

LINC Commission Meeting

July 18, 2022



Caring Communities Day! 2022



MORNINGSTAR'S
Development Company, Inc.



LINCSM
Local Investment Commission
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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, July 18, 2022 | 4 – 5:30 pm
Kauffman Foundation

Agenda

- I. Welcome and Announcements**
- II. Approvals**
 - a. May 2022 minutes (motion)**
- III. Superintendent Reports**
- IV. Caring Communities**
 - a. LINC Summer Programs**
 - b. Back to School — Fall 2022**
 - c. Caring Communities Day**
 - d. National Community Schools & Family Engagement Conference**
 - e. MAACE Conference**
- V. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education Update**
- VI. Kansas City Public Schools — Blueprint 2030**
- VII. Other**
- VIII. Adjournