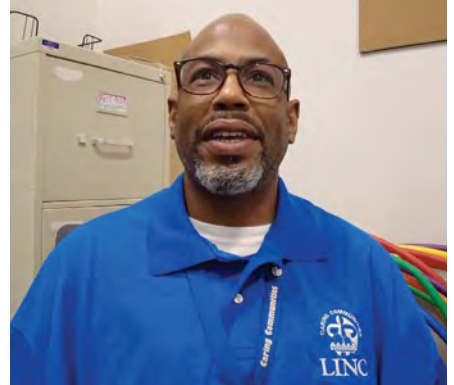


LINC Commission Meeting

October 18, 2021



Why we **LOVE** 
working
for **LINC**SM

LINC part-time staff share their stories about why they choose to work for LINC and with our children and families.



Local Investment Commission (LINC) Vision

Our Shared Vision

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

Our Mission

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

Our Guiding Principles

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



Monday, Oct. 18, 2021 | 4 – 5:30 pm
Online Meeting

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Announcements
- II. Approvals
 - a. **September 2021 minutes (motion)**
- III. Superintendent Reports
- IV. LINC Employee Recognition
- V. LINC Financial Management Update
 - a. State contracts
 - b. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education
 - c. 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- VI. Other
 - a. Utility Assistance
 - b. Black History Project Award
 - c. Staff Recruitment Campaign
 - d. Lights On After School
- VII. Adjournment



THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – SEPT. 20, 2021

The Local Investment Commission met via Zoom. Cochair **Ken Powell** presided. Commissioners attending were:

Bob Bartman
Bert Berkely
Tom Davis
Aaron Deacon
David Disney
Mark Flaherty

SuEllen Fried
Rob Givens
Tom Lewin
Marge Randle
David Ross
Marj Williams

Powell thanked school district staff for their leadership in serving students and families during a difficult time.

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2021, LINC Commission meeting was approved unanimously.

Superintendents Reports

- **Yolanda Cargile**, Superintendent (Center School District), reported the school year began with in-person learning and an option for virtual learning. The school board approved the new five-year strategic plan which focuses on real-world learning opportunities, racial equity, academic growth, reducing discipline rates, hiring and retaining qualified staff, and maintaining financial reserves. Cagile thanked LINC for partnering in the food pantry program and Justice in the Schools. The new Indian Creek Elementary building is now open (a video was shown).
- **Steve Morgan**, Asst. Superintendent (Fort Osage School District), reported the new school year began with in-person learning and a few students learning virtually. The district held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new East Campus building on Aug. 26. The school board is expected to approve a name for the new coffeeshop, which will hold a grand opening in October. Homecoming was held on Friday. Finding bus drivers is a big challenge; the district has also lost a food vendor.
- **Joana King**, Asst. Superintendent (Grandview School District), reported the district is facing shortages of drivers, substitute teachers, and food options. Student enrollment is down 300 from last year. Grandview expanded Pathway Academies last year; over the summer teachers participated in externships with Honeywell.
- **Yaw Obeng**, Superintendent (Hickman Mills School District), thanked LINC staff for help guiding the school board through issues. The district is addressing a food shortage caused by supply chain and labor issues; last week the district held a media campaign, which has garnered support. The district is also addressing staff shortages, offering incentives. The district is observing Hispanic Heritage Month.
- **Christy Harrison**, Director of Educational Innovation (Kansas City Public Schools), reported KCPS is working with parents and stakeholders on Blueprint 2030. KCPS has rolled out a new student information system, Infinite Campus, to provide new data and faster access. The district has launched Evening Academy for high school students who need classroom options outside of traditional hours. Dr. Jennifer Collier is the new deputy superintendent.

- **Dan Clemens**, Superintendent (North Kansas City Schools), reported a Northland parent group is suing the district over its mask mandate. The district is facing substitute teacher shortages and has lost three food vendors; it is working with the Governor's office on the issue. The district opened a new early childhood learning center this year and is implementing four Pathways at each school.

Rob Givens reported on the LINC 401(K) and Retirement Committee's efforts to manage LINC's fiduciary responsibility by working with its co-fiduciary Two West. The Committee is requesting action from the Commission on a resolution including the following items:

1. Amend the charter to remove the automatic inclusion of particular officer positions as recommended by the LINC 401(k) Retirement/Savings Committee
2. To appoint David Disney, a non-employee member of the Commission to the Committee to fill the vacancy created by the death of Bailus Tate.
3. To appoint Bryan Shepard, an employee of Greater KC LINC, Inc., to the Committee to fill the vacant employee position.

