complex, involved and very fluid.

The materials included here are intended to provide a broad overview of the issue. No endorsement of any particular plan or proposal is intended.

The section includes the following materials:

Kansas City Star articles and editorials

- *“Missouri education commissioner to recommend KC district remain unaccredited”* – Sept. 26, 2013
- *“KC board to sue state over accreditation”* – Dec. 12, 2013
- *“CEE-Trust presents its proposal to remake Kansas City’s public schools”* – Jan. 13, 2014
- *“Missouri Senator files bill urging provisional accreditation for KC schools”* – Jan. 21, 2014
- *“Missouri transfer bills get their first hearing in Missouri”* – Jan. 23, 2014
- *“Kansas City schools deserve our best thinking”* – Bill Eddy, Jan. 7, 2014
- *“Fix state law to help the Kansas City school district serve students”* – Dec. 28, 2013 Editorial

Reorganization plans

Different groups have come forward with different plans to address the potential effect of the Missouri school transfer law or to improve educational opportunities for students in an unaccredited school district or school.

There are three major plans which are available on the Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education website.

- **“The Conditions for Success: Executive Summary”** – A plan developed by CEE-Trust at the request of the Missouri Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education **(Pages 20-29)**
- **“A New Path to Excellence”** – A plan developed by several Missouri school superintendents **(Pages 30-31)**
- **“2014 Kansas City Public School Plan”** – A plan developed by the Kansas City Public School District **(Page 32-40)**

Kansas City Public Schools Planning Data

These pages shows current and closed Kansas City Public schools, enrollment trends, and the number of school aged children living within the school district and the percent attending KCPS schools

Posted on Thu, Sep. 26, 2013

Missouri education commissioner to recommend KC district remain unaccredited

By JOE ROBERTSON
The Kansas City Star

Missouri Education Commissioner Chris Nicastro will recommend that Kansas City Public Schools remain unaccredited this year.

She announced her decision Thursday, casting it across an area-wide sea of concern as Kansas City and its neighboring districts fear future disruption in student transfers.

“These are always difficult decisions,” Nicastro told The Star. But the requests from many area superintendents that Kansas City gain provisional accreditation “were not based on Kansas City’s performance, but on the expediency in stopping student transfers.”

She praised Kansas City’s improvement in the latest state report card, but she held to her position that the district needs to show more sustained improvement before gaining provisional accreditation.

The district’s current improvement remains too tenuous on top of its long history of struggles, despite the competing concerns, she said.

“Our interest has to be what is best for the kids.”

Kansas City Superintendent Steve Green said he had anticipated the commissioner’s decision, but argued again that the district’s improvement has been “dramatic and unprecedented.”

“We strongly believe that based on hard data earned over two years, we have earned provisional accreditation,” he said, reading a prepared statement.

The state school board will take up Kansas City’s request at its next regular meeting, Oct. 22, and Green held out hope that the board will approve it.

Decisions on accreditation are made by the board, but it has usually followed its commissioner’s recommendation.

The state, meanwhile, will carry forward on work with a consulting team to develop a plan for improving the Kansas City district. The state would like to have that plan in place early next year.

Neighboring districts are closely watching the board’s accreditation decision because Kansas City’s unaccredited status could expose the area to potentially damaging effects of a school transfer law in the 2014-2015 school year.

That law allows students in unaccredited districts to transfer to surrounding accredited districts.

The district already has been before the state school board to argue its case for provisional accreditation. Green and his executive cabinet presented their case at the regular meeting Sept. 17 in Jefferson City. Board members asked questions but did not take a vote.

Kansas City, which has been unaccredited since January 2012, thinks it deserves provisional status after it scored well in the provisional range when state report cards were issued in August.

The district earned 60 percent of the points possible, more than the 50 percent required to be considered for provisional accreditation. The district earned many points for improvement in test performance, but 70 percent of its students still scored less than proficient on state tests.

In a letter to Green, Nicastro praised Kansas City's improvement, but noted that the district still scored in the lowest category in four of the five performance test areas.

While Kansas City has argued it deserves provisional for its performance alone, Green also warned that potential student transfers "threaten to destabilize a foundation and results built during the last three years."

The student transfer law is already being applied in the St. Louis area, where the Normandy and Riverview Gardens districts are unaccredited. Roughly one-fourth of the students in those districts sought transfers, putting the districts in financial crises that the state has said will bankrupt Normandy this year if it does not receive state aid.

The law requires the unaccredited districts to cover the costs of tuition and transportation. Receiving districts have also been strained trying to maintain limits on class sizes, with some districts holding town hall meetings during the summer as many residents expressed concerns over receiving students from the failing districts.

Kansas City area districts have held off applying the law because the Missouri Supreme Court is still considering a case from several area districts claiming that the law is unconstitutional. That case is scheduled for a hearing Wednesday, with a ruling expected later this year.

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court upheld the law in a St. Louis area case.

The transfer situation "is like a train coming out of a tunnel right at you," said Grandview's Ralph Teran, one of numerous area superintendents who have asked Kansas City be made provisional.

He said he respects the commissioner, who is "grappling" with a difficult situation. Grandview and other area districts with significant populations of low-income students have made strong gains recently, and Teran thinks the districts are working together to help Kansas City follow suit.

"There is a spirit of interconnectedness across the barriers of suburban and rural," he said. "The transfer issue to me is going to be a barrier to progress. It's really alarming."

Since Kansas City's improved score was announced in August, Nicastro has held to her belief that the district needs to show sustained growth for at least another year, if not two years.

That is what the state's accountability system demands, she said. The problems with the transfer law need to be fixed separately.

"We've got to think long-term," Nicastro said. "Will they be accredited? Will they be unaccredited? All this does is exacerbate people's anxiety. It does not improve conditions for children."

The state has contracted with Indianapolis-based CEE-Trust to develop a long-term plan for improving outcomes for children in Kansas City Public Schools. The \$385,000 contract is being funded by the Kauffman Foundation and the Hall Family Foundation.

The research has begun and CEE-Trust is expected to produce a draft in January, which will be followed by community meetings to help develop it further.

The work with CEE-Trust will continue, Nicastro has said, whether Kansas City remains unaccredited or gets provisional status. She has said she hopes a plan can be developed that will help guide work with other low-performing districts in the state.

The Star's Mará Rose Williams contributed to this report. To reach Joe Robertson, call 816-234-4789 or send email to jrobertson@kcstar.com.

Thu, Dec. 12, 2013

KC board to sue state over accreditation

By JOE ROBERTSON
The Kansas City Star

The Kansas City school board intends to sue the state Friday to try to get provisional accreditation and shield the district from the mounting threat of a student transfer law.

The legal action is necessary, Kansas City school board President Airick Leonard West said, to “protect our scholars from chaos.”

West clarified the board’s intent to The Star after a late afternoon news conference Thursday.

He announced that the district would be seeking an injunction because of a Missouri Supreme Court ruling this week that upheld state law that would allow students in the unaccredited Kansas City district to transfer to any accredited districts in Jackson or adjoining counties.

The district has been arguing that it scored well enough on the state’s school district report card in its second year of improvement to earn provisional accreditation.

If the state were to grant the higher accreditation, the Kansas City district and its neighboring districts would not be exposed to the transfer law.

In requesting the injunction, West said, the district would be asking a Cole County circuit judge to stop enforcement of the transfer law while the district’s case for provisional accreditation is pending.

A spokeswoman for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education said the department would have to see the lawsuit before it could make any comment.

Education Commissioner Chris Nicastro all along has recommended that the district remain unaccredited because she said it needs to record at least another year of improvement to show it can sustain its gains.

The state board agreed and voted in October to keep Kansas City unaccredited.

Much of the district’s improvement in the August report card was in non-test performance areas. Seventy percent of its students did not perform at a proficient level.

But Kansas City did earn 60 percent of the possible points on the August report card, which placed it well above the 50 percent threshold to be considered for provisional accreditation. It had boosted its percent from a score of 19.6 in a preliminary scoring in December 2012.

Neighboring superintendents and their school boards, who are also concerned about potential effects of the transfer law, have been backing Kansas City’s bid for the higher designation.

“I think Kansas City is within their legal rights to file for provisional accreditation,” Raytown Superintendent Allan Markley said. “They have met the requirements under the new guidelines (of the state’s report card system). Why pull the rug out from under them?”

The transfer law is already being implemented in the St. Louis area with the unaccredited Normandy and Riverview Gardens school districts, where some 2,500 students out of their combined enrollment of 10,600 sought transfers.

The receiving districts, after some initial contentious public meetings in some communities last summer, have demonstrated many efforts to welcome the new students and help them succeed. But the many students remaining in Normandy and Riverview Gardens are going to schools suffering from financial strain that the education department said is leading them to bankruptcy.

Kansas City became unaccredited in January 2012, when it was coming off a tumultuous year of school closings and the sudden departure of a superintendent — and saw its report card score fall in August 2011.

The district improved in its August 2012 report, but remained just below provisional. The state installed a new scoring system for 2013. A preliminary test putting the last three years of data into the new system showed Kansas City earning 19.6 percent of the possible points.

But by August, the district had made the leap into the provisional level.

