

LINC Commission Meeting

March 17, 2014



Summer Camps

LINC will offer a variety of fun, enriching summer camps for children.
Talk to your LINC Site Coordinator for more information.
Or visit: kclinc.org/summer



Supporting Community Schools kclinc.org

Local Investment Commission (LINC) Vision

Our Shared Vision

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

Our Mission

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

Our Guiding Principles

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



Monday, March 17, 2014 | 4 – 6 pm
Kauffman Foundation
4801 Rockhill Rd.
Kansas City, Mo. 64110

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Announcements
- II. Approvals
 - a. **January minutes (motion)**
- III. Superintendents' Report
- IV. LINCWorks and Family Support Division
 - a. LINCWorks update
 - b. FSD reorganization update
- V. LINC and Summer
 - a. Program locations
 - b. Summer program focus
 - c. New partnerships
 - d. Summer food program
- VI. Other Reports and Recognition
 - a. Google Rally II (Aaron Deacon)
 - b. Jackson County Spelling Bee
 - c. Calvin Wainright Recognition
- VII. Adjournment

The next commission meeting is Monday, April 21st



THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – JAN. 27, 2014

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

Sharon Cheers
Jack Craft
Aaron Deacon
Herb Freeman
Bart Hakan
Rosemary Lowe

Sandy Mayer
Richard Morris
Marge Peltier
David Ross
Bailus Tate

Everyone introduced themselves.

The “LINC in Photos 2013” slide show was shown.

A motion to approve the Nov. 25, 2013, LINC Commission meeting minutes was passed unanimously.

Kansas City Public Schools

Video segments from two KCPT programs, The Local Show and Week in Review, were shown. The segments featured discussion of competing proposals for ensuring students in Kansas City Public Schools, which is currently not fully accredited, can get a good education.

Dr. Stephen Greene, KCPS superintendent, reported that the plans being considered would offer a clear choice for those making the decision about the district’s future: the plan by CEE-Trust would be experimental, while the others would build on the stability that the district has gained in recent years. Greene outlined the KCPS plan for improving school performance by addressing problems at the building level.

Dr. Bob Bartman, Center School District superintendent, reported on the deleterious effects on two St. Louis school districts by a state law requiring unaccredited school districts to pay for tuition and transportation of students who may, under the law, attend school in neighboring accredited districts.

Discussion followed.

Superintendents’ Report

- **Carl Skinner** (Deputy Superintendent, Hickman Mills School District) reported the 40 people involved in five-year strategic planning have reached agreement on a plan; a proposal will be submitted to the board for four-year-olds to attend all-day school at the Freda Markley Early Childhood Center; the district seeking an alternative school for suspended students
- **Dan Clemens** (Assistant Superintendent, North Kansas City School District) reported the school board approved an extended academic calendar at two schools; the board approved language for a levy and bond issue to create space for a growing population
- **John Tramel** (Director of Family Services, Independence School District) reported planning is going forward on the development of the Next Generation Learning Academy; teachers are being trained on mental health first-aid for students.
- **Mark Enderle** (Superintendent, Fort Osage School District) reported cooperation between area school districts is better than ever.

- **Stephen Greene** (Superintendent, Kansas City Public Schools) reported the district is focused on repairing and restoring relationships and introduced district staff who are charged with improving student performance and supporting teachers.

Munro Richardson of Turn the Page KC reported on the effort to get all children reading proficiently by third grade, by engaging and enabling parents and caregivers, using data to drive outcomes, and identifying scalable solutions.

Leigh Anne Taylor Knight of the Kansas City Area Education Research Consortium reported on the results of the summer 2013 reading program and data sharing agreement.

Discussion followed.

Aaron Deacon reported on Gigabit City 2.0, a Feb. 13 event at the Kansas City Public Library. The purpose is to discuss several implementation projects taking advantage of Google Fiber internet capability and includes efforts to use the technology to improve academic outcomes.

The meeting was adjourned.



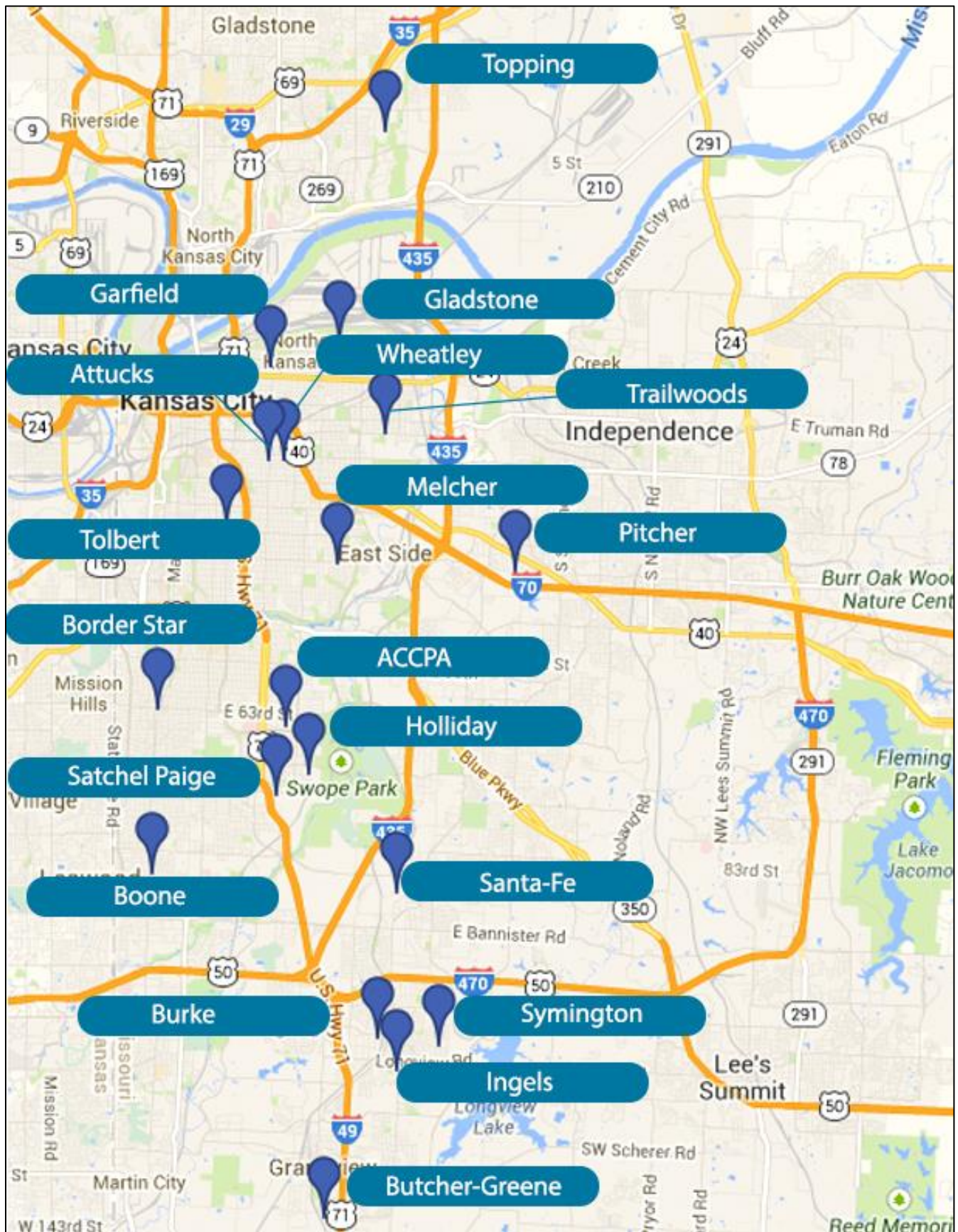


2014 Summer Programs

District	Location	Before & After Summer School	All Day Summer Camp
Center	Boone Elem.	X	
Fort Osage	TBD (one location)		X
Grandview	Butcher-Greene Elem.	X	
Hickman Mills Sites are tentative as of 3/11/14. There will be B&A at four locations and summer camp at one location.	Burke Elem.	X	X
	Ingels Elem.		
	Santa Fe Elem.	X	
	Symington Elem.		
Kansas City, Mo.	Gladstone Elem.		
	Paige Elem.	X	
	Wheatley Elem		
	ACCPA		
	Attucks Elem.		
	Border Star Montessori		
	Garfield Elem.		X
	Holliday Montessori		
	Melcher Elem.		
	Pitcher Elem.		
Trailwoods Elem.			
North Kansas City	Topping Elem.	X	X
Charter	Tolbert Academy	X	



LINC Summer Program Locations 2014



CAP St. Joe Site Visit to LINCWorks

March 5, 2014

9:00 a.m.-9:30 a.m.