A motion to approve the Committee's resolution was approved unanimously.

HR Director **Trent DeVreugd** reported on LINC's efforts to work with Blue Cross Blue Shield KC to provide quality health care benefits to LINC staff at a reasonable cost. LINC is negotiating with BCBS to renew the health plan for 2022.

LINC President **Gayle Hobbs**, Vice President **Janet Miles-Bartee**, and Deputy Director **Brent Schondelmeyer** reported on LINC's Safe to Serve initiative. All LINC staff are now fully vaccinated. Staff are wearing Safe to Serve buttons, and the effort is being promoted by signage at LINC sites. Over 26,000 vaccinations have been given at the clinic at Morning Star Youth and Family Life Center, which will also provide booster shots.

Miles-Bartee, Hobbs, and DeVreugd reported on the fall opening of the LINC Before & After School program. While parents are excited to have their children back in school, some are being waitlisted for the LINC program due to staff shortages. LINC is working with state licensing on the issue and is aggressively recruiting for part time staff. A video was shown.

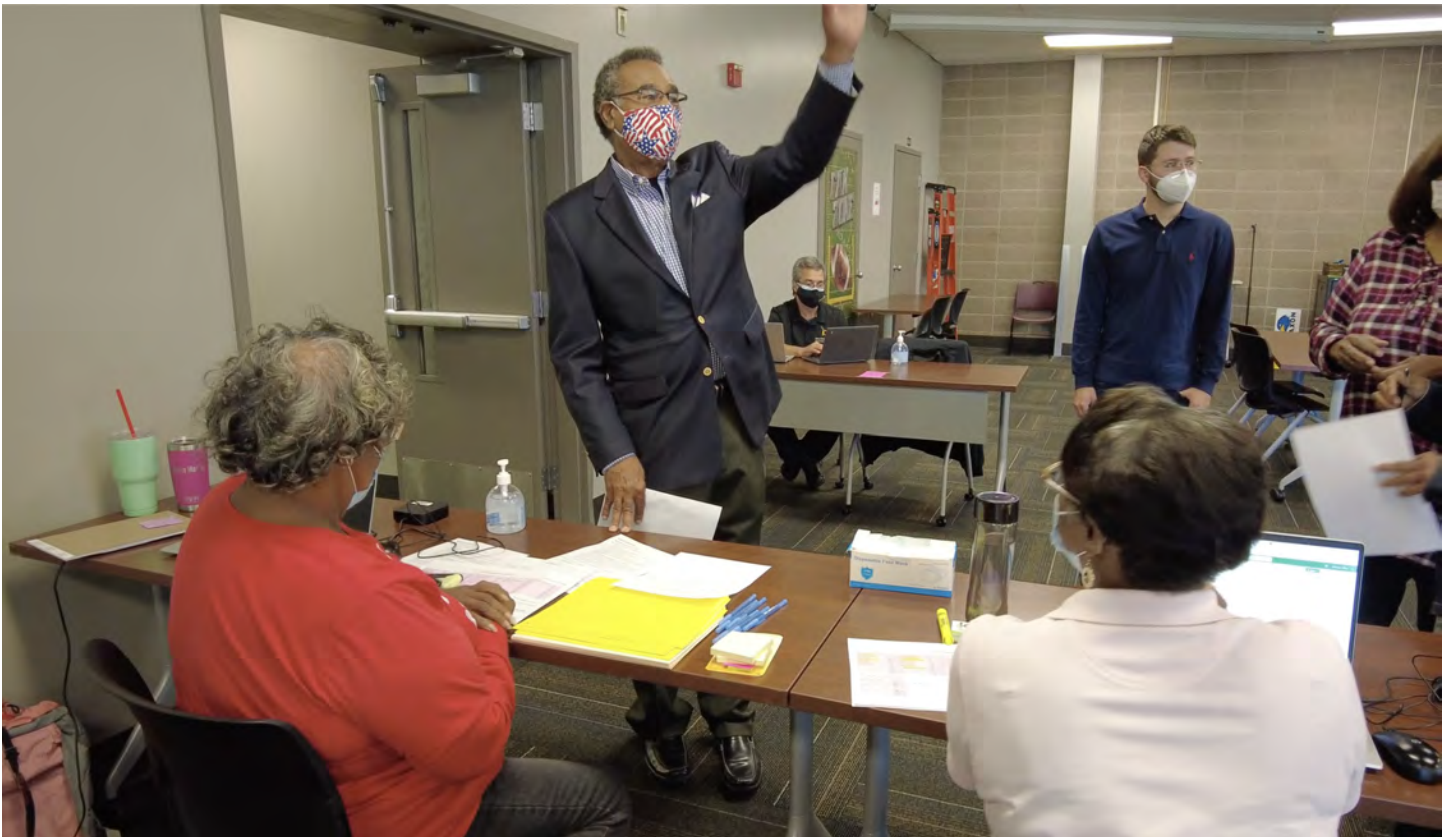
Schondelmeyer reported on LINC's involvement in the Missouri Bicentennial parade last weekend. The LINC Hickman Mills drum line and drill team marched in the parade in support of the Family and Community Trust float representing the 20 community partnerships. A video was shown.

The meeting was adjourned.

Cleaver: KC now a model in nationwide struggle to provide rent and utility assistance

Sept. 27, 2021

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer



U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II greets workers and volunteers who were helping households get access to federal dollars for rental and utility assistance at Kansas City Public Schools' Manual Career & Technical Center Sept. 25.

In a quick trip home from Washington, D.C., U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II spent Saturday at the site of one of Kansas City's most vexing struggles.

Outside, protesters were demanding protections for vulnerable renters and house-less neighbors. Inside, Kansas City workers and volunteers were helping renters get federal aid for back-due bills — sometimes in the thousands of dollars.

"Lack of adequate housing," Cleaver said, "is the No. 1 issue right now in the United States."

"No question about it," he said. "This is it."

The congressman was visiting the [Kansas City Emergency Rental Assistance Center](#) — set up on this morning at Kansas City Public Schools' Manual Career & Technical Center.

The city staffers and community volunteers in the vast room were sitting with renters and their stacks of documents, tapping at computer keyboards, working to get them relief from the bills they owe landlords and utility companies.

The federal government has appropriated \$25 billion in pandemic relief funds to help renters with back-due bills earlier this year, but for many months Kansas City was stymied like most U.S. cities in trying to get households connected to the funds.

In the past two months, however, the city has built and streamlined its processes, got help spreading the word and is now a model for other cities, Cleaver said. He wanted to come and see how the city was pulling it off, and to encourage the team.

“This is the grassroots way of doing something that’s critically important to us,” he said.

The city had people ready to upload and process documents including copies of bills and income information to go along with a cumbersome online application process. Utility companies had representatives on hand to help with account information and even put a pause on shutoff notices.

This collaboration under one roof is a model LINC started earlier this year with the [Mid-America Assistance Coalition](#) and utility companies [at Morning Star’s Youth and Family Life Center](#) to help families access the relief funds.



City staff and community volunteers help process applications for rental and utility assistance.

The city is taking appointments for future assistance clinics. To learn more and to request an appointment, go to kcmo.gov/renthelp, or call 816-513-4501.

The city and several social service agencies including LINC have now combined to distribute more than 80% of the \$12 million available so far to the Kansas City area, Cleaver said. As of Sept. 27, LINC and Morning Star had processed more than \$850,000 in utility bill assistance.

It’s still not enough, Cleaver acknowledged. He said he understands the frustration of the protesters, activists with [KC Tenants](#), who decried rapidly rising rental rates in Kansas City and issued several demands they want to share the city manager’s office.

There are many issues ahead, but the immediate relief available now in pandemic aid can’t be left on the table.

“Every time we get someone walking in that door,” he said from inside the clinic, “that’s another family whose level of safety and survivability is increased.”



KC Tenants members demand more support and rights for renters outside Kansas City’s Emergency Rental Assistance Center.

LINC helps parents bring media attention to dangerous traffic at King Elementary

Sept. 22, 2021

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer

The parents and grandparents of Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School — with LINC’s help — say they are just getting started in trying to protect their children from the dangerous traffic that rushes by their school.

“Cars come jumping over that hill,” grandparent Pam Woodcox said, “and once they top that hill it’s hard to stop.”

The King Elementary families and the Blue Hills Neighborhood Association shared their concerns with LINC’s Caring Communities Coordinator Darryl Bush, and LINC helped the parents and neighbors [reach out to local news station KSHB-41](#) to help raise attention.

KSHB reporter Sarah Plake met with the parents and neighborhood members Sept. 21 on the corner of Woodland Avenue and the school’s parking lot at E. 48th Street. The TV station came with its own radar gun to see just what the parents were talking about.

“Two weeks ago I almost got hit by a car,” parent John Allen said. “They go like 45 to 50 mph up and down that hill.”

We’ve got people using walkers,” Blue Hills Neighborhood Association President Linda Brown said. “We’ve got parents with strollers pushing children here.”

Some of the possible remedies they are seeking are more police patrols, warning lights and speed bumps. KSHB’s reporting noted the process for installing speed bumps would include getting a city evaluation, going through a petition process and getting at least 75% approval from property owners in the petition area.

Bush said he will continue working with the parents and neighbors.

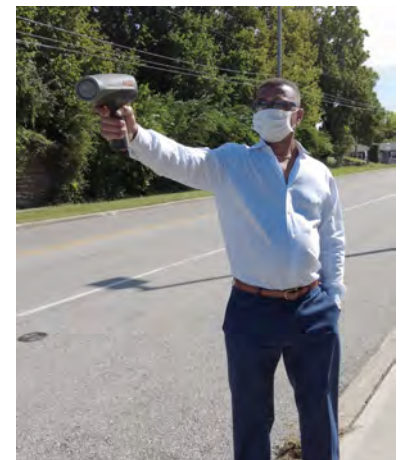
For the parents, Bush said, inviting the television station out “was just step one.”



Parents Dianna Anderson (left to right), Kara Huff and grandparent Pam Woodcox talk to KSHB-41 reporter Sarah Plake Sept. 21 about their concerns with dangerous traffic on Woodland Avenue at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School in Kansas City.



A school bus climbs the hill at Woodland Avenue and E. 48th Street that parents say is dangerous, especially when cars come over the top the hill from the other direction.



LINC Caring Communities Coordinator Darryl Bush with KSHB’s radar gun.

School lunchrooms' grim tale: This is the crisis that Covid built

Sept. 28, 2021

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer

The tales coming from area school districts are beginning to sound like a fractured children's book.

These are the warehouses with empty shelves that lack the workers to load the trucks that sit with no drivers to deliver the food that goes to lunchrooms with freezers gone bare in schools that lack servers to ladle the meals that feed the kids who are trying to learn, if they can be focused and healthy and strong.

Yes, the strain on school nutrition programs stretches up “the whole delivery chain,” Hickman Mills Superintendent Yaw Obeng said at the September LINC Commission Meeting.

The North Kansas City School District, Superintendent Dan Clemens told the Commission, is just one of many districts that have had major food suppliers cancel their services because the suppliers can't fulfill their contracts.

The crisis has districts scrambling after new resources and paring down menu options to meet the critical task of feeding students, he said.

“If you can't find essential functions and provide for kids,” he said, “it's hard to educate them.”

Grennan Sims, the director of food services for Hickman Mills, [told The Kansas City Star](#) that school districts are calling food distributors and calling on each other to cobble together meal plans.

The worker shortages from school cafeterias to major food supplier warehouses is forcing hard choices on suppliers that are dealing both with retail contracts and the lower profit margin of school contracts, Sims told The Star.

“The sad part is now there are kids potentially suffering because of that,” she said. “We have a vulnerable population here in Hickman Mills. School is the only place where some of our kids get a hot meal.”

Many essential school services are straining under the worker shortages in addition to food service, superintendents told the Commission.

Administrators and staff have been called on to fill bus driver slots, do lunch duty and cover for paraprofessionals. After-school programs, like LINC, and childcare services are also in need of staff.

Put together, the shortages are denting the hard work of recovery as we emerge from the pandemic's quarantines.

School systems throughout the nation are suffering the same dilemmas — trying to maintain nutrition standards while having to take whatever food sources they can to keep meals coming.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which oversees the federal food program that provides free or reduced-price meals for low-income families, has been waiving many of its regulations and not penalizing districts for falling short of many guidelines during the shortages.

“We know that districts are doing everything they can to put healthy, nutritious food on the plate for kids,” USDA Undersecretary Stacy Dean [told the New York Times](#). “We want to support that effort and reassure them that no one is going to get in trouble because of an unexpected difficulty.”

Schools know well Maslow's hierarchy of needs and its understanding that a child's road to self-actualization — where real growth and learning happens — can't begin if a child fears for basic needs: food, water and shelter.

“We want kids in school,” Sims said. “We want things to be normal. A huge part of that is feeding kids.”



Children in LINC's after-school program at Border Star Montessori enjoy Covid-safe snack time in May 2020.