The district still has a lot of ground to make up to get more students testing at higher levels, but it is making gains at a time of renewed stability in leadership and in operations, West said.

Now that the Supreme Court has affirmed the transfer law, the district’s quest to get provisional designation takes on heightened urgency, West said.

“The board has directed our legal counsel to pursue appropriate legal remedies that will protect the academic well-being of our scholars from certain chaos and disruption,” he said at the news conference.

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

Posted on Mon, Jan. 13, 2014

CEE-Trust presents its proposal to remake Kansas City's public schools

By JOE ROBERTSON
The Kansas City Star

A state consultant on Monday unveiled its vision of a Kansas City public school system where independent schools, as long as they excelled, would control their classrooms and their money.

[CEE-Trust](#), an Indianapolis-based think tank, was charged with completely reinventing the role the state plays in helping unaccredited school districts.

What CEE-Trust presented to the [Missouri State Board of Education](#) is not a charter school system, but a centrally controlled system that recruits strong programs to run schools their own ways, said Ethan Gray, CEE-Trust's chief executive officer.

Each school that earns independence within the system would have its own board and gain control of most of its funding to choose its leadership, staff and curriculum.

Schools could be run by successful charter school programs, nonprofit education agencies and foundations, neighboring school districts or community organizations arising from already-successful district schools and principals.

Ideally, the system would generate successful schools in every neighborhood, while giving families freedom to choose among schools throughout the system.

"The system's No. 1 role is to ensure schools are held accountable, but give schools wide latitude in how to meet those needs," Gray said about the plan.

Board members sounded both intrigued and daunted by the idea of such a remaking of a school system.

"Where have we seen this done?" board member Russell Still asked, wondering aloud where the state would gather needed talent and resources.

"You hired us because it hasn't been done," Gray said.

Getting there won't be easy — not just because of the difficulty of remaking a public school system, but because of the controversy and politics that have preceded the plan's arrival.

State Education Commissioner Chris Nicastro has been struggling with a divided Kansas City community over what to do with its long-troubled school system since the state board first determined in October 2011 that the district would become unaccredited in 2012.

The CEE-Trust plan is not the only proposal that the state board will hear, "and we are still open to new ideas," Nicastro said.

But emails and other records [reported by The Star in early December](#) showed that Nicastro, CEE-Trust and two private foundations that funded CEE-Trust's work — the Kauffman and Hall Family foundations — had been making plans since April.

The records showed that, once the state board directed the department in June to put the contract for a study up for bid, the department carried out a bid process favorable to CEE-Trust.

Some groups, including the NAACP, the school district's parent and community advisory committee and MORE2, an interfaith social justice organization, have protested that the study should be stopped. Some Democratic lawmakers have called for Nicastro's resignation.

Opponents rallied outside before the start of Monday's state school board meeting. The overall turnout swelled to more than 100 people, leading the board to move the meeting to a larger room across the street.

Monday's meeting was just for the board to hear the plan. The board is not expected to vote on any proposal until March at the earliest.

As controversy over the CEE-Trust plan grew, Gray said he wanted the chance to get CEE-Trust's ideas out and let the debate turn on what to do about failing urban schools.

He got his wish Monday.

Watching closely were leaders, staff and supporters of [Kansas City Public Schools](#), which still hopes to gain provisional accreditation and avoid coming under state control.

The district sued the state in mid-December in a case that is pending, claiming it made enough improvement under the state's accountability system to earn provisional status.

It is seeking an injunction to be declared provisional while the case is pending to shield the district from a state law that could allow students to transfer to neighboring districts at Kansas City's expense — potentially bankrupting the district.

It also is asking for the injunction to be shielded from any potential disruption by the CEE-Trust plan.

The district will have the chance, without the lawsuit, to escape any takeover plan the state chooses. If Kansas City continues to show enough improvement to repeat a provisional score on the state's district report card in August, Nicastro said she would recommend provisional status to the state board.

If the district slips in its performance, and if CEE-Trust's proposal were put into action, the transition to a new district could begin this fall.

How plan would work

Under the CEE-Trust plan, the operation of the schools would change little at first, but a full-scale recruiting process would begin in earnest to bring in top leadership and new school operators.

The district would come under the control of a Community School Office, with an executive director selected by the education commissioner, and an advisory board chosen by the state school board — replacing the current administration and elected school board.

The state, with the executive director, would create a Transition Authority that would take over management of the district's schools. The Community School Office would begin handing

schools over to independent operators that meet its criteria, and establish binding performance agreements.

The Transition Authority would continue to manage district schools that lack new operators, or take back schools where operators fail to meet their performance agreements.

CEE-Trust's plan is similar to another proposal it made for Indianapolis schools in 2011, in which it called for giving autonomy to "opportunity schools" that demonstrated success.

That plan, however, has not been put into action because it needed the approval of the district's school board, which divided over it.

The Kansas City plan, however, would have what Gray previously called a "state trigger." If whatever arises at the end of a public input period is approved by the state board, state law gives the education department the authority to act.

The proposal strives for middle ground in some of education's most volatile conflicts.

The plan caters to charter schools — public schools that operate independently of school districts. But they would not be charter schools. They would be accountable to the district's Community School Office.

Funding would flow through the district, and the school operators would maintain high degrees of independence only as long as they met their performance agreements.

The central office would own and maintain the buildings, operate bus services for all the schools and coordinate a lottery-based enrollment process with a standard expulsion policy.

Gray said the plan is not "anti-labor" because each independent school board could decide to enter into collective bargaining agreements with its teachers.

The plan, though, would dismantle the Kansas City Federation of Teachers that currently represents teachers and other staff positions districtwide. Many of the new schools likely would not be unionized.

Right now, Kansas City Public Schools pays one of the lower average teacher salaries in the region, Gray said, and he thinks the shift in how funds are administered in CEE-Trust's proposal would give schools opportunities to pay more.

CEE-Trust's research asserts that principals currently control what happens with about 5 percent of a school's funding, or about \$796 annually per pupil. The proposal estimates its changes would put \$10,003 of the per-pupil funding "into the hands of educators to make decisions in the best interests of their students."

The elimination of many central office costs, Gray said, could free \$28 million to support a universal pre-kindergarten program desired by the district and the community.

The CEE-Trust plan would be a gamble.

It depends on the state's ability to put highly effective leadership in place to carry out its audacious plan, and the leadership's ability to entice top school programs to come under its umbrella. And the independent schools will need to attract strong teaching staffs.

"That's a huge learning curve," board member O. Victor Lenz said.

Doug Thaman, the executive director of the [Missouri Charter Public School Association](#), was impressed by the plan.

For some successful charter school operators, joining such a system “might be appealing,” he said. “Independence and autonomy are what we believe are important.”

While some charters in Kansas City have succeeded, many have not.

Gayden Carruth, executive director of the [Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City](#), thinks decentralization of the system could put too many schools off a focus on instruction.

State board member Michael Jones said CEE-Trust’s plan would be “taking a chance on a different paradigm.”

“It would be radically reforming the system — that seems to have the real potential of an upside,” he said.

Once launched, the plan makes no provision for turning back. Even if the district succeeds and is returned to the control of an elected school board, the plan requires the board to continue the Community School Office structure.

District parent leader Jamekia Kendrix, who drove to Jefferson City to see the presentation, said she fears that many schools might struggle and that the system would lead to turnover of neighborhood schools.

“They come up with experiments and push them down on people who have to live in this,” Kendrix said.

The success of whatever plan the state chooses will depend on leadership, state board President Peter Herschend said.

“Without the right person (in the executive director position) or at the principal level, it will fail,” Herschend said.

He said the state “will change how we look at education, or we will move through the same systems and make them work.”

“What we have done in the past has not worked. ... However this board acts has to make a difference for kids.”

Public discussion

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will hold a public meeting at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 29 at the Paseo Academy, 4747 Flora Ave., to discuss the CEE-Trust plan and other proposals.

To reach Joe Robertson, call [816-234-4789](tel:816-234-4789) or send email to jrobertson@kcstar.com.

Tue, Jan. 21, 2014

Missouri Senator files bill urging provisional accreditation for KC schools

By JASON HANCOCK

The Star's Jefferson City correspondent

State Sen. Paul LeVota is asking his fellow lawmakers to join him in calling on the Missouri Board of Education to grant Kansas City Public Schools provisional accreditation in the hopes that the district can avoid the ramifications of a controversial student transfer law.

Kansas City Public Schools have been unaccredited since January 2012. However, due to a series of lawsuits over the years it has not had to abide by a law that permits students in unaccredited school districts to enroll in accredited districts, with tuition and transportation provided by the failing districts -- a situation that critics say will bankrupt urban schools and overcrowded suburban classrooms.

The district [scored enough points on the state report cards](#) issued in August to be granted provisional status, but state Board of Education members argued that one more year of progress was needed.

LeVota, a Democrat from Independence, has drafted a resolution that would encourage the state to grant the district provisional status immediately, arguing that Kansas City has had two years of improving scores, the same as St. Louis public schools when they were granted provisional accreditation.

The resolution also urges the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to use the authority it was granted by lawmakers last year to intervene in failing districts, among other suggestions.

It also asks that the department submit a budget that would cover the cost of tuition and transportation for students who have already transferred out of two unaccredited districts near St. Louis.