Welcome

Conference Room A, Suite 1100

- CAP St. Joe
- LINC

9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Group assessment observation

LINCWorks Large Conference Room, Suite 1114

- CAP St. Joe career counselors
- LINC assessment team

Data, work flow, reports

Conference Room A, Suite 1100 & LINCWorks Data Department, Suite 1114

- CAP St. Joe: Michele Barton & Jill Ruckdeschel
- LINCWorks: Tom Jakopchek, Andrea O'Neal, Dawn Patterson, & LaTonya Rice











12:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

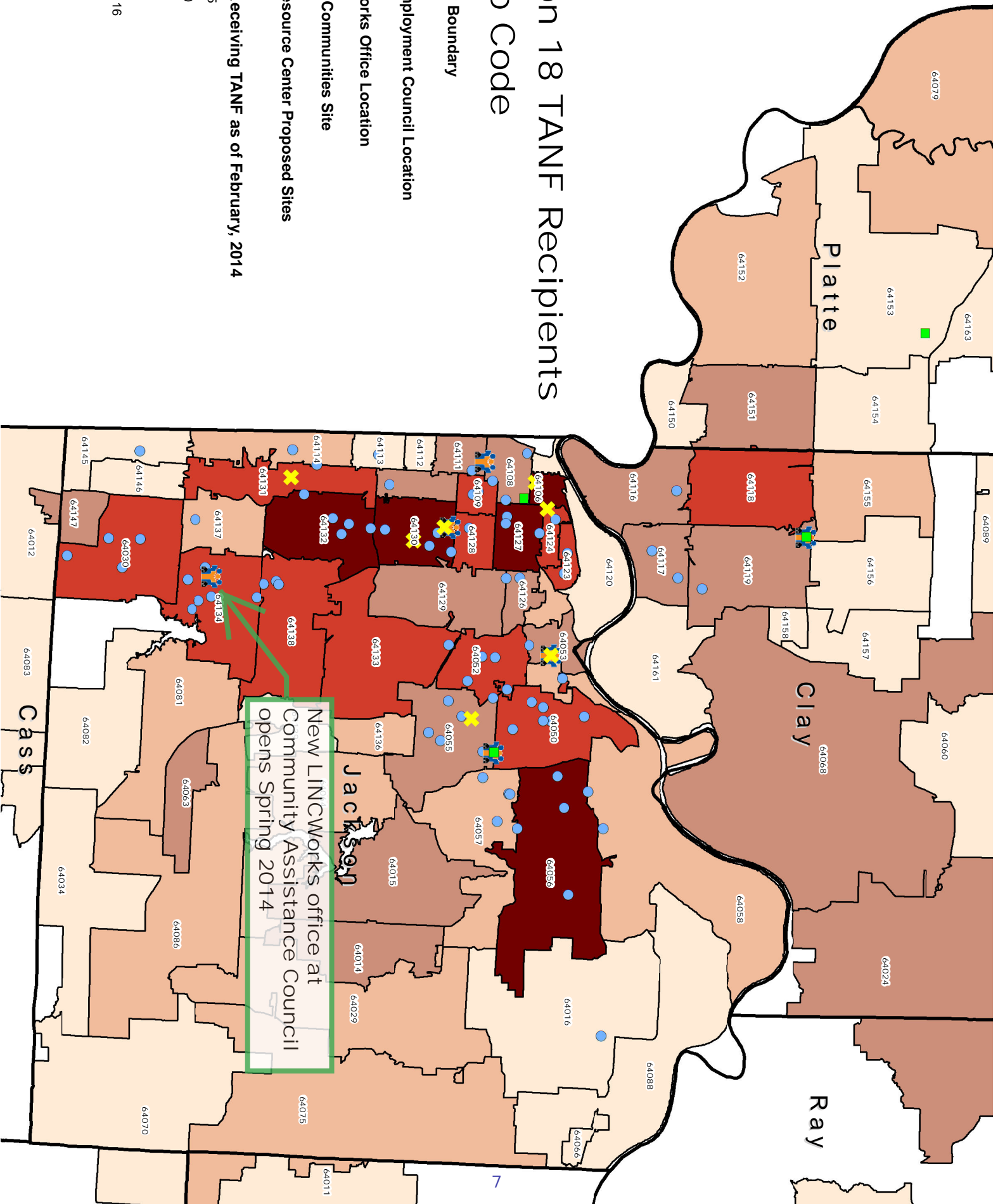
Luncheon & Discussion

Conference Room A, Suite 1100

- CAP St. Joe
- LINC
- St. Joseph Youth Alliance
- Family Support Division
- Metropolitan Community Colleges Institute for Workforce Development
- Full Employment Council

Region 18 TANF Recipients by Zip Code

-  County Boundary
 -  Full Employment Council Location
 -  LINCWorks Office Location
 -  Caring Communities Site
 -  FSD Resource Center Proposed Sites
- Households Receiving TANF as of February, 2014**
-  221 to 345
 -  116 to 220
 -  51 to 115
 -  17 to 50
 -  Less than 16



New LINCWorks office at Community Assistance Council opens Spring 2014

MWA Incentive Funds LINC Budget and Narrative

LINC's proposal for the use of the MWA Incentive funds is described below. Activities chosen support one or more of the four purposes of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program identified by the State of Missouri in directions for this proposal. The four allowable purposes are:

1. Provide assistance to needy families with children and provide parents with assistance in becoming job ready, job preparation, work, and support services so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives and parents may leave the program and become self-sufficient.
2. End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.
3. Prevent and reduce the number of non-marital births, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies, and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies.
4. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Activity A - Out of School Time Program Support

TANF Purpose Proposed Service/Activity Meets: TANF Purposes 1, 2, and 4.

Eligibility Requirement (if required): Out of School Time tuition is set-up on a sliding scale based on a child's qualification for Free and Reduced Lunch. Children qualifying for free lunch, pay nothing for program services, those approved for reduced-fee lunches pay only \$5 per week. 91.4% of participating children in LINC's Out of School Time programs qualifies for one of these two categories (i.e. 85% = free, 6.4% = reduced).

Requested Funding:

Out-of-School-Time Programming \$119,542.96

Service/Activity Details: LINC will apply these funds to Out of School Time (Before and After School) programming for youth at over 40 school locations throughout the Kansas City Missouri metropolitan area. These programs are designed to assist single and two-parent households seeking care for their children while at work, as well as other families struggling economically. The availability of low cost child care increases the likelihood parents will be able to accept new job opportunities or to continue in existing positions. Improvements in the stability of income streams for these families will in turn reduce stress that might otherwise lead to the breakup of two parent households, and reduce the need for family reliance on other forms of government supports.

Activity B – Work Related Activity Incentive / Barrier Removal

TANF Purpose Proposed Service/Activity Meets: TANF Purpose 1.

Eligibility Requirement (if required): Eligibility is determined by receipt of Temporary Assistance benefits and the referral to LINCWORKS as a Missouri Work Assistance participant.

Requested Funding: \$30,000

Service/Activity Details: LINCWORKS will provide an initial incentive for MWA participants during the assessment process. This incentive is to help defray the startup costs of TANF referrals beginning a countable work activity. The incentive assistance will be in the form of a \$30.00 VISA Bank card. This provides incentive and partial barrier removal for up to 1,000 initial referrals from Region 18 Family Support Division.