Fear not: Youth health ambassadors steel their courage to save lives

Oct. 7, 2021

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer



Ruskin High School students Shymerra Butler, left, and Jayleona Mayfield have taken on the role of youth health ambassadors.

Know this, all of you who answered “No” with snarky comments on 15-year-old Jayleona Mayfield’s Instagram poll asking who’s going to get vaccinated for Covid:

Jayleona’s not backing down.

Same goes to everyone who tossed away Shymerra Butler’s pro-vaccine flyers and told her they don’t need the vaccine . . . that it’s stupid . . .

“Some of them even said they think they’ll *get* the virus if they take the vaccine,” said Shymerra, who’s also 15.

Shymerra’s not backing down either.

Get ready, because one of the purposeful effects of [ArtsTech’s](#) Youth Health Ambassador’s training in Kansas City is the fire it’s lighting in its graduates.

“Don’t be scared to get your opinion across,” Jayleona said, describing what the summer training did for her. “Don’t be concerned about being judged . . . Say what you want to say.”

Jayleona was one of the 10 teenagers in the first cohort of youth ambassadors — who exceeded their goal of all together reaching at least a thousand individuals in a vaccination campaign through face-to-face encounters, student-designed flyers and views of social media posts.

Shymerra is part of the second cohort bringing a new wave of energy to the cause.

They both are Ruskin High School students, and other youths in the program have represented Paseo Academy, Lincoln College Preparatory Academy, F.L. Schlagle High School, Raytown High School, Lee’s Summit North High School, Raymore-Peculiar High School and the Kansas City Art Institute.

All of them have their personal Covid stories that they bare in their crusades. They’re also versed in the facts through classes and interviews with professionals with the Samuel U. Rodgers Health Center, University Health Truman Medical Center and the Kansas

City Health Department.

This month the U.S. passed 700,000 in Covid-related deaths. An estimated 200,000 of those who died could have survived if they had taken opportunities to get vaccinated. The youth learned that minorities were twice as likely to die from the virus, and that youth ages 12 to 17 make up only 8.2 percent of all those who have gotten the vaccine.

Yes, it's personal, said Jayleona. She has family members who live with diabetes and underlying heart conditions — people who are most at risk of serious illness or death with Covid. And she is particularly vulnerable because she has asthma.

That's part of her testimony, along with the declaration that "I'm totally vaccinated." And ArtsTech helped her hone the message, distribute it and engage peers in direct and online correspondence.

Nearly two-thirds of the people who engaged in her poll discussion said they were not getting the vaccine. And that just gets Jayleona running harder.

The new health ambassadors program "fits the mission" of ArtsTech, 1522 Holmes St., said Executive Director Juan Tabb. Because ArtsTech, a non-profit that helps young people build artistic and technological skills in an entrepreneurial environment, "is a place of teen empowerment."

Jim and Janice Nunnelly of Kansas City created and led the program, drawing on Jim's public health career and their roles as community activists to bring in public health experts. ArtsTech's programming helped the students design fliers, promotional materials and social media campaigns.

"There are a lot of untapped resources in our young people," Jim Nunnelly said. "Young people are somewhere between believing in Santa Claus and knowing we can land on the Moon. That is a precarious point in their lives."

During the health ambassadors training, he said, he could see that students have "something to hope for, something to drive toward and, most importantly, contribute to."

"I'm proud of these young people," Janice Nunnelly said. "I feel good that they are our future."

Shymerra carries on with growing courage. She continues to look for another chance for an opening — in the school cafeteria, or in breaks from class — to ask, "How do you feel about that virus going around?"

"It's OK to be outgoing and forward with your thoughts," she said. "People are out there listening."

The health ambassadors program doesn't stop with Covid. Tabb and the Nunnellys want to reach in multiple directions, turn a program of 10 ambassadors into a hundred, and influence not a thousand people but tens of thousands.

"This model can help with any public health issue," Tabb said. "Mental health, chronic disease, preventative care, healthy lifestyles . . ."

No one's going to back down now.



Jim Nunnelly (left, in blue) talks with the Youth Health Ambassadors at ArtsTech in Kansas City.



The Youth Health Ambassadors created personal promotional flyers like this one by Kansas City Art Institute student Brianna Burgo.



Why we love working for LINC

The work of LINC's Caring Communities is as important and life-changing as ever.

And the search for passionate people to join in this work also faces a critical moment.

At a time when the available workforce in Kansas City and nationwide is stretched thin, several of LINC's frontline staff stepped aside during a break from their duties with children at LINC's before- and after-school programs to give testimony to why LINC jobs — among so many choices out there — are special.