LeVota said his hope is that the state takes action soon and doesn't wait for lawmakers to solve the problem legislatively, which could take several months.

"This is a way of showing the department that they have the support of the legislature in taking the necessary steps," he said.

Several proposals have been put forth in regards to unaccredited districts, both by lawmakers as well as various interest groups. A state-hired consultant [proposed its plan](#) earlier this month, followed shortly thereafter by [one proposed by Kansas City school officials](#). The department of education plans public meetings over the next several weeks to gather ideas and reactions.

Thursday, Jan 23, 2014

School transfer bills get their first hearing in Missouri

By JASON HANCOCK

The Star's Jefferson City correspondent

Proposals to change a controversial student transfer law got their first public airing Wednesday, starting with a set of identical bills sponsored by a bipartisan group of St. Louis area lawmakers.

While admitting that the bills are a work in progress, advocates say the aim is to address concerns that the status quo ultimately will drive school districts like Kansas City's into bankruptcy and overcrowd the classrooms of their suburban neighbors.

"This is one of the most important issues to take up this year," said Sen. Scott Sifton, a St. Louis Democrat. "It also happens to be one of the most complex."

More than a dozen bills have been filed pertaining to a 1993 law that permits students in unaccredited school districts to enroll in accredited districts, with tuition and transportation provided by the failing districts.

The outcome could have a major impact on Kansas City Public Schools. The district has been unaccredited since 2012 but thus far hasn't had to abide by the transfer law while legal challenges play out in court.

The bills heard Wednesday allow districts receiving transfers to establish class size policies and teacher-student ratios that would allow them to turn students away for space reasons. Additionally, when a district becomes unaccredited, a new rating system would grade school buildings individually, allowing a student in a failing district to first have the option of transferring to a school within that district.

Unaccredited districts also could lengthen the school day, increase the hours of instruction and extend the school year. And high-performing districts would be permitted to open charter schools in a failing district.

The five identical bills debated Wednesday were sponsored individually by three Republicans and two Democrats, all from St. Louis or surrounding communities.

Lawmakers have wrestled with the transfer issue for years. But it was given new urgency after the Missouri Supreme Court upheld the transfer law last summer, opening the door for almost a quarter of students in the unaccredited Normandy and Riverview Gardens districts in St. Louis County to flee those districts.

Despite laying off 100 teachers, closing an elementary school and increasing class sizes, Normandy has said it will need an additional \$5 million from the state to keep from going bankrupt before the end of the school year.

Kansas City Superintendent Steve Green testified Wednesday that being forced to abide by the transfer law would create similar financial difficulties for his district.

To reach Jason Hancock, call 573-634-3565 or send email to jhancock@kcstar.com.

Jan. 07, 2014

Kansas City schools deserve our best thinking

By BILL EDDY
Special to The Star

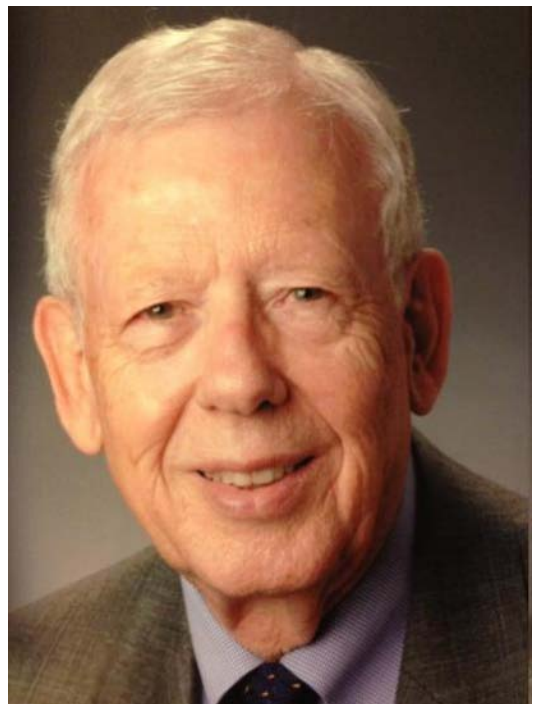
It's an interesting point in time when some media, the public educational establishment, teachers unions, and groups claiming to represent parents are pressing to stop a study by the CEE-Trust aimed at finding ways to turn around the failing Kansas City Public Schools.

Why wouldn't we want all the informed ideas we can get on fixing a bad situation, one that has plagued the community and cheated students for decades? Could it be the results and recommendations might run counter to special interests? It seems ironic that in Missouri, the "Show Me State," there would be a movement to quash the research before we see the results.

The research group "Cities for Educational Enterprise Trust" (CEE-Trust) is a national organization of 33 city-based foundations, non-profits and mayor's offices seeking to support educational innovation. The respected publication "Education Week" names the CEE-Trust director "One of the ten people who are changing education today—and will be ten years from now." Major funding comes from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation, which have poured millions into assisting public education.

Why is CEE-Trust viewed as a threat? Because they have sometimes supported charter schools as a part of the solution to urban education problems? Because charter schools threaten the public educational establishment since they are out from under the control of traditional school districts and teachers' unions?

Contrary to hyperbole from media and pressure groups there is no evidence that Commissioner Chris Nicastro violated any laws or regulations in selecting CEE-Trust. Using privately donated money, not state funds, Nicastro sought the organization she thought could provide the best, not cheapest, plan for turning around unaccredited school districts. Use of innuendo like questionable behind-the-scenes maneuvering and suggestions of a conspiracy are meant to discredit the agent of change. Forgotten is the fact that under the new state law the commissioner has several options for bringing about change, including replacing the school board and administration and dividing up the district. Commissioning a study is the least drastic step she could have taken.



Do the facts support claims of the Kansas City Star editorial (12/29/13, "Recent Impressive Gains?" Emphatically no. The per-pupil cost is \$16,823, the highest in Missouri. Here's what we get for those dollars:

- Most of the points gained on the accreditation assessment are not for student achievement but for actions by staff members involving absentee records, tracking graduation rate, bookkeeping. The lowest score is for academic achievement (43%).
- Seventy percent of the district's students still perform below proficiency on state tests, the lowest in the area.
- A large majority of students made little or no gains. Small average gains made by cramming for tests are not likely to last and do not represent real academic progress.
- There was no growth in communication arts (reading and writing).
- ACT scores measuring student preparation for college are the lowest in the area and among the lowest in the state.

Decades of efforts by the district and community groups have had little or no impact on student academic achievement and have cheated students. It is time to try something new instead of protecting vested interests by playing it safe and tweaking a dysfunctional system. Our students deserve better.

Bill Eddy of Kansas City is a lifelong educator who is chairman of Do the Right Thing for Kids, a watchdog organization.

Posted on Sat, Dec. 28, 2013

Fix state law to help the Kansas City school district serve students

Editor's note: This is the fourth of a five-part series on major issues facing the region that will ignore the calendar year's end and demand attention again in 2014.

Year after year, the academic quality of Kansas City Public Schools has struggled with the district gaining at best only provisional accreditation.

The New Year portends more of the same, only accreditation is gone, triggering a state law that enables Kansas City students to transfer to neighboring districts. That reckless public policy could create chaos not only for the Kansas City district but its neighboring districts, which would have to absorb the transferring students.

Perhaps an unintended consequence of the pending transfers is newly forged and long-needed unity among Kansas City area school districts and community groups to develop an alternative to the state plan. Local officials have reasons not to trust that the state has their best interests or that of the students in mind.

Emails revealed this year under the Missouri Sunshine Law indicate questionable action by Missouri Education Commissioner Chris Nicastro in a rushed bidding process for a \$385,000 contract awarded to CEE-Trust, an Indianapolis firm, to help plan the future of Kansas City Public Schools. Community groups and school organizations are right to petition the Missouri state school board to halt CEE-Trust's work, fearing it will damage the stability and improvements the district has finally achieved.

For now, the Kansas City district's future unfortunately appears headed toward that of the Normandy and Riverview Gardens school districts in the St. Louis area. The two unaccredited districts are stuck with the cost for tuition and transportation for 2,500 students from a combined enrollment of 10,600. Both are headed for bankruptcy.

Trying to avoid that result, the Kansas City school board has filed a lawsuit that seeks provisional accreditation and to block the transfer of students in the 2014 school year. But the Missouri legislature for years has refused to fix the transfer law, punting its responsibility to the courts. A substantial repair early in the 2014 session would give everyone some breathing room.

The Kansas City district lost accreditation in January 2012. But with a strong school board, the focused and steady guidance of Superintendent Stephen Green and committed teachers, the

district on its August report card earned 60 percent of the possible points to lift it to provisional accreditation, which would negate any student transfers.

The Missouri Board of Education, following the now suspect advice of Nicastro, voted to keep the district unaccredited, triggering the potential transfer of students to surrounding districts.

The Kansas City district must continue to concentrate on improving students' academic achievement. Despite the recent impressive gains, 70 percent of its students still perform below proficiency.

Meanwhile, superintendents of surrounding districts have generated a plan to help all districts statewide in danger of losing their accreditation.

Gayden Carruth, executive director of Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City, and a half-dozen superintendents talked about the details in a meeting with The Star's editorial board. They said the proposal was presented to the Missouri Board of Education and Nicastro, but they received no response.