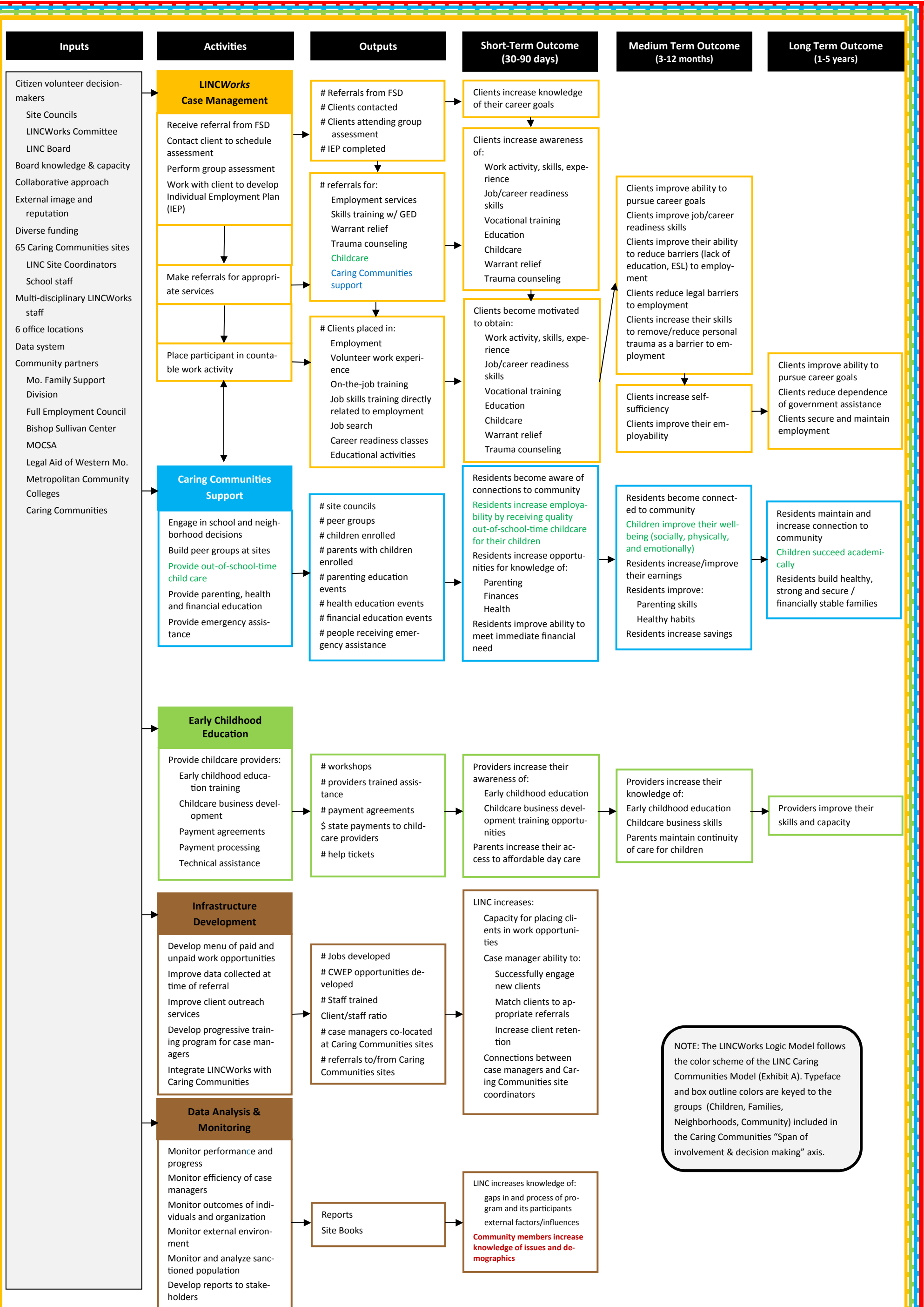
Budget Summary

Out of School Time Programming: \$119,542.96

MWA Incentive/Barrier Removal: \$30,000.00

Total Combined Funding Amount: **\$149,542.96**

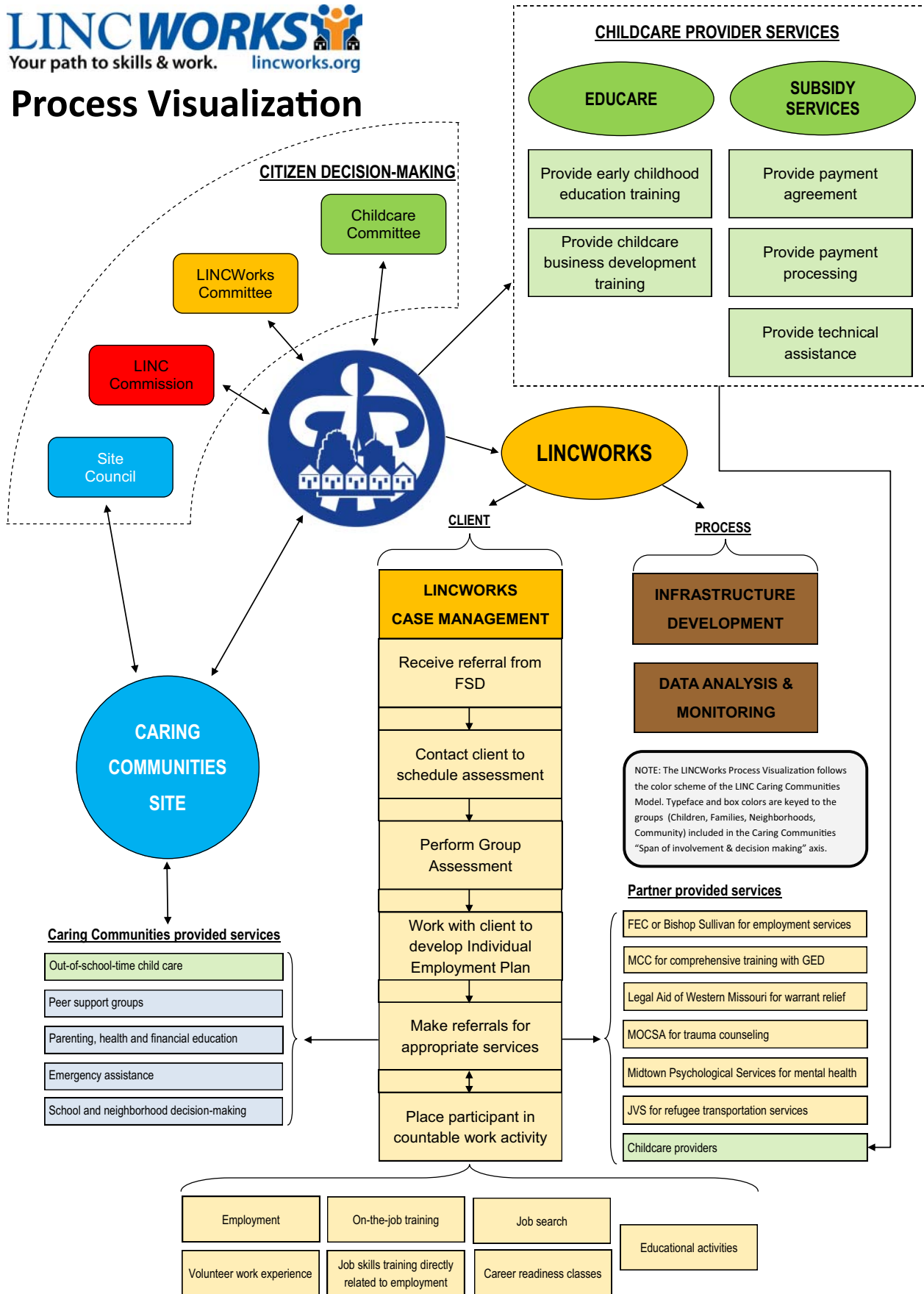
LOGIC MODEL



NOTE: The LINCWorks Logic Model follows the color scheme of the LINC Caring Communities Model (Exhibit A). Typeface and box outline colors are keyed to the groups (Children, Families, Neighborhoods, Community) included in the Caring Communities "Span of involvement & decision making" axis.