In a series of video interviews, they share the joys of their work, the challenges in helping children, families and neighborhoods, and the conveniences of part-time hours on weekday mornings and afternoons.

Watch the videos at: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8925763>

Some team members add LINC service to other employment or home obligations. Some are retirees, carrying on meaningful work in their lives. Some are college students, spending their middays in class, then gaining valuable experience — and part-time wages — in LINC's work of building communities.

Check out their stories. And learn more — and how to apply today at

kclinc.org/parttimejobs

Kansas City Black History book project wins statewide award for excellence

Sept. 30, 2021

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer

A 12-year project of gathering the stories of influential Black men and women in Kansas City's history has won a statewide award for excellence.

The [Missouri Library Association](#) honored [the Black History Project](#) with the Excellence in Genealogy and Local History Award at its annual conference Sept. 29.

The [Kansas City Public Library](#), the [Black Archives of Mid-America](#) and [LINC](#) shared the honor for a collaboration that, beginning in 2009, has shone a light on the many Black leaders from the Kansas City area who changed the world in business, history, education, athletics and the arts.

In 2020, as Missouri celebrated its bicentennial — and as the Black Lives Matter movement rose to new heights — the Black History Project compiled [more than 70 biographies](#) from the previous decade of its research into a 44-page book.

The project had already become a reliable source of important local history for schools, churches, community groups and individuals [across the nation and even internationally](#) as it produced an annual collection of features, posters and calendars highlighting some of Kansas City's great achievers.

The book gathered the features into a single volume and added essays from contemporary voices, including Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas, reflecting on the power of Kansas City's Black history today.

The project included a new poem by Glenn

North, the executive director of the Bruce R. Watkins Cultural and Heritage Center, and the poet laureate of the 18th and Vine Historic Jazz District.

A video of North reciting the poem — [“I Sing Their Names”](#) — accompanies the project online.

Copies of the book can be ordered or downloaded at kclinc.org/blackhistory, and at kblackhistory.org.

Links to the individual stories are also available on the websites.



An image from the cover of Kansas City Black History shows the 1914 cornerstone laying of the Kansas City YMCA.

Kansas City district may close, consolidate schools after years of enrollment decline

By [Sarah Ritter](#) Updated October 13, 2021 8:26 AM



Kansas City Public Schools Superintendent Mark Bedell *Star file photo*

Kansas City Public Schools, after facing dwindling enrollment over the past decade, will likely need to close and consolidate some schools over the next several years, officials said Tuesday. They're asking the community to help plan the district's future.

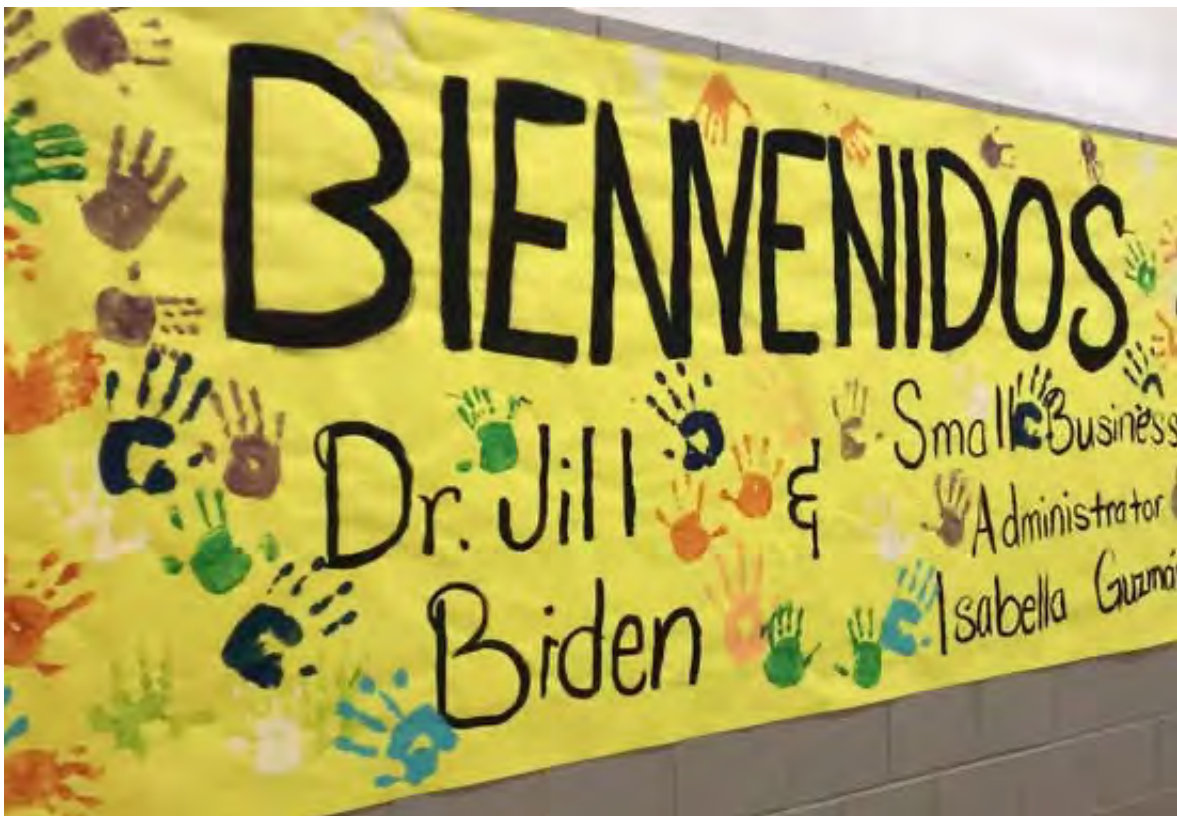
As more students have left for charter schools and suburban districts, KCPS is operating several schools that are "significantly under capacity" and unable to offer all of the extracurriculars, athletics and support services that