That's unfortunate. State education officials should take the proposal seriously. It calls for a new ratings system, early intervention instead of punitive action against struggling districts, accountability from the state and action by a group appointed by the state education department to provide needed help. Schools having difficulty would be targeted for extensive help, and students would have the opportunity to remain in neighborhood schools and be part of the improvement process.

Communications would be open, and what's good for the children in the push for academic excellence would be paramount. The state board of education would be wise to adopt the proposal and draw in Kansas City area superintendents as advisers.

With this plan and the help of community groups and neighboring districts, Kansas City Public Schools at the start of the 2014-2015 school year should be making progress toward full accreditation — an accomplishment needed to put in past tense its long, troubled history.



The Conditions for Success: Executive Summary

Ensuring great public schools in every neighborhood



CEE-TRUST
The Cities for Education Entrepreneurship Trust



January 2014

In the summer of 2013, The Missouri Board of Education posed the question: what is the appropriate role for the state in the support of and possible intervention in unaccredited school districts, if the goal is achieving dramatic student achievement gains? This draft report provides recommendations to answer that question, and represents a comprehensive vision for an urban school system that fosters the conditions schools, educators, parents, and students need for success. While we focus here on the Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS), these recommendations could also guide state intervention in other unaccredited districts.

The Conditions for Success

This project has been informed by one daunting fact: Individual urban schools in America are achieving incredible results for students from low-income communities, but no urban *school systems* are achieving incredible results for all — or even most — children in an entire city.

Our team scoured research and data from across the country to identify these individual schools of excellence. We then identified the **conditions** that have enabled these schools to succeed where so many others have struggled. Simultaneously, we conducted a series of focus groups and interviews with teachers, parents, union leaders, community leaders, and district leaders to better understand the history of education in Kansas City, and to get their ideas for how a school system could create the conditions through which every neighborhood has a great public school.

Based on this research, and the results of our interviews and focus groups, we have prepared a draft plan for how the State Board can help Kansas City and other unaccredited districts create those conditions for every school system-wide, in order to move from schools of excellence to a system of excellence.

Two core conditions unite most high-performing urban schools:

1. **Educators Run Schools:** In the high-performing urban school our research identified, educators and school leaders are in charge of the major decisions. They control the staffing, curriculum, school culture, calendar, and budget. They are free from the bureaucratic constraints of a one-size-fits-all central office. This broad professional autonomy enables educators to meet the needs of the students that they know better than anyone else. And it makes it possible for schools to attract and keep the best possible leaders and teachers, who crave the opportunity to create schools that help students succeed.
2. **Schools are Held Accountable:** While empowered educators run great urban schools, the system also holds them meaningfully accountable for achieving ambitious results with students. The high-performing schools we studied viewed strong but fair accountability as central to keeping them focused on driving student achievement gains.

Listening to Stakeholders

We wanted to tailor the plan to Missouri, with a special focus on Kansas City, to reflect the unique and important perspectives of the stakeholders who participated in our focus groups and interviews and to respond to the data we gathered about Kansas City. The focus groups revealed several commonalities.

- ✦ There is broad agreement on the need for universal access to **high-quality pre-K** so students come to school ready to learn.

- ✳ There is near consensus that **schools and educators should have more autonomy to run schools**, as long as they have shared performance goals and are held meaningfully accountable.
- ✳ There is a shared desire for the system to have the **flexibility to spend resources on wrap-around services**, so students can go to school, healthy, well fed, and well-supported.
- ✳ Parents and teachers were particularly interested in having a **system that fostered multiple types of school programs and themes** — such as Montessori, African-Centered, or Science and Technology.
- ✳ Most stakeholders believed that parents should have the option to send their child to the public school in the city that best meets their needs, but that **every neighborhood should have a great public school**.
- ✳ There was near consensus that schools should be held **meaningfully and fairly accountable**, and the system should provide parents with better information on school performance and more support selecting the best school for their child.

Breaking out of the Box

Our plan addresses these priorities with a comprehensive vision for a new public education system. Through our research, we have sought to harness the creativity of the community, align it with national best practice research, and suggest a new way of structuring a school system that is far more likely to achieve results than the outdated model that has failed generations of urban schoolchildren.

Despite decades of reform efforts, despite the hard work and passion of incredibly talented educators and district leaders, and despite education budgets that have more than doubled in today’s dollars since 1970, student achievement results are still disastrous.

While Kansas City Public schools is not the only Missouri district in need of improvement, it serves as a central illustration of both the need and the opportunity. As described more fully in Chapter 1:

- ✳ 70 percent of KCPS students are below proficient in math and English Language Arts (ELA).
- ✳ ELA proficiency rates have *declined* in some recent years, despite improved management and operations.
- ✳ Very, very few students graduating from KCPS are ready for college based on their ACT scores.
- ✳ While science and social studies scores have improved this past year (mirroring statewide trends), proficiency rates in those subjects are *still* below 30 percent.
- ✳ And average KCPS student achievement growth is lower than state predictions based on similar districts’ results, meaning that KCPS students could fall further behind their peers over time.

While some argue that the system has been stabilized after years of dysfunction, one must ask: **what good is stability if most students still cannot read, write, or do math proficiently, or graduate from high school ready for college or careers?**

Today’s operationally stabilized system masks the historical reality that there have been **26 superintendents in the past 45 years** — all presiding over KCPS schools with profoundly low student achievement results. Nationally, the average tenure for an urban school superintendent is under four years. In light of the overwhelming evidence, despite decades of effort from talented leaders and educators, our

conclusion is that **it is not the people in the system that is the problem; it is the system itself.**

Simply put, the traditional urban school system does not work. It is not stable. It does not serve the needs of its students. It does not, nor has it ever, produced the kind of results all children, families, and taxpayers deserve. And it **does not create the conditions that research shows enables great urban schools to thrive.** It is time to think outside the box and have a robust community conversation about how to build a new and different school system that is structured for success.

Plan Overview

This plan describes how this new school system should be structured. In the draft full report we profile high-performing urban schools — the kind of schools every child in Kansas City and other struggling districts deserve — and discuss the conditions that enable their success. We describe how to create a school system that empowers its educators; holds schools accountable; creates new and different school models to meet the diverse needs of diverse students; returns power to the community; and gives schools budgetary flexibility so they can provide wrap-around services, pay teachers more, and invest in city-wide pre-K.

Under this plan:

- ✳ Educators and community members would gain the power to create and operate **nonprofit schools** that meet the needs of the students they serve.
- ✳ Millions of dollars would be unlocked to pay for the highest priorities, such as: **paying teachers substantially more**, funding city-wide access to **high-quality preschool**, and offering **wrap-around services** to meet children’s out-of-school needs.
- ✳ Students would gain access to **high-quality schools within their neighborhoods** and beyond.
- ✳ Educators would be able to **collectively bargain at the school level** if they so choose.
- ✳ The school system would **shift its focus from operating schools directly to finding the best possible nonprofit operators**, empowering them to run schools, and holding them accountable for results. Schools that succeed would grow to serve more students. Those that continually fall short would be replaced with better options.
- ✳ The school system would **continue to perform critical central functions** such as operating facilities, providing transportation, ensuring that all students have access to great schools, and serving as a steward of the public’s funds.

Below we profile the key elements of this new system.

The Community Schools Office

A **Community Schools Office (CSO)** would oversee public education across the community and function as the community’s Local Education Agency (LEA). In each community with one or more unaccredited school districts in need of state intervention, the state would establish a CSO — led by an Executive Director who is appointed by the State Board of Education. The CSO would also have a Community Advisory Board of local leaders and stakeholder appointed by the State Board of Education.

Like a conventional school district, the CSO would serve as the governing authority for public education in the community; take responsibility for ensuring that every child has a place in a public school; and handle certain core administrative functions that make sense to be housed centrally, such as overseeing school facilities, running a city-wide transportation system, and managing a common enrollment process.

Unlike a conventional district, the CSO would not, after a transition period, directly operate any of the community's public schools. Instead, **it would carefully select a variety of nonprofit school operators that each run public school in the community — for-profit operators would not be eligible to participate in the system.** Each operator would have a “performance agreement” with the CSO — a legal agreement that specifies exactly what the operator must accomplish with students in order to continue operating the school. In return for agreeing to meet those expectations, the operator receives assurance that its educators can operate the school as they see fit, to meet the needs of its students.

The CSO's central responsibility would be selecting the nonprofit organizations that receive performance agreements to operate one or more schools within the community. Operators could include teams of educators currently working within a public school in the community; nonprofit organizations within the community; surrounding school districts already operating successful schools serving similar student populations; existing successful charter schools in the community; or existing successful charter schools from other communities.

If operators are successful, they could continue doing their good work. Indeed, the CSO could ask them to take on additional students and campuses, spreading their excellence if they so choose to even more students within the community. Expansion would be purely voluntary for schools, which could elect to stay at their current size or grow. If, on the other hand, operators fall short, the CSO could replace them with new operators. Through this process, the CSO could ensure that over time, a greater number of students in the community have access to a great school.