FAMILIES	LINC helps TANF participants on the path to skills and work, and provides community supports to help families increase economic self-sufficiency.
CHILDREN	LINC provides affordable, accessible after-school care to help families go to work. Also supports training of early childhood education providers.
NEIGHBORHOODS	LINC builds relationships with businesses and other potential employers through its presence at 65 sites in low-income neighborhoods.
COMMUNITY	LINC engages the community in broad-based discussions about long-term efforts including workforce development and welfare reform.

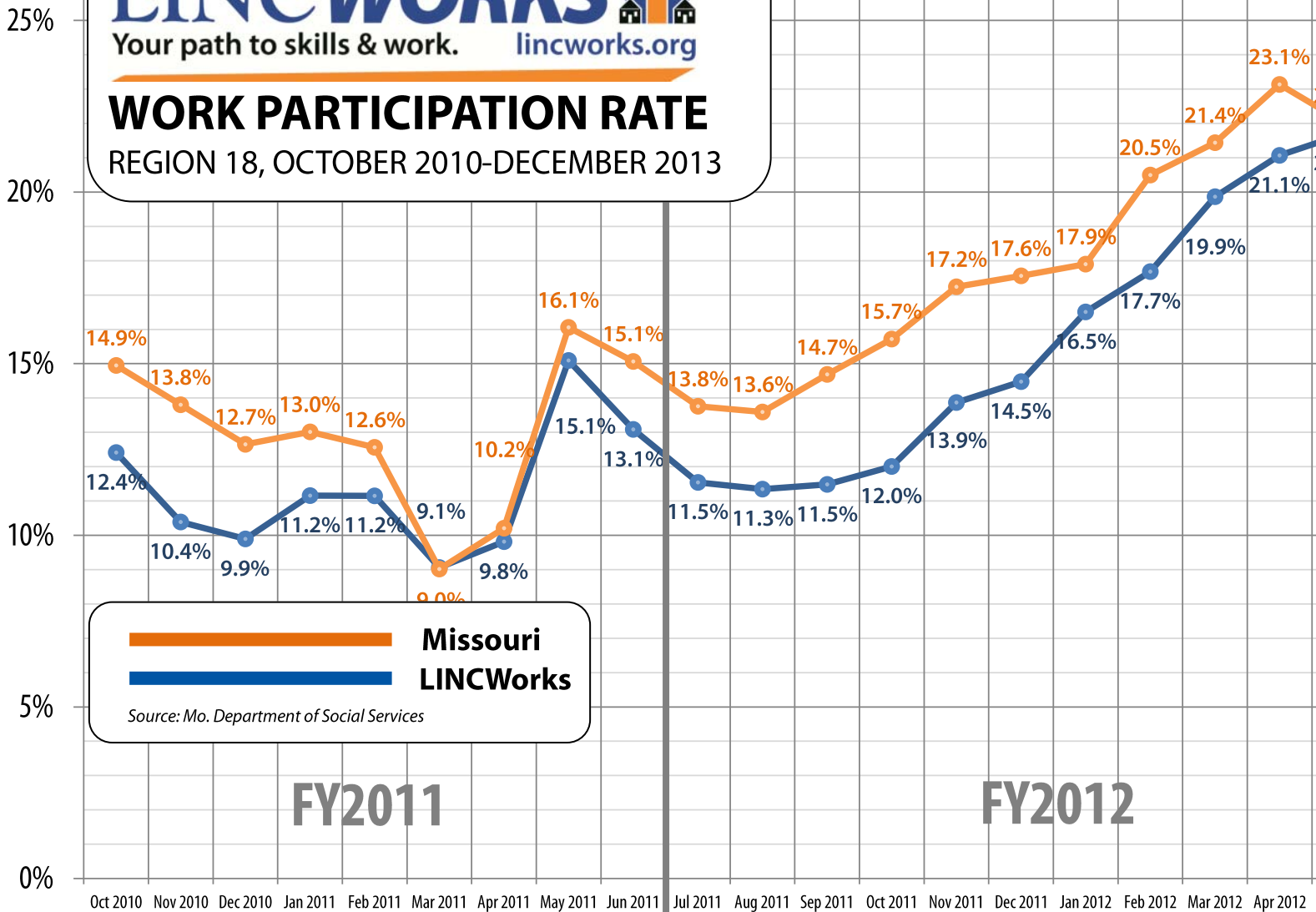
Process Visualization



FAMILIES	PROVIDE PATH TO SKILLS AND WORK, INCREASE ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY
CHILDREN	OFFER AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE AFTER-SCHOOL CARE, TRAIN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROVIDERS
NEIGHBORHOODS	BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS THROUGH 65 SITES IN LOW-INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS
COMMUNITY	ENGAGE COMMUNITY IN DISCUSSIONS ABOUT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE REFORM

WORK PARTICIPATION RATE

REGION 18, OCTOBER 2010-DECEMBER 2013



REGION 18 AT A GLANCE (FY2013)

CASELOAD (AVG.)

3,950

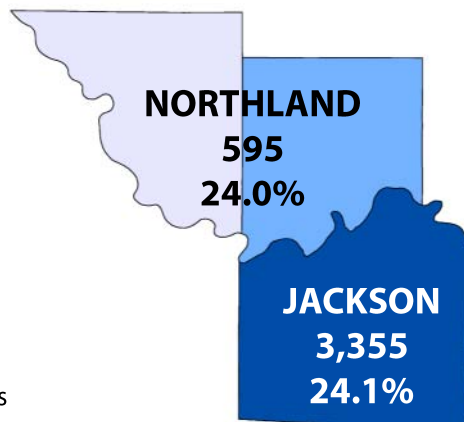
Adult single-parent household TANF cases subject to work requirement

PARTICIPATION (AVG.)

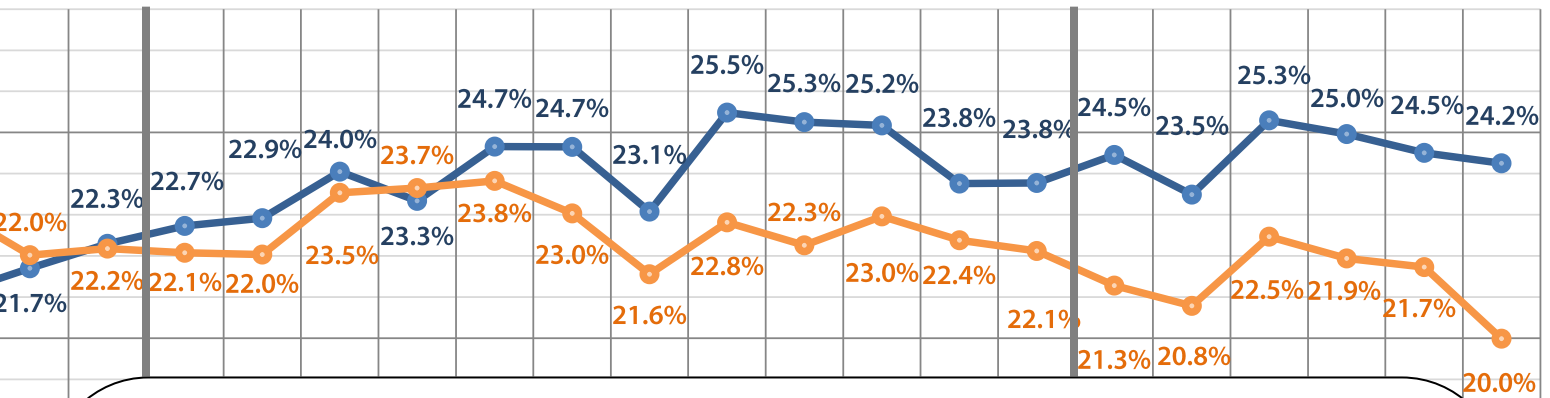
24.1%

Clients engaged in countable work activities

Average FY2013 caseload and participation within Region 18



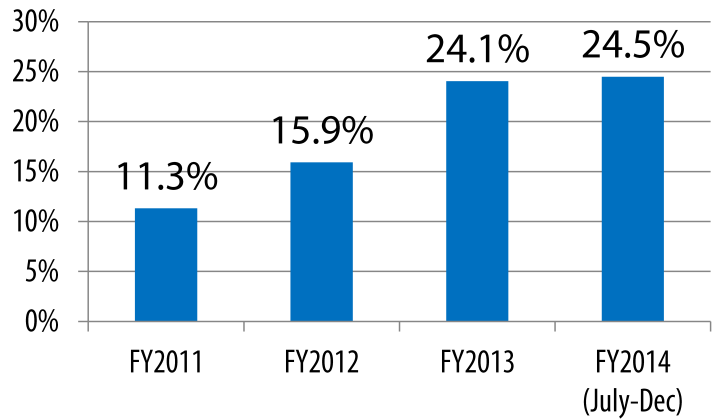
While the Region 18 MWA population resides predominantly in urban Jackson County, LINCWorks also serves participants in the Northland (Clay and Platte counties), where the population is more rural.