others with full enrollment do, Superintendent Mark Bedell said.

“How much do you think a high schooler can get in a school where the (enrollment numbers) are under 500? Do you think you can offer band? Do you think you can have debate? Do you think you can fill the football team throughout a whole season when you include injuries and you include COVID? ... It’s not possible,” Bedell told local media Tuesday.

TOP VIDEOS

Watch More



First Lady Jill Biden listens to concerns from Latino community during stop in Kansas City, Kansas

“And is that fair to our kids? Is it fair to our kids that we continue to operate a system like this, that does not give them a true comprehensive experience, unless you’re at Lincoln High School or you’re at East High School, where the

enrollment in both of those schools is over 1,000?"

School officials are engaging families, residents and community groups to help craft the district's plan, Blueprint 2030. Over the next several years, Bedell said the plan will aim to fix inefficiencies, expand and improve programs, plus ensure all students have access to the same opportunities districtwide, to help the district compete with neighboring systems and retain students.

Nothing is decided yet. And it won't be without community input, Bedell said. Several community engagement sessions are planned throughout October. Officials will then develop several scenarios.

District officials are emphasizing the need for families and taxpayers to be involved in the process — something that they said was largely missing 10 years ago, when KCPS underwent a historic "right-sizing" plan that closed 26 schools.

"I think what hurt us from 2011 is when we made these closures, there were areas in the community where we left holes. And that allowed for charter schools to flourish. They opened up in certain areas and they're thriving, because we left those holes," Bedell said. "So you've got to be very intentional around what stays and what goes. And people need to have context as to why that makes the most sense."

With the growth of charter schools over the past couple of decades, Kansas City district enrollment fell by half, to under 15,000 students. KCPS lost state accreditation, and over the past decade has been working to improve attendance and student achievement to regain full accreditation.

The district has recently seen a leveling off in enrollment, has made significant strides and is now close to achieving the goal of full accreditation.

And it has added or expanded several new programs under Bedell, such as the Middle College Program that helps young adults who dropped out prepare for post-secondary education and the workforce. It has expanded its early college program. And it's opened the International Welcome Center for English language learners and immigrant students.

Bedell said KCPS is also looking to grow evening classes.

"We're really trying to embrace this nontraditional way of how we offer programs that meet the different sectors of our community," he said. "And we think we have an opportunity to do that. But in order for us to sustain these practices, we also have to be efficient."

A high percentage of students leave the district for charters, private schools and suburban districts. According to a [transfer analysis report](#) for 2017 to 2019, released last year, roughly 1 out of every 3 students transferred out of the district at the end of elementary or middle school.

"It's hard to navigate our KCPS system in a lot of ways," spokeswoman Kelly Wachel said. "How do we make our system predictable and easy to navigate with quality schools for every option that our kids might choose? So whether it's grade configurations that we're looking at, how many schools, what kind of programs, this is the big conversation, and we want the community to know how important this is."