More Money to Schools Without Raising Taxes

As explained in Chapter 2, one of the critical conditions enabling great schools is a empowering educator, the people closest to the action of teaching and learning, to allocate resources in ways that meet the needs of their students. In most school districts, by contrast, the central office controls most of the resources. Missouri districts are no exception. In Kansas City, for example, our analysis found that only 52 percent of total district funds were part of school budgets in FY13, and *only 5 percent of expenses were truly controlled by principals.*

As a result, a key part of this plan shifts a significant amount of funds from being centrally managed to school-controlled. Our financial analysis of Kansas City Public Schools suggests that a CSO in that city would be able to make **more than \$10,000 in per pupil funding** available to school operators. This change would allow educators to use funds in ways they see best for improving student achievement, including the flexibility to **pay teachers more and offer a variety of wrap-around support services.**

Shifting responsibility and funding for most services to school control in Kansas City would allow close to **65 percent of funds to flow directly to schools and classrooms** and be controlled by educators, in contrast to only 5 percent truly controlled by

school leaders in FY13. **That represents a shift of more than \$143 million a year into the hands of the educators closest to the students.**

Preschool for All

The need for high-quality preschool for all emerged as a central theme of our interviews and focus group discussions in Kansas City. And decades of research by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman and others makes clear that academically oriented preschool helps students succeed in school and even has long-term benefits for their employment, income, health and other outcomes.

In our financial analysis, one of our goals was to identify resources that could be freed to devote to providing **universal access to high-quality preschool — again, without raising taxes.** In the Kansas City example, the analysis suggests that \$28 million annually could be reallocated for preschool, while still leaving ample resources for the CSO’s functions and for school-controlled expenditures. **That would allow all three and four year olds in the city to be served in quality preschool programs.**¹

Transition Authority

While our plan centers on the idea of independent nonprofit organizations operating public schools throughout a community, a CSO could not simply shift to that kind of system immediately. A multi-year transition — described in more detail in Chapter 4 — is needed. The primary reason for a multi-year transition is the need to grow a “supply” of high-quality school operators. Some already successful public schools — such as Lincoln College Prep or Academie Lafayette, or high-performers in surrounding school districts — already exist and could participate in the new system immediately. These operators may be able to run 10 to 20 percent of the system’s schools on day one. Reaching the other 80 to 90 percent would require time to cultivate local school operators and, if needed, attract those from other cities.

During this transition period, the CSO would house an entity called the “Transition Authority,” charged with operating all schools not yet in independent operation. In the first year or two of the transition, this unit would operate a set of schools directly. It would provide a set of centrally run services for those schools and select the leaders and teachers for those schools.

But even from the start, the Transition Authority would be quite different from most conventional school districts, in two respects. First, for the schools it operates, it would shift almost all its focus to one priority: **making them the most attractive possible places for teachers and leaders to practice their craft.** The Transition Authority would revamp itself and its schools to make them magnets for talent, where educators could work in selective teams, develop on the job, and have substantial opportunities to earn more and advance in their careers by teaching and leading in the community’s schools.

Second, the Transition Authority aims from the beginning to “put itself out of business by **shifting all of its schools to independent operation over time.** This is one reason for the “talent magnet” strategy; as schools increasingly become led and staffed by high-performing teams and meeting expectations for improvement, they would become eligible for independence.

¹ Based on live births in 2009 and 2010 in zip codes where KCPS has elementary schools.

Not all schools, of course, would rise and transition in this way. Research on turnarounds in schools and other sectors suggests that many of the attempts would fall short. As a result, the CSO works with partners to **cultivate the supply of additional operators that can assume the management of schools**. Over time, this process would lead to a mix of schools in the system: some previously successful schools, some newly successful schools, and some schools that are under the leadership of new nonprofit operators.

Community Schools Fund

One advantage of the Community Schools Office is its ability to focus on a limited set of core functions, at the center of which is selecting independent school operators and holding them accountable for performance. To complement the CSO's work, we also recommend that leaders in any community with CSOs establish a "Community Schools Fund" that sits outside the system and aggregates funding from local and national foundations to support school success.

The Community Schools Fund could play a number of roles depending on the community's needs, but the following roles are the most important to the success of this plan:

- ✦ **Cultivating school operators.** The Community Schools Fund would aim to boost the supply of great school operators as rapidly as possible. Drawing on experiences from cities that have sought rapid scale-up of an independently operated school sectors, the fund could invest in local educators and community groups to design and launch new schools; invest in and grow already successful school operators, or recruit to the community high-performing operators from other cities and states.
- ✦ **Fueling the supply of teachers and school leaders.** While school operators would play the lead role in staffing their schools, the Community Schools Fund would help by raising funds and forging partnerships with organizations that can help with this supply. The Fund could support local institutions of higher education, teacher unions, non-profits like Teach For America or Leading Educators, and other teacher organizations to give schools the best chance of filling teaching positions and leadership slots with top-notch candidates.
- ✦ **Providing families and the community with useful information about schools.** To empower families and community members, the Community Schools Fund would work, perhaps in partnership with other local organizations, to provide a useful base of information about school options within the community. The CSO would produce reports showing schools' results on a variety of measures. The Fund would supplement these data with qualitative information about each schools' offerings and, over time, feedback and insights provided by families themselves about each school.
- ✦ **Catalyzing "wrap-around services."** The plan outlined above would provide schools with substantially more control over their resources. One way they may seek to use that flexibility is by obtaining out-of-school services their students need, often referred to as "wrap-around services." The Community Schools Fund could help facilitate this process in various ways, such as identifying common needs across schools; creating an inventory of existing providers of needed services; catalyzing investment to create or expand services that are not currently available or adequate; and helping school operators collaborate through joint purchasing or the formation of cooperative service agreements.

While the Community Schools Fund would work in partnership with the CSO, it would need to remain independent of the CSO. In this way, it would serve as both a support and an agent of community-based accountability. To maintain its independence, the Community Schools Fund would finance its activities with contributions from local and national donors.

Statewide Support for CSOs

If Missouri establishes multiple CSOs across the state, it would need to build some capacity at the state level to oversee and support the network. We do not recommend the creation of a large unit at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to do this work, but rather a lean office with only a small number of employees and three primary purposes.

First, the office would hold CSOs accountable for improving their schools' performance. For accountability purposes, the CSO would hold a performance agreement with the state specifying the student achievement gains and absolute performance levels required for the CSO to return to local control (as described below and in more detail in Chapter 5).

Second, the office would report on the progress of CSOs to the state board of education, the legislature and the public.

Finally, the state office would provide a limited set of supports for CSOs in cases where a statewide activity appears beneficial. For example, one key activity would be recruiting successful school operators from other regions to operate within CSO-led systems. Many successful operators are looking for geographies in which they can achieve considerable scale, which often means operating in more than one city. As a result, the state could organize an initiative to recruit operators to Missouri, holding out the possibility of working in multiple cities over time.

Governance

During the period of state intervention, the state would have governance responsibilities for the CSO. The State Commissioner of Education would appoint the Executive Director of the CSO. The State Board of Education would appoint a Community Advisory Board for the CSO. While local parents, stakeholders, and educators would serve on the governing boards of the non-profit school operators that are running schools within the CSO — giving new, and deeper meaning to “local control.”

Once performance levels for the school operators within the CSO reach a sufficiently high level — as spelled out in the CSO's performance agreement with the state — then the CSO would be returned to local governance oversight. Once again, local residents would vote for a board of education to govern the CSO. However, neither the CSO nor the local board would directly operate schools or make decisions about what happens within schools. Instead, they would focus on the core areas of the CSO's authority, including accountability and the provision of central services such as common enrollment, transportation, and the publication of system-wide performance information.

What is Not in this Plan

We explain all of these ideas in greater detail in the full draft of the report. But we also want to address upfront what this plan is *not*.

- ✦ This plan is **not about privatizing public education**. This is about reimagining **public** education so that the system is structured in a way that it creates the conditions through which a great public school emerges in every neighborhood. In fact, since the CSO could only enter into performance agreements with nonprofit school operators, we ensure that public schools *could not* be privatized by for-profit operators.
- ✦ This plan **does not call for an all-charter system**. We believe there is an important role for a central system (a Local Education Agency or LEA) that unites all public schools, but that role is substantively different than the role that the school district currently plays. In our plan, **the CSO would serve as the Local Education Agency** and non-profit school operators would have performance agreements with the CSO to run schools. However, more than 30 percent of Kansas City students are currently enrolled in public charter schools. Many of these schools are low performing. Charters clearly are not the answer in and of themselves. But any citywide plan must address existing charters since they serve so many students; thus, we have developed clear strategies for how to ensure that existing charters improve and future schools are higher quality. To be clear, we don't believe in a totally decentralized, all-charter school system.
- ✦ This plan is **not anti-labor**. On the contrary, a key focus of our plan is enabling teachers in communities like Kansas City both to earn substantially more than they do now, and to take control of their schools in ways that are impossible in most districts. We believe that teacher's unions can be strong allies for improving schools. And, we explicitly recommend that **educators should be able to organize and collectively bargain in all public schools** within our new proposed system.
- ✦ This plan is **not the State Board of Education's plan for intervention**. This is one of several plans that the State Board will consider in 2014 to help guide its interventions in unaccredited districts, including Kansas City Public Schools. DESE has consistently said that it will not make accreditation recommendations to the State Board of Education until there are multiple years of MSIP5 data showing performance trends in districts. **If KCPS is able to improve its performance in 2013-2014, it could gain accreditation and not be subject to state intervention**. However, the State Board needs to prepare for the possibility that KCPS will not make sufficient progress. And the Board also needs to consider strategies to guide its interventions in other unaccredited districts across the state.