The line graph above shows the work participation rate from October 2010 (the beginning of the contract) to December 2013 (the latest month with available data). Since June 2012, LINCWorks has consistently enhanced the statewide participation rate.

LINCWorks' average yearly participation rate has steadily increased over time, as shown by the bar graph at right.

Work Participation Rate Yearly Average, FY2011-2014

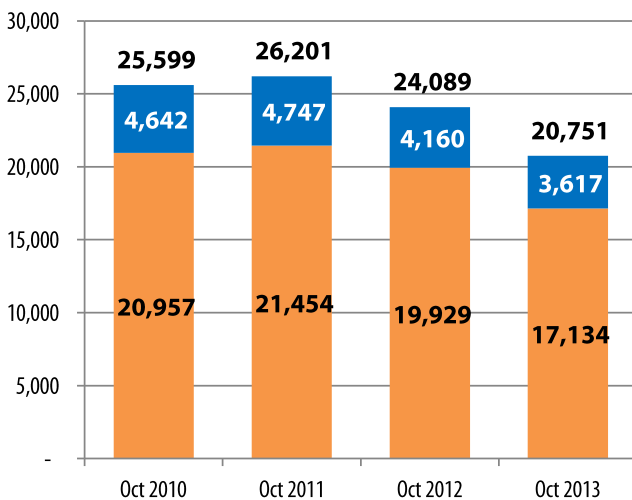


FY2013

FY2014

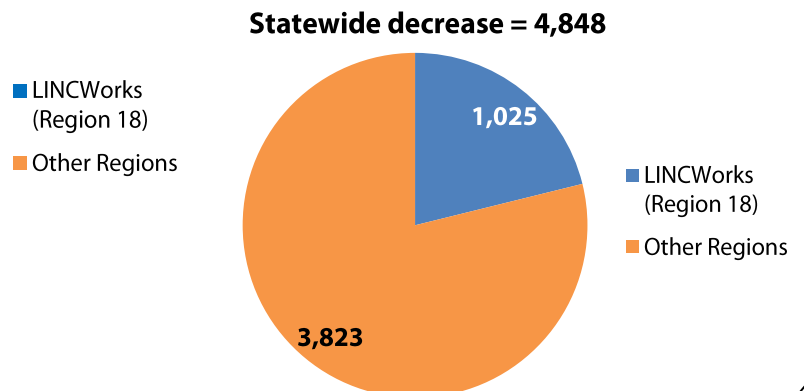
MWA CASELOAD REDUCTION, OCTOBER 2010-OCTOBER 2013

Decrease in MWA caseload, Oct. 2010-Oct. 2013



Decrease of Region 18 MWA caseload, Oct. 2010-Oct. 2013, as a share of statewide total

Nearly 1 in 4 cases were in Region 18.



Wednesday, Feb 19, 2014

Missouri intervention plan pleases Kansas City school district

By JOE ROBERTSON
The Kansas City Star

All of the options for the future of Kansas City Public Schools remain on the table in a proposed state intervention plan that was presented Tuesday to the state school board.

The proposal, which Kansas City school leaders found encouraging, emphasizes earlier interventions in districts as they begin to slide, with strict performance contracts.

But the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education wants to keep multiple options available when districts fall unaccredited, including collaborating with the local school board, appointing a new board or changing the structure of the district such as with a new administrator who answers to the state education commissioner.

If a district fails to recover from unaccredited status under its performance contract, the state, at its discretion, can declare the district lapsed. Then the state would move forward with takeover plans that could include taking direct control of schools or giving them over to other operators or districts under contracts.

The proposed statewide plan, which is being forwarded to the board's March meeting for approval, means to be tough but flexible to the varying conditions in any district, Education Commissioner Chris Nicastro said.

That includes Kansas City, she said. No plan is proposed yet specifically for Kansas City — which could still regain provisional accreditation later this year if it shows performance gains.

"I hope this sends the message that we are anxious to work with them," Nicastro said. "We want them to turn around, and we are willing to do anything to help them make that happen."

The state also wants to reserve multiple options to help the schools, however, if the district falls, she said.

"It is not OK to continue to support failure," Nicastro said.

Kansas City Superintendent Steve Green said Tuesday afternoon that he and other district leaders were pleased with the state's recommendations.

Green said the state's plan "incorporates much of what we submitted in our plan" for improving the district. He pointed to elements of the plan that support local control of schools, allowing for the current administration to remain in place.

While acknowledging that the district still has a long way to go, Green said: "I'm very confident that our teachers and students have given evidence that this is a district on the climb. ... We are very optimistic."

The state is debating reform ideas for Kansas City Public Schools as a launching point to create new policy on how the state should intervene in unaccredited school districts.

The conversation has been politically charged. The state school board is weighing the role of elected local school boards versus appointed boards. It's weighing increased system support versus system overhaul.

It is contemplating ideas proposed by teacher groups, community agencies, superintendents and school districts, as well as the most radical plan on the table from a consultant that was commissioned by the state.

The pressure for action has intensified because of a state law that allows families in unaccredited districts to transfer to neighboring districts with the costs of tuition and transportation paid by the unaccredited districts.

The state board did vote Tuesday to begin a transition process to take control of the unaccredited Normandy School District in the St. Louis area, which has been devastated by the troublesome transfer law.

Some lawmakers and education officials had hoped the education department would consider a policy move to evade the transfer law. But Nicastro and the state board decided against it.

The department is recommending keeping the current "unaccredited" classifications that trigger the transfer law, leaving the responsibility to address the law with the legislature.

St. Louis area districts began applying the law in August with the unaccredited Normandy and Riverview Gardens districts.

Kansas City area districts worry they will have to apply the law for the 2014-2015 school year, if Kansas City Public Schools remains unaccredited.

Lawmakers have been debating potential fixes for the law — but tangling over how to ease the damage to unaccredited school systems while giving families options out of failing schools.

The new accountability system would mean little change for most districts in the state.

Roughly eight out of 10 of the state's more than 500 districts would be classified as high-performing and warrant only slight state monitoring.

The plan proposes a Tier Two accreditation, in which a district is nearing a provisional status, or has been in two years of decline, at which time the state would conduct a more thorough review of the district's operations.

Performance plans come into place for districts that fall into the provisional range or unaccredited range, which currently would include about 3 percent of the state's districts, serving 62,000 children. In the Kansas City area, Kansas City Public Schools is unaccredited, and the Hickman Mills School District is provisionally accredited.

In considering the education department's working plan, the state board picked up its conversation from a workshop Feb. 10 when it gave the department some feedback on the ideas laid out in the various proposals.

Consensus was unclear, but at least some of the board members in the seven-member panel were leaning away from some of the dramatic ideas the state's consultant — Indianapolis-based CEE-Trust — has proposed.

CEE-Trust's plan would eliminate the current board and administration in favor of a community schools office whose primary role would be recruiting independent, nonprofit groups or institutions to run schools that would have the freedom to determine their own leadership, staffing, curriculum and programming as long as the schools met performance agreements.

Whether board members were inclined to try to work with the elected boards — as board member John Martin said — or preferred a different central administration system — as board President Peter Herschend said — they had nodded agreement with Herschend that the state's accountability plan must “have teeth.”

The proposal presented Tuesday does not propose the independent network of schools in the CEE-Trust plan, but leaves the state broad latitude in determining an alternative structure for an unaccredited or lapsed district.

“We believe schools are best run in the local community,” Nicastro said. “But there could be structures other than the current district structures, and these are things we will explore.”