Bedell said in some ways, officials continue to operate the district as if it still had 20,000 students. KCPS has seven high schools, including its Manual Career and Technical Center. By comparison, the similarly sized Independence district has only three high schools.

"If I'm saying to you we've got seven high schools, and we've got high schools that are under 500 in enrollment, and you're having to fold a football

team because you don't have enough students, there's going to have to be some consolidation," Bedell said. "Those things are a part of the discussion."

District spokeswoman Elle Moxley said 26 of 32 schools do not meet the district's school size standards.

Many district buildings are also outdated, officials said, and in need of modern upgrades. Officials gave the example of high school science classrooms that do not have sinks to use during lab experiments.

"It's horrible. And I took a picture of it. I was like, are you serious? In 2021?" Bedell said. "In pockets of the district, we have it. But in some pockets, we don't. So where's the equity in how we provide services to our kids across the district?"

Bedell said students in every school should have access to the same resources, and by reconfiguring the district, schools could see additional resources, such as more math specialists, foreign language programs and school counselors.

Officials expect the process to be challenging, with tough decisions on how to operate thriving schools and reduce student mobility across the city, including in neighborhoods with a history of redlining and economic depression.

"Is there going to be discomfort? Are we going to experience some frustration and pain? I've been through this before. Every system I've been through where we've had to do something like this, whether it's boundary changes or consolidation ... there is some discomfort. And we have to be willing to go through this discomfort to get to a better day," Bedell said.

"There are things we're going to have to give up. We can't continue to do

things the same way we've been doing it because if what we were doing was working, we wouldn't be in this situation having to have this conversation," Bedell said. "Obviously what we're offering right now is not what the community wants. Otherwise, we would be thriving from an enrollment standpoint. So we have to make some serious changes here in order to get people to really say, this is a system I want my kid to attend."

Bedell said the community will guide the decisions and have a say in what plan makes the most sense for the district in the coming years.

"For me, the community is going to tell us how far we want to go."

Community meetings

Here are the upcoming engagement sessions for the public:

- Noon-1 p.m. Oct. 18: Bedell will hold a Facebook Live session about the planning process. And from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. that day, the district will host an open house at Phillips Elementary School.
- 5:30-6:30 p.m. Oct. 19: The district will hold a virtual meeting via Zoom in Spanish.
- 5-7 p.m. Oct. 20: Open house at Central Middle School.
- 5:30-6:30 p.m. Oct. 21: Virtual meeting via Zoom.
- 9-10:30 a.m. Oct. 22: Open house at Hale Cook Elementary.

This story was originally published October 12, 2021 3:52 PM.

Sarah Ritter covers K-12 education for The Kansas City Star. Formerly a reporter for the Quad-City Times, Sarah is a graduate of Augustana College.

LIGHTS AFTERSCHOOL



at LINC Caring Communities

Join us to celebrate our students, families, and community and focus on the importance of before and afterschool programs.

Center School District

Boone Elementary	8817 Wornall Rd., KCMO	Thu., Oct. 28, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Center Elementary	8401 Euclid Ave., KCMO	Thu., Oct. 28, 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.
Indian Creek Elementary	9801 Grand Ave., KCMO	Fri., Oct. 29, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Grandview

Butcher-Greene	5302 East 140th St., Grandview, MO	Thu., Oct. 21, 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.
Conn-West Elementary	1100 High Grove Rd., Grandview, MO	Mon., Oct. 25, 4:30 - 5:45 p.m.
Martin City K-8	201 East 133rd St., Grandview, MO	Wed., Oct. 27, 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

Hickman Mills

Dobbs Elementary	9400 Eastern, KCMO	Tue., Oct. 26, 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.
Ervin Elementary	10530 Greenwood Rd., KCMO	Fri., Oct. 25, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Kansas City Public Schools

ACCPA	6410 Swope Parkway, KCMO	Thu., Oct. 28, 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.
Banneker Elementary	7050 Askew Ave., KCMO	Thu., Oct. 28, 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Carver Dual Language	4600 Elmwood, KCMO	Sat., Oct. 30, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Gladstone Elementary	335 N. Elmwood, KCMO	Thu., Oct. 28, 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.
Hale-Cook Elementary	7302 Pennsylvania Ave., KCMO	Thu., Oct. 28, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Melcher Elementary	3958 Chelsea, KCMO	Thu., Oct. 28, 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.
Troost Elementary	1215 East 59th St., KCMO	Thu., Oct. 28, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

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