What this Plan Means for Students, Educators, and the Community

There would be significant, important benefits for educators, students, and the community in this new plan.

Benefits for Students

- ✦ Access to any public school in the city that best meets their needs

- For schools that are oversubscribed, the system would host an open lottery, with students from the school's neighborhood having a special weight to their lottery number
- ✳ Access to transportation services that allow students to attend whatever public school in the city that best meets their needs, even if they move within the city during the school year
- ✳ Access to pre-k and wrap-around services to ensure they can be productive while attending school
- ✳ Access to schools where educators are treated and paid like true professionals

Benefits For Educators

- ✳ Control over all the important decisions about what happens in a school
 - Curriculum
 - Calendar
 - Schedule
 - Culture
 - Budget
 - Staffing rules
 - Whether to collectively bargain or not
- ✳ Control over 13 times more resources than under the current system, with the ability to pay for wrap-around services (like health care and food security) if the school believes that they would help its students
- ✳ Access to significantly higher pay for teachers within existing budgets
- ✳ Being held meaningfully accountable for helping students achieve results, while being given wide latitude for *how* to achieve those results

Benefits for the Community

- ✳ A clear path for system-wide school improvement
- ✳ Higher-quality schools attract residents back into the city, reversing decades of enrollment decline and tax-base disruption
- ✳ Higher-quality schools attract more business investment and strengthens the local economy
- ✳ This type of system would be more attractive to the nation's best non-profit school operators, making it more likely best-in-class schools would come to Missouri
- ✳ Higher-quality schools increase graduation and college enrollment rates, subsequently decreasing the burden of social service expenses, and improving the life outcomes of the community's young people

A New Path to Excellence

The consensus among Missouri education leaders is that transferring students out of unaccredited school districts is not in the best interest of all students and will not lead to improvement of unaccredited districts and increased academic outcomes for Missouri students. In order to improve unaccredited schools and increased academic outcomes for Missouri students, a solution of support and early intervention must be provided.

We Believe That...

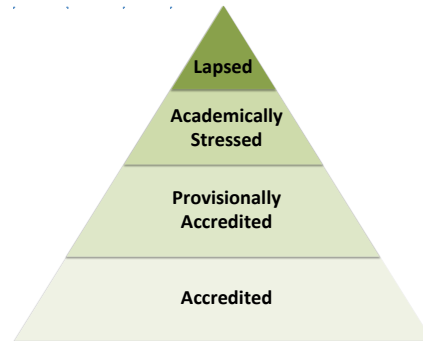
- Every student matters, every school matters, every community matters.
- Schools are not improved, nor are communities revitalized by transferring students from one location to another.
- Local control builds strong communities.
- Early intervention is essential.
- School buildings should be the focus rather than school districts.
- School funding should be spent on improving instruction rather than transporting students.
- Stronger Missouri schools will come from keeping every student, school and community intact.

A Response To Intervention Model for Accreditation

We propose the establishment of four levels of accreditation in Missouri.

Level 1 – A district that scores between 70% and 100% on its annual performance report would be designated as “Accredited.” There would be no interventions at this level.

Level 2 – A district that scores between 50% and 69% would be designated as “Provisionally Accredited.” When so designated, a review group from school districts will be assigned by DESE to perform a thorough review of the district and the unaccredited schools within the district. The review group will then issue a report to DESE and to the school district on appropriate improvement strategies. Students in unaccredited school buildings will have the option to transfer to other accredited schools within the district if they exist and if space permits. If the district does not show growth within five years, the district will be designated as “Academically Stressed” and actions defined for this level will be taken.



Level 3 – A district that scores less than 50% on its annual performance report will be designated as “Academically Stressed.” The Commissioner of Education or State Improvement Director will review the district and make changes as needed including the possible removal of the board of education, the superintendent of schools, principals, teachers, and the possible voiding of all contracts. All unaccredited buildings will be assigned to an Achievement School District. The Commissioner of Education or State Improvement Director will determine the entity to control the Achievement School District. Options include a state appointed board or a contract with a surrounding district(s). Once the annual performance report for the school has increased to the accredited level and a review group agrees that systems are in place within the school district to sustain the improvement, the Achievement District will transfer control of the school(s) back to the school district. The state achievement test scores of these schools are attributed to the Achievement District, not the school district in which it is located.

Level 4 – If the Achievement District and local school district are unable to demonstrate sustained growth in the overall school district within five years, the state board of education may designate the school district as “Lapsed” at which time the students and physical property will be transferred to another local education agency under current Missouri law.

Students Currently Involved in the School Transfer Program

We believe that those transfer students who chose to attend other accredited schools in the St. Louis area during the 2013-2014 school year under current Missouri statutes should be permitted to continue their education in those schools following the guidelines set forth:

- Only students who participated in the transfer program during the 2013-2014 school year will be eligible to continue participation in the transfer program.
- No additional student transfers should be allowed anywhere in the state.
- A student may stay in the same/current receiving districts until he/she graduates. Students may not transfer to a different receiving district.
- Students must maintain residency in the original sending district in which residency was established to remain eligible for the transfer.
- Once a student drops from the receiving district for any reason, the student is no longer eligible to participate in the transfer program to the same district or any other district.
- The sending school district will forward its foundation formula payment and Proposition C payment for the resident transfer students who continue to transfer to the receiving school district.
- The State of Missouri will create a new categorical which will pay the difference between the amount of state aid transmitted by the sending school district and the receiving school district’s tuition rate.
- The amount appropriated for the transfer categorical will diminish over time as students graduate, move, or choose other educational options.
- When the sending district becomes provisionally accredited or accredited, the district is no longer required to provide transportation for the transfer students.



2014

KANSAS CITY PUBLIC
SCHOOLS PLAN





The Kansas City Public Schools Plan

CONTINUING THE PATH TO EXCELLENCE

Upon being designated as unaccredited in January 2012, the Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) created a data-driven, evidence-based turnaround plan with the singular goal of full accreditation. The plan, coupled with the 18-month Regional School Improvement Team (RSIT) process, was instrumental in delivering two years of academic improvement under MSIP 4 and MSIP 5 with a well-defined plan to deliver again in 2013-14.

In 2009 the Board of Directors of the Kansas City Public Schools adopted a model of governance developed specifically to address the historical criticisms that have been directed at the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors recently adopted “commitment statements” that underpin its governance model that focuses on policy and not micro-managing in order to move KCPS to full accreditation. Additionally, members of the KCPS educational community, including the District Advisory Committee (DAC) and the Kansas City Federation of Teachers & School-Related Personnel (KCFT & SRP) have been working cooperatively with Dr. R. Stephen Green, Superintendent, to turn KCPS around, and we’ve made dramatic progress in that regard.

Through collaboration, KCPS has made significant progress in providing a quality education to our children. Together, we are:

- Targeting funds and resources to meet the specific needs of students. Equity of funds and resources is determined through the careful monitoring of needs assessments;

- Improving stability in leadership and staff;
- Improving the quality of leadership and staff through a comprehensive evaluation and feedback system that allows for continuous improvement in instruction for all students;
- Utilizing data through a monitoring and measuring system to identify the individual academic needs of students;
- Enhancing the curriculum;
- Providing quality professional development, tailored to the needs of administrators and staff;
- Enhancing early childhood programs and providing “wrap around” services for students and families; and
- Engaging parents and the community in new and meaningful ways.

We believe any plan should be based on the best interests of the students, the actual performance of the schools and not a district’s historical narrative.

Our plan recommendation is based upon the proven success by KCPS and the collaboration between KCPS and the RSIT team. Therefore, we recommend expanding the RSIT model to the individual school in conjunction with the proposed accreditation system outlined below.

Each school will be individually accredited according to the state Annual Progress Report (APR). Each KCPS school will establish a School Improvement Advisory Committee (SIAC) consisting of the following members: principal, teacher, classified employee, parent, LINC representative, two at-large representatives. The SIAC will review the school improvement plan, identify, prioritize and recommend the interventions necessary to address the specific needs of the school.

The four levels of accreditation will be as follows:

Level 1

Schools with an APR score between 70-100% will be designated as Accredited. Interventions and support for schools at this level will be monitored through the current monthly data consults between members of KCPS administration and the SIAC.

Level 2

Schools with an APR score between 50-69% will be designated as Provisionally Accredited.

- Representatives from KCPS, Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City (CSDGKC) and Regional Professional Development Center (RPDC) will be responsible for monitoring the school improvement plan.
- SIAC will present a quarterly progress report to the monitoring team.
- The monitoring team will hold SIAC accountable to the improvement plan by reviewing data, tracking progress, identifying and removing challenges and recommending additional supports.

Level 3

School buildings with an APR score below 50% will be designated as Academically Stressed. The focus at Level 3 will be creating a community school based upon the comprehensive data-driven needs of the individual students within each school.