Tier Two accredited districts will come under scrutiny. The focus will be not just districtwide, but school by school.

Provisional districts will have to commit to reforms and spell them out and the required improvements in a performance contract. Measures could include new teacher evaluation systems, new literacy plans, leadership development, preschool programming or extended school days.

An unaccredited district will have to negotiate its governance structure with the department and the state board, establishing required expectations if it keeps its board intact, or proposing takeover models.

“I hope we can find a way to work with Kansas City and its current board and superintendent,” said Martin, who served as an interim superintendent for Kansas City in 2008.

“There is a track record trending to progress,” he said. “And that needs to be rewarded with an opportunity to continue.”

The next round of state report cards will come out this summer, and Nicastro said again Tuesday that if Kansas City can repeat or improve its provisional score, she would recommend that the state board give the district provisional accreditation. The district has been unaccredited since January 2012.

The details

The state has posted its accountability plan for schools and is taking feedback at dese.mo.gov/divimprove/sia/msip/unaccrediteddistricts.html.

The state also is holding public hearings to gather feedback. The first meeting will be Monday in Kansas City at Metropolitan Community College-Penn Valley and Tuesday in St. Louis at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. The meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m.

The details

The state has posted its accountability plan for schools and is taking feedback at www.dese.mo.gov/unaccredited-districts.

The state also is holding public hearings to gather feedback. The first meeting will be Feb. 24 in Kansas City at Metropolitan Community College-Penn Valley and Feb. 25 in St. Louis at University of Missouri-St. Louis. The meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m.

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.

Sunday, Feb 16, 2014

Missouri school board starts discussing fate of children in unaccredited districts

By JOE ROBERTSON
The Kansas City Star

The state's still-evolving plan for the Kansas City Public Schools got some direction from state school board members Monday.

The seven-member panel is not inclined to turn the state's poor-performing schools over to a statewide special school district or to a state-appointed community schools office.

Several board members said they would prefer to work with the locally elected school board in Kansas City and other unaccredited districts in pursuit of swift change for failing schools.

The board seemed to turn away from some of the key elements of the state-commissioned plan created by CEE-Trust, an Indianapolis-based educational consultant. But board members want the time line for improvement to be swift and for consequences to "have teeth."

Those and many other details, debated in a six-hour workshop Monday, now need to be hammered into a plan for how the state should intervene in unaccredited school districts.

The board hopes the education department can bring a proposal to the board's next meeting on Feb. 18.

The hard question was left to some interpretation by the department: "What if?" Deputy Education Commissioner Margie Vandeven asked the board. If the unaccredited school district can't turn around its weak schools, "how does the state intervene?"

Board member Charlie Shields said he could see the unaccredited district being compelled to offer choices — either by contracting with neighboring districts to operate schools or by sponsoring charter schools in the district.

One concern the state board could not address was the extra pressure of a transfer law.

The board needs to be focused on holding districts accountable to improving performance, said board Vice President Mike Jones. It should not compromise its standards because of a problem with a law that the legislature has failed to address for several years.

"The responsibility for fixing that is across the street at the state legislature," he said.

The transfer law allows students in unaccredited districts to transfer to neighboring districts, with costs for tuition and transfer paid by the unaccredited districts.

In many ways, said Mark Van Zandt, the education department's general counsel, the state's wish to find a "nuanced" plan for failing schools is trumped by the immediate concerns of the transfer law.

The Missouri School Boards Association on Monday announced that many districts and organizations are pitching an idea that unaccredited districts would be willing to enter into a performance agreement with the state school board. While the districts are under that agreement, the state would classify them as provisionally accredited, freeing the districts and their neighboring districts from the transfer law.

The law threatens to come into play in Kansas City ahead of the 2014-15 school year and is already in effect in the St. Louis area, where the unaccredited Normandy and Riverview Gardens school districts are in danger of bankruptcy.

The state board has enough on its plate, board members said, recognizing the "traps" awaiting them in every direction as they hope to agree on a policy for helping failing schools.

The board members worried about how to give choice to families in poor schools, without sacrificing the children who stay behind. They worried about labels and the potential "leper colony" image around the idea of a special state-run district for failed schools.

There were concerns about the idea of giving failed schools over to nonprofit entities. And they worried about the capacity statewide and in communities to gather the immense talent needed to pull off the steep missions in several reform ideas on the table.

The state must contemplate the pressure of the transfer situation, board President Peter Herschend said, but not let it cripple the long-term mission of fixing the plight of 62,000 children in districts that are unaccredited or provisionally accredited.

The work ahead has to find a way that "we can say we changed that number," he said. "We helped the 62,000 children who are being cheated in their lives."

The education department is contemplating ideas picked from several proposals on how the state should intervene. The presentation did not mention any of the plans by name but scattered their different ideas under headings that included governance, finance, accountability, community and parent involvement, and teacher quality.

Foremost is the plan that the department commissioned from CEE-Trust, which proposes the most sweeping changes. It would replace the current board and administrative structure with a community schools office that would oversee a network of independent schools with their own school boards. The schools would have autonomy to choose staff, curriculum and programming as long as they meet performance agreements.

The community schools office would have a chief executive appointed by the education commissioner, and an advisory board appointed by the state school board.

Several area school district superintendents and their state association proposed a plan that emphasizes more collaboration between the state and districts that are struggling. Schools that continue to perform at an unaccredited level would come under a state achievement district.

Kansas City Public Schools also submitted a plan, drawing the same accountability structure as the superintendents' plan and outlining more intense programming to help students and their families inside and outside of school.

Other plans in the mix have come from the Missouri Charter Public Schools Association and the Kansas City-based Metropolitan Organization for Racial and Economic Equality.

The Kansas City chapter of the NAACP added its proposal to the mix Monday, calling for the state board to protect transfer rights but giving Kansas City another year to see whether its improvement plan continues to show progress. The NAACP plan, like the superintendents' plan, urges that accreditation and intervention be applied school by school and not districtwide.

The state board members said they would be inclined to support a school-by-school accountability system.

The plan the department ultimately proposes could be any combination of the ideas on the table. And the board members think the plan should be flexible, adapting to the needs of each unaccredited district and its individual schools.

Kansas City has been unaccredited since January 2012 but has been improving its state report card score the past two years. It scored in the provisionally accredited range in August 2013 and asked the state to grant it provisional status.

But the state determined the district needed to hit the mark for at least two years.

Kansas City sued the state, seeking a designation of provisional accreditation. The case is pending.

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

Editorial



Sunday, Feb 16, 2014

Don't embrace the experimental overhaul of Kansas City schools

Top Missouri education officials are scheduled to work this week on a plan that could shape the future of Kansas City Public Schools and other struggling districts.

Education Commissioner Chris Nicastro has sought suggestions from the public and interested groups and, controversially, an Indianapolis-based firm that supports school choice. She hopes to recommend a plan to the Board of Education when it meets Feb. 18.

Nicastro and the board would make a serious mistake by adopting wholesale the dramatic changes recommended by CEE-Trust of Indianapolis, especially when better options exist.

While some of its prescriptions are on the mark — universal pre-kindergarten, for example, and more decision-making authority at the school building level — CEE-Trust proposes making Kansas City the site of a first-of-its-kind experiment.

It would dismantle the Kansas City Public Schools and replace it with a new entity that would select and support a system of independent nonprofit school operators. Those chosen to run schools would decide on curriculum, teacher pay, school year calendars and school culture. A “community schools office” would take care of central functions such as transportation.

The troubled history of Kansas City's urban school district demands new thinking and more accountability. But the CEE-Trust plan is highly speculative. It relies on multiple as-yet-unknown entities to create and sustain great schools.

Kansas City has a strong nonprofit and foundation network. But does the community have the capacity to sustain enough excellent nonprofit boards to make sure these schools thrive and serve the interests of children and their families? Sustained board leadership has been a challenge for many charter schools in Kansas City.

We also question whether a collection of independently run schools, some of which would enroll students through a lottery, would appeal to families looking at Kansas City as a place to live. Strong neighborhood schools in a stable district seem a more reliable option.

The Kansas City Public Schools has for the most part also failed to provide that option. But while the district's overall performance is unacceptable, some schools perform well.