- Representatives from KCPS, Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City (CSDGKC),

Higher Ed and the Regional Professional Development Center (RPDC) will be responsible for monitoring the school improvement plan.

- SIAC will present a monthly progress report to the monitoring team.
- The monitoring team will hold SIAC accountable to the improvement plan by reviewing data, tracking progress, identifying and removing challenges and identifying additional supports.
- An in-depth and comprehensive “needs assessment” will be completed by a team of internal and external professionals to determine the needed interventions and “wrap around” services for students, their families, and the contiguous community surrounding the school.
- Based on available resources and circumstances, KCPS commits to implementing as many of the recommended interventions as possible.

Level 4

If an Academically Stressed school is unable to demonstrate academic improvement within three years, the KCPS will recommend to the State Board of Education the school be designated as Lapsed. The Lapsed school may be reconstituted or closed. Students from the Lapsed school will be transferred within the district using a fair and equitable transfer policy developed by KCPS to ensure the needs of students and schools are met. Transferred students’ scores will not count against the accredited school for one year from the date of transfer.

Level 1 - Accredited

Level 2 - Provisionally Accredited

Level 3 - Academically Stressed

Level 4 - Lapsed



Interventions To Address *Areas of Concern*

Interventions can be used at all levels, but allocation of resources will be prioritized with the emphasis on supporting Level 3 schools.

Based on the findings of the needs assessment, recommendations will be made to the KCPS Superintendent, Cabinet, KCPS Board of Directors, the school's SIAC, KCFT & SRP, DAC and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The recommended "wrap around" services will be targeted for the school's specific needs, but not limited to the following areas:

School Climate

- Tools/strategies to improve school climate, discipline, and culturally responsive instruction.
 - Work with KCFT & SRP and LINC to expand the community school efforts that are already in place and are having a positive impact on the student, families, and school staff.
 - Establish a Parent and Family Resource Center in each school. Survey and identify parental needs, and establish programs to meet those needs to the extent resources are available.
 - Establish a Building Family Advocate/Parent Liaison in each school.
 - Continue the implementation of the Positive Behavior Intervention Support program, and implement other strategies to improve school climate.
- » Trauma Informed Care.
 - » Students in Transition (homeless) training and supports.
 - » Social/Emotional Behavioral Health Supports and Interventions.
- Provide Professional Development (“Cross Professional Development” days a few times a year) for those community partners that are working with the students before/after school, weekends, and during the summer.
 - Provide executive coaching for Building Administrators
 - » Facilitate two site visits each semester.
 - » Provide weekly conference calls.
 - » Provide virtual and/or site training on best practices, leadership and using data to improve academic achievement.

Professional Development, Curriculum and Instruction

- Teaching the whole child instructional practices that support social-emotional learning.
- Requirement of specific “wrap around” services as necessary to meet the specific social, emotional, physical and academic needs of the students in the building.
- Additional weeks of mandatory professional development for all certified and classified building staff as part of their current contract. In addition to training to improve instruction, training may include:

Additional Student Supports

- Extended school year including summer school with remediation and enrichment opportunities.
- Appoint a Building Attendance officer in every Level 3 school.
- Continue utilizing Behavior Interventionists where there is a need.
- Continue utilizing Reading Specialists in every Level 2 & Level 3 school.

Additional “Wrap Around” Services

Create and/or expand community schools with services housed in the school building:

- LINC, YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, Mattie Rhodes, etc.
- Mentoring Program.
- Intensive Prevention Services.
- Health Services.
- Social Services.

KCPS requests:

1. The immediate designation of provisional accreditation to KCPS.
2. The individual accreditation of each school commencing May 2014.
3. The implementation of the four levels of accreditation and interventions outlined above.