Most plans submitted to the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recognize that dichotomy, and correctly propose that interventions take place at the building level as opposed to dismantling entire school systems.

A consortium of superintendents has recommended that failing schools be placed under the temporary control of an “achievement district” run by a state board. Schools — and districts — that fail to improve could eventually become part of a more successful district. Leaders of the Kansas City Public Schools have proposed something similar.

Neighboring school districts need to be a part of the solution. Districts such as Center, Grandview and Raytown have achieved impressive academic results with students who, like most of those in the Kansas City Public Schools, come from impoverished backgrounds.

Superintendents of those districts and others have expressed their willingness to help turn around failing schools in the Kansas City district, and even annex them if necessary. Given their track records and their understanding of the educational environment here, tapping their expertise looks like the quickest route to a turnaround.

Most families in Kansas City are weary of educational experiments. They want solid leadership in which they can place their confidence. The faster state leaders can facilitate that, the better.

Sat, Mar. 08, 2014

The definition of class: 75 rounds later, Kush Sharma wins the Jackson County Spelling Bee

By DONALD BRADLEY
The Kansas City Star

At the end came a moment that everyone watched, but only two could really share.

Rightfully so for Kush Sharma and Sophia Hoffman. These two went 75 rounds alone, spread over two weeks, after everyone else fell out of the Jackson County Spelling Bee.

On Feb. 22, the competition was suspended when the judges ran out of words.

Coming back Saturday to pick up their marathon bout, Sophia, 11, a Lee's Summit fifth-grader, misspelled her word — "stifling" — in Round 28.

After an appeal, a judges' huddling to review a recording and then a break, Kush, 13, a seventh-grader from Kansas City, stepped to the microphone in the bone quiet of Helzberg Auditorium at the Kansas City Central Library.



He needed one word to win it all and a trip to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C. As soon as the pronouncer gave it to him, everyone knew it was over. But then a woman at the officials' table broke in to say her audio equipment had stopped working. A technician hurried over.

It was during that little break that Kush, standing alone, turned to Sophia sitting behind him. They

locked eyes, tears in hers, and she gave him a little smile.

When he turned back, a bit of woe crowded the excitement on his face. It had all been so good, so fun, so special and so long, and he was about to end it.

After nailing earlier killer words like “hemerocallis” and “jacamar,” Kush spelled “definition” — after first, of course, asking for its definition. Behind him, Sophia was first to clap, happy for the friend she got to know as they passed to the microphone back and forth through 75 rounds.

Kush, a polite young man, patiently gave the moderator a handshake before hurriedly going to Sophia. They hugged.

Minutes later, Sophia said, “It was a great experience, and I’m happy for Kush.” She added she would be back next year.

News outlets all over the country and world had picked up on these two. They had traded “madeleine” for “scherzo,” “mukhtar” for “bobbejaan,” and on and on for more than five hours. They and their families traveled to New York on ABC’s dime to appear on “Good Morning America,” a sh

ow widely watched that day at Sophia’s Highland Park Elementary in Lee’s Summit and Kush’s Frontier School of Innovation in Kansas City.

Scripps officials rejected a groundswell push on Twitter to “Send Them Both!”

Both Kush and Sophia crammed for Saturday’s finale. Sophia got help from her sister, Jordan, 15, who won the bee three times from 2010 and 2012.

A.K. Sharma worried his son didn’t get enough sleep the night before.

“I told him he was supposed to be in bed at 10, but he wanted to stay up and watch the guy who took Jay Leno’s place,” Sharma said.

Because of the unprecedented attention for the showdown, a large projection screen on the library’s main floor enabled viewing for an overflow crowd of more than a hundred.

Neither skipped a beat until Sophia’s miss in Round 28. During the ensuing break, she gathered with her family. Kush saw Sophia crying.

He walked over and bent to her.

“Stop crying, or you’re going to make me cry,” he told her.

She looked up and laughed.

Next year, they will probably see each other again.

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Tuesday, Mar 11, 2014

Google Fiber begins sign-ups for more parts of the KC area

By SCOTT CANON
The Kansas City Star

[Google Fiber](#) kicks off a push today to land customers in the northern and southern stretches of Kansas City and three suburbs — with a promise to hook them all up by year's end.

That marks a far speedier effort to light up homes with the TV and super-fast Internet service than Google Inc. achieved in its first rollout of fiberoptic network.

"We're just excited about being able to move quicker," said Carlos Casas, Google Fiber's Kansas City field team manager. "We've made some changes to our (registration) process."

The campaign is the second for now-or-never sign-up Google Fiber "rallies."

Residents of much of southern and northern Kansas City, Raytown, Grandview and Gladstone can begin [registering](#) this afternoon for the service and hope their neighbors follow suit. Prospective customers will need to put down \$10 with a credit or debit card and declare what service they will buy.

Google [says](#) it will expand only where demand is greatest.

In Google Fiber's first rollout, the neighborhoods that showed the greatest demand were the first to get the service. That created a hopscotch deployment. This time, hoping to speed things, Google will hook up the southern areas first, then the northwest and finally the northeast. It also will begin with larger installation crews and slightly fewer homes. The company says it will finish that work by year's end.

Its first rally wrapped up in fall 2012. The company expects to complete installations to houses and apartment buildings in Kansas City, Kan., and the middle third of Kansas City, Mo., later this spring.



Google Fiber sells industrial-strength broadband (optionally bundled with cablelike TV) at home consumer prices. At speeds nearly 10 times those of most Internet hookups, it lets customers stream high-definition video to multiple screens at once.

This second phase of customer recruitment comes as the fanfare of Google launching its service in Kansas City has largely faded. It is selling the same service in Austin, Texas, and Provo, Utah. The company announced in February that it is contemplating expanding to up to nine other markets nationwide.

This second registration effort figures to gauge the excitement for a service that has yet to spawn a game-changing use of the Internet.

“If you had a lot of really cool applications (that require ultra-fast Internet speeds), that would probably be a magnet,” said Donna Jaegers, a telecommunications industry analyst at D.A. Davidson & Co. “(But) it’s too early for that.”

Indeed, the service, notable for 1-gigabit-per-second speeds to high-end customers, is still relatively young. The first handful of customers had the service installed in late 2012. Google will not say how many customers it has.

Google breaks up the cities it serves into “fiberhoods,” its name for neighborhoods. It then sets a threshold for the number of potential customers it needs from each area, ranging from 5 percent to 25 percent of households. The number varies based on the population density and the cost to expand into a neighborhood.

Analysts see the rallies as a clever marketing scheme. They coax bandwidth-hungry technophiles to recruit their neighbors. Google’s offer of free connections to schools, library and other public buildings is also contingent on signing up enough homes in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Raytown, Grandview and neighborhoods in south Kansas City have until April 10 to qualify. Fiberhoods in northwest Kansas City have until May 15. Gladstone and the rest of Kansas City, North, have until June 19.

In addition, 21 neighborhoods that didn’t qualify in Google Fiber’s first rally have a second chance with a June 19 deadline.

The companies that were selling Internet access and TV before Google arrived are reluctant to concede they have adjusted their packages. Rather, they say their increasing Internet speeds and occasional discounts reflect a market with an unusual amount of competition. [Time Warner Cable](#) is the dominant company. In some suburbs where Google has yet to expand, [Comcast](#) leads.

But [AT&T’s U-verse](#) product moved into the market several years ago and now has more than 100,000 customers. [Consolidated Communications](#), formerly SureWest, offers Internet, phone and TV service to neighborhoods encompassing 140,000 homes in the market, and sells to nearly a third of those.

Consolidated overlaps with Google's existing network for about 2,500 homes, said Matt Smith, the company's treasurer and vice president for investor relations. Smith said the company lost some of its customers when Google Fiber moved in, but not primarily for the gigabit Internet.

Google offers three tiers of service. For \$70 a month on a one-year contract, customers can buy the fastest Internet connections. For \$120, that Internet hook-up comes bundled with a standard TV package.

But for \$300 split into a year of \$25 monthly payments, Google sells a relatively slow Internet service that promises download speeds up to 5 megabits per second and upload speeds of a single megabit per second. After the first year of installation payments, the service is free for six more years.