What changes are proposed

MSIP 5

Accredited Districts

Three ratings

Focus on consequences

No help for struggling schools

DESE takes over District

Some students transfer out of district

No intervention at provisional

No review teams

No specific time limits for provisional

No required models for improvement

No community engagement

KCPS Proposal

Focus on individual schools

Four ratings

Proactive - Focus on interventions and support for improvement

Expansion of the RSIT model along with individual support to schools

Each school establishes a School Improvement Advisory Committee

Students stay within the district

Interventions provided at all levels

SIAC monitors school improvement plan

Three-year limit to gain provisional accreditation

Research-based models determined by individual school performance and need

Community engagement is an essential component

Kansas City Public Schools
1211 McGee Street
Kansas City, Missouri
64106

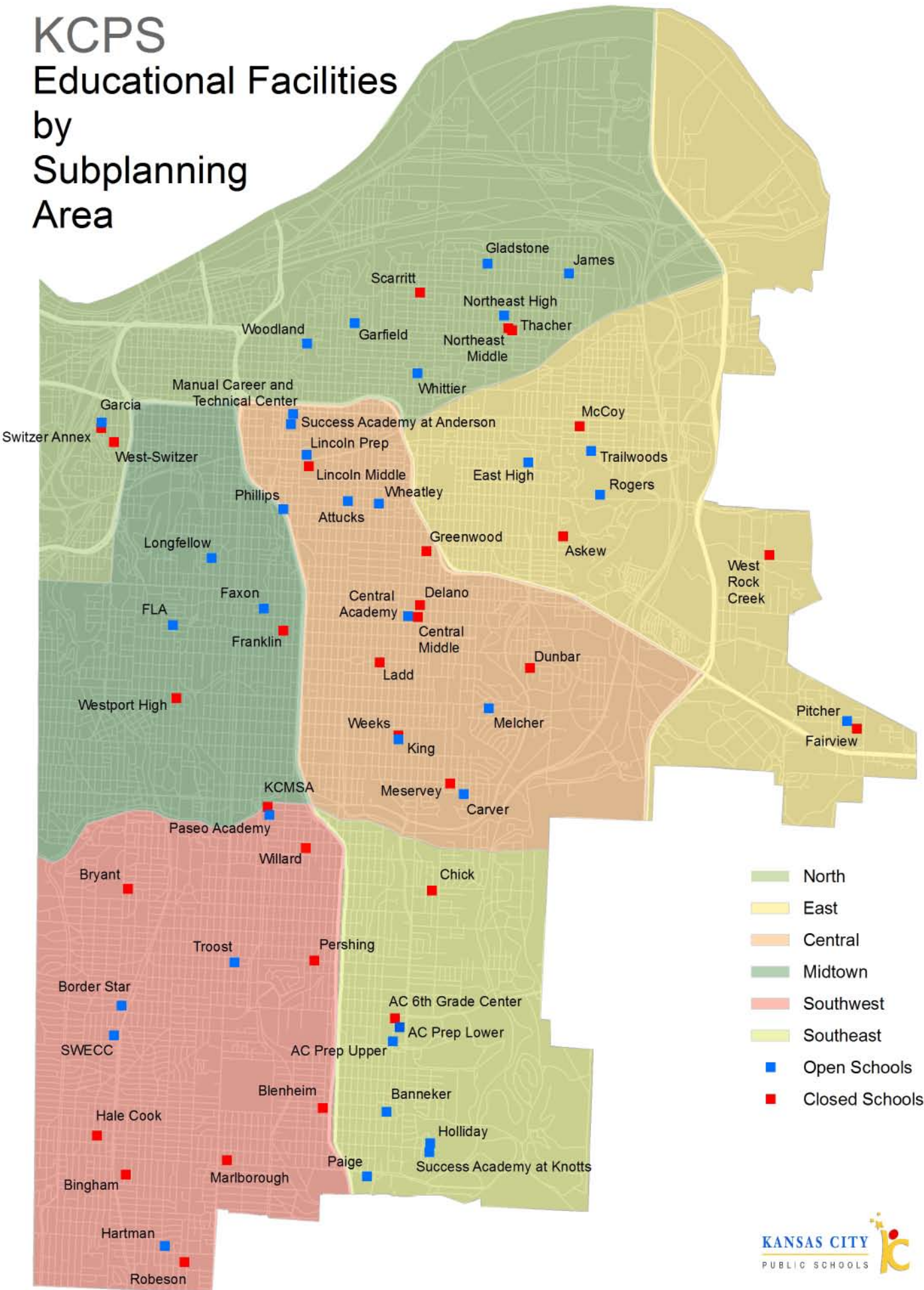
Phone
(816) 418-7000

Email
askthesupt@kcpublicschools.org

Web
www.kcpublicschools.org



KCPS Educational Facilities by Subplanning Area



KCPS
Students

57%
capture rate

14,307
students

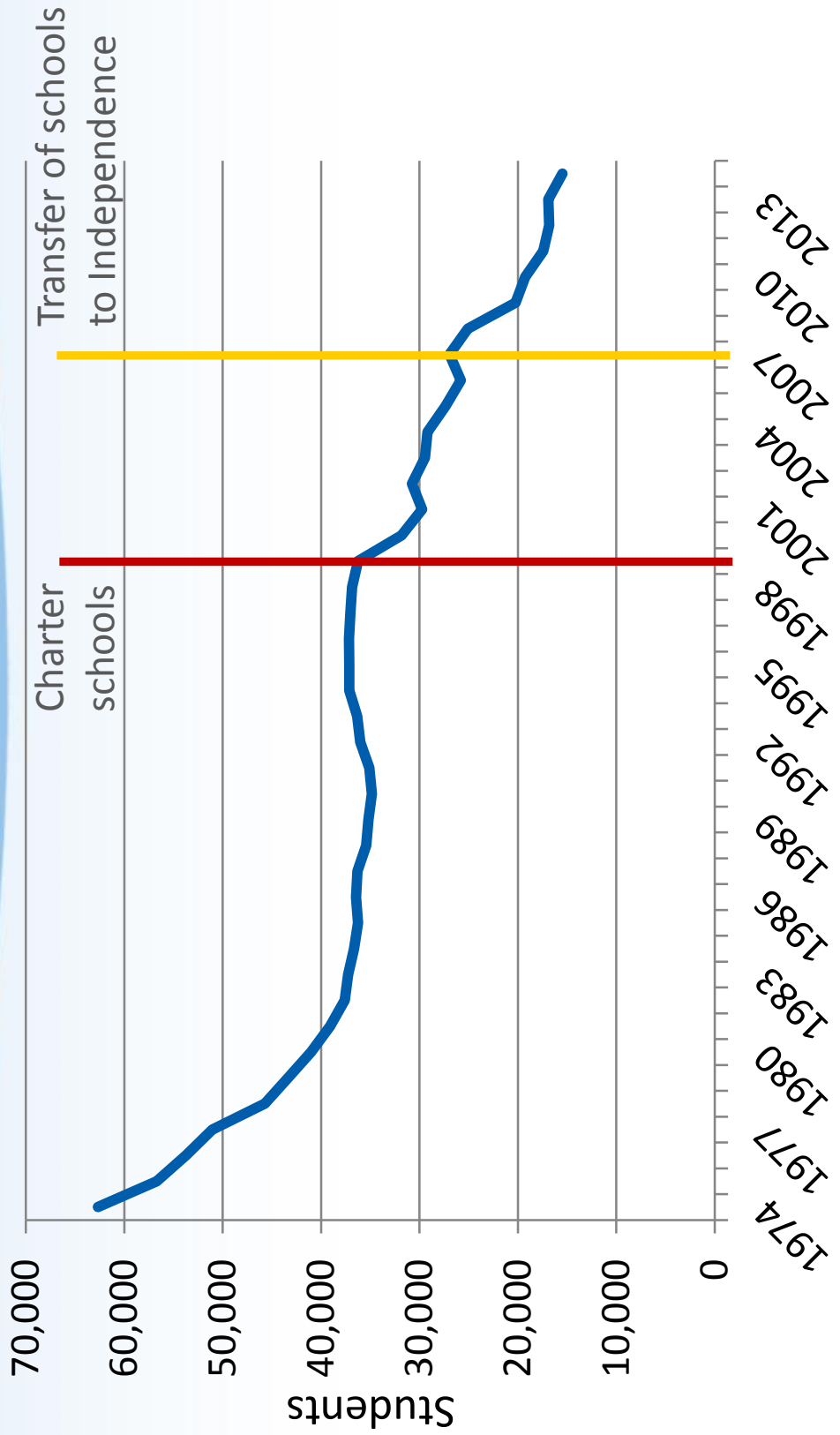
26%
capture
rate

School-Aged
Children

31,361
school-age
children

46% District-wide
capture rate

KCPS Enrollment SY1974-2013

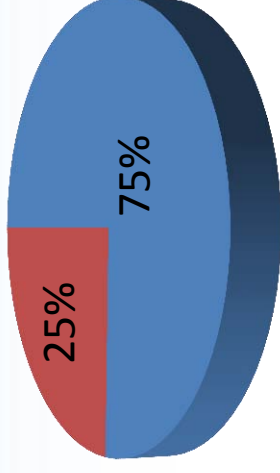


Current Enrollment

15,487 Students (PK-12)

61.1%	African American
26.3%	Hispanic
9.3%	White
3%	Asian
0.2%	American Indian
87.7%	Free/Reduced Lunch
49.5%	(Missouri Average)

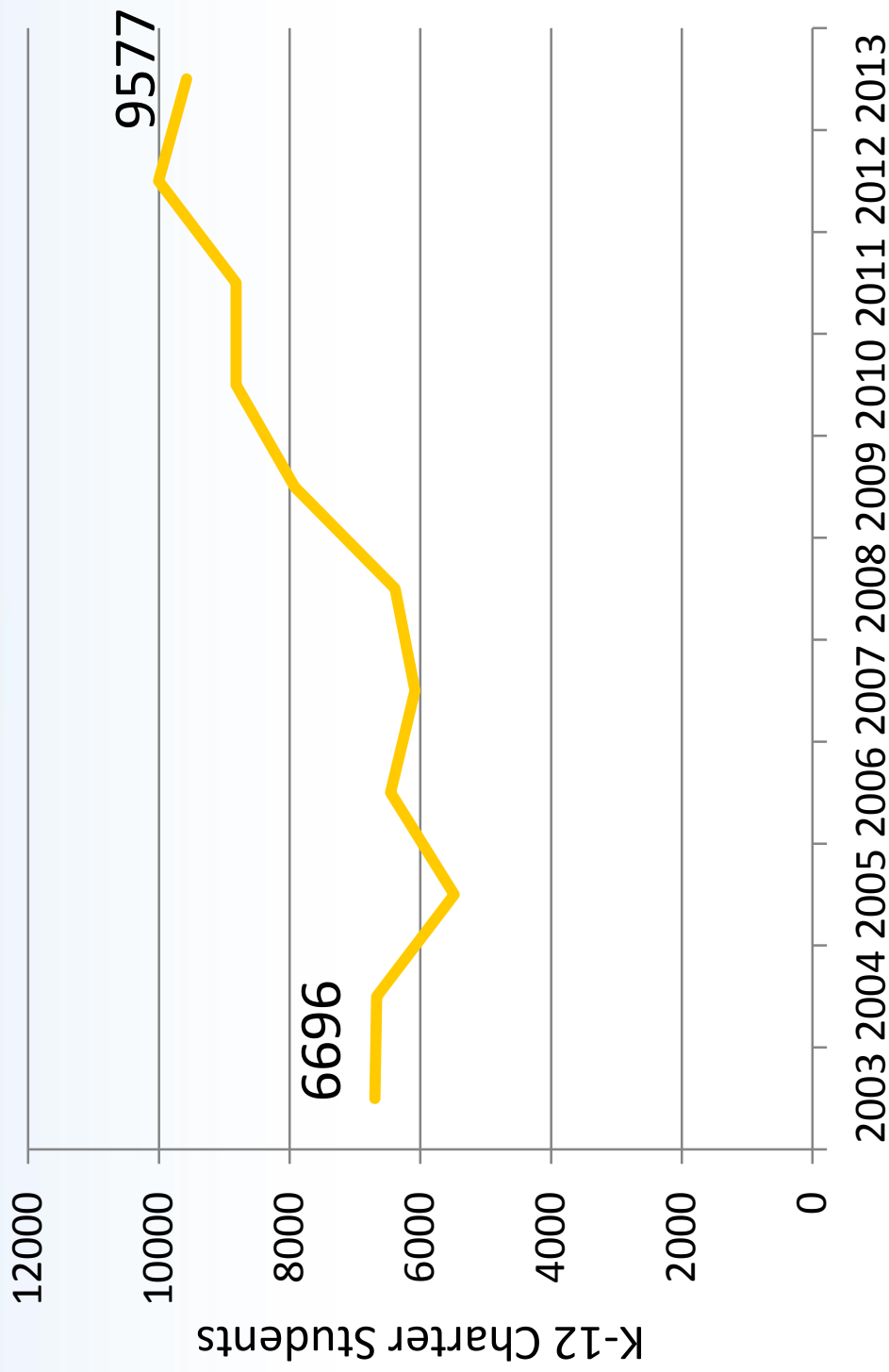
Enrollment by School Type



■ Neighborhood

■ Non-Neighborhood:
Signature, Contract,
Alternative

Charter Enrollment SY2003-2013



Black History Month Archives

Download previous sets of Black History Month posters and booklets at kclinc.org/blackhistory



Minnie Lee Crosthwaite
Social Worker



Daniel Holmes
Pastor



Horace Peterson
Historian



Lucile Bluford
Journalist



Herman & Dorothy Johnson
Civic Leaders



Tom Bass
Horseman



Bernard Powell
Civil Rights Activist



**Bettye Miller
Milt Abel**
Musicians



Bruce R. Watkins
Politician



Mary Lou Williams
Jazz Musician



Florynce Kennedy
Civil Rights Attorney



Hiram Young
Businessman



Melvin Tolson
Poet



**Josephine
Silone Yates**
Teacher



William Thompkins
Physician



Roy Wilkins
Civil Rights Activist



Samuel Bacote
Pastor



Satchel Paige
Baseball Player



Speedy Huggins
Entertainer



**Leon & Orchid
Jordan**
Politicians



William D. Matthews
Civil War Soldier



Sgt. William Messley
Civil War Soldier



**1st Missouri Regiment
of Colored Infantry**



Battle of Island Mound
U.S. Civil War



**Flag of the
1st Kansas Colored Infantry**



**Independent Battery,
U.S. Colored Light Artillery**
Fort Leavenworth, KS