Smith said it is that so-called free service, that has drawn most of the Consolidated customers who bolted to Google Fiber.

"The demand isn't there for the higher speeds," he said. Rather, Consolidated has found more customers prefer to buy Internet speeds of 10-18 megabits per second.

Consolidated sells TV programming bundled with 10-megabits-per-second Internet for \$66 a month. Time Warner Cable sells stand-alone Internet services at prices ranging from \$15 a month for 2 megabit speeds, \$40 for 15 megabits and up to \$70 for 100 megabits. Basic TV and 18-megabit Internet from U-verse starts at \$79 a month.

But most customers buy their service in discounted bundles. Unlike its competitors, Google Fiber does not include phone service, and it lacks the popular cable channel AMC.

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Appendix: Income Inequality in America's 50 Largest Cities, 2007-2012

City	Population, 2012	Household Income, 2012		Ratio, 2012	Change in Household Income, 2007-2012		Ratio Change, 2007-2012
		20th percentile	95th percentile		20th percentile	95th percentile	
1 Atlanta, Georgia	443,768	\$14,850	\$279,827	18.8	-\$4,036	-\$16,813	3.1
2 San Francisco, California	825,863	\$21,313	\$353,576	16.6	-\$4,309	\$27,815	3.9 *
3 Miami, Florida	413,864	\$10,438	\$164,013	15.7	-\$1,840	-\$3,397	2.1 *
4 Boston, Massachusetts	637,516	\$14,604	\$223,838	15.3	-\$1,359	-\$14,912	0.4
5 Washington, District of Columbia	632,323	\$21,782	\$290,637	13.3	-\$22	\$7,645	0.4
6 New York, New York	8,336,697	\$17,119	\$226,675	13.2	-\$1,735	-\$8,677	0.8
7 Oakland, California	400,740	\$17,646	\$223,965	12.7	-\$1,062	-\$14,059	0.0
8 Chicago, Illinois	2,714,844	\$16,078	\$201,460	12.5	-\$2,194	-\$4,100	1.3 *
9 Los Angeles, California	3,857,786	\$17,657	\$217,770	12.3	-\$3,107	-\$26,242	0.6
10 Baltimore, Maryland	621,342	\$13,522	\$164,995	12.2	-\$2,706	-\$7,586	1.6 *
11 Houston, Texas	2,161,686	\$17,344	\$205,490	11.8	-\$1,977	-\$10,327	0.7
12 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	1,547,607	\$12,850	\$151,026	11.8	-\$1,536	\$2,638	1.4 *
13 Dallas, Texas	1,241,108	\$17,811	\$200,367	11.2	-\$2,392	-\$25,065	0.1
14 Detroit, Michigan	701,524	\$9,083	\$101,620	11.2	-\$2,098	-\$19,820	0.3
15 Minneapolis, Minnesota	392,871	\$17,753	\$193,777	10.9	-\$1,486	-\$8,256	0.4
16 Memphis, Tennessee	655,141	\$13,520	\$145,015	10.7	-\$1,231	-\$12,014	0.1
17 Cleveland, Ohio	390,923	\$9,432	\$100,903	10.7	-\$1,865	-\$5,537	1.3 *
18 Tulsa, Oklahoma	394,098	\$17,359	\$183,407	10.6	\$38	\$4,127	0.2
19 Denver, Colorado	634,265	\$19,770	\$208,810	10.6	\$1,000	\$7,169	-0.2
20 Fresno, California	505,870	\$15,665	\$160,360	10.2	-\$3,257	-\$6,171	1.4 *
21 Charlotte, North Carolina	775,208	\$21,998	\$219,126	10.0	-\$4,864	-\$6,815	1.6 *
22 Kansas City, Missouri	464,346	\$16,353	\$161,488	9.9	-\$1,641	-\$2,668	0.8
23 Long Beach, California	467,888	\$19,255	\$185,543	9.6	-\$3,042	-\$14,302	0.7
24 Austin, Texas	842,595	\$21,738	\$207,594	9.5	-\$1,646	-\$10,787	0.2
25 Portland, Oregon	603,650	\$20,152	\$191,492	9.5	-\$1,535	\$3,681	0.8
26 Tucson, Arizona	524,278	\$13,798	\$130,327	9.4	-\$3,800	-\$9,029	1.5 *
27 Sacramento, California	475,524	\$17,901	\$168,858	9.4	-\$6,608	-\$12,393	2.0 *
28 Milwaukee, Wisconsin	598,920	\$13,328	\$125,363	9.4	-\$3,481	\$237	2.0 *
29 El Paso, Texas	672,534	\$16,206	\$151,745	9.4	\$1,530	-\$4,486	-1.3
30 Indianapolis, Indiana	835,806	\$16,230	\$150,346	9.3	-\$5,811	-\$16,883	1.7 *
31 Seattle, Washington	634,541	\$26,156	\$239,549	9.2	-\$678	-\$11,471	-0.2
32 Louisville, Kentucky	605,108	\$16,924	\$152,792	9.0	-\$1,636	-\$11,832	0.2
33 Albuquerque, New Mexico	555,419	\$18,646	\$168,121	9.0	-\$2,818	-\$239	1.2 *
34 Nashville, Tennessee	623,255	\$18,539	\$166,032	9.0	-\$3,914	-\$10,293	1.1 *

City	Population, 2012	Household Income, 2012		Ratio, 2012	Change in Household Income, 2007-2012		Ratio Change, 2007-2012
		20th percentile	95th percentile		20th percentile	95th percentile	
35 San Diego, California	1,338,354	\$25,126	\$224,814	8.9	-\$3,158	-\$13,942	0.5
36 San Jose, California	982,783	\$31,047	\$273,766	8.8	-\$3,560	\$8,143	1.1
37 Jacksonville, Florida	836,507	\$17,411	\$152,329	8.7	-\$7,843	-\$18,999	2.0 *
38 Phoenix, Arizona	1,488,759	\$19,186	\$167,503	8.7	-\$3,796	-\$26,099	0.3
39 San Antonio, Texas	1,383,194	\$18,518	\$158,566	8.6	-\$1,480	-\$5,381	0.4
40 Columbus, Ohio	809,890	\$17,238	\$147,496	8.6	-\$1,134	\$1,295	0.6
41 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	599,309	\$18,835	\$160,125	8.5	-\$1,492	-\$12,331	0.0
42 Raleigh, North Carolina	423,743	\$24,113	\$199,911	8.3	-\$1,137	-\$174	0.4
43 Omaha, Nebraska	421,564	\$19,649	\$161,910	8.2	-\$2,252	-\$7,658	0.5
44 Fort Worth, Texas	782,027	\$20,992	\$168,989	8.1	-\$1,701	-\$827	0.6
45 Colorado Springs, Colorado	431,846	\$22,213	\$175,034	7.9	-\$3,372	-\$4,378	0.9 *
46 Wichita, Kansas	385,586	\$19,516	\$151,068	7.7	-\$2,781	-\$16,879	0.2
47 Las Vegas, Nevada	596,440	\$21,380	\$164,344	7.7	-\$6,248	-\$36,330	0.4
48 Mesa, Arizona	452,068	\$21,007	\$157,190	7.5	-\$5,952	-\$10,044	1.3 *
49 Arlington, Texas	375,598	\$24,169	\$175,759	7.3	-\$3,458	\$220	0.9 *
50 Virginia Beach, Virginia	447,021	\$31,051	\$187,652	6.0	-\$4,727	\$211	0.8 *

Source: Brookings Institution analysis of 2007 and 2012 American Community Survey data

* Change was significant at the 95% confidence interval

LINC Chess K-12 Tournament

Saturday, April 5, 2014



No Entrance Fees! Medals awarded to every participant!

Pre-register online at kclinc.org/chess

Check-In: 8-9 am

Pre-registration will close the Wednesday
before the tournament at noon!

Students who are not pre-registered will not play in the first round!

North Kansas City High School
620 East 23rd. Ave. N. KCMO 64116

Students who are not pre-registered or who show
up late will not be permitted to play in the first round!

Please pre-register & be on time!



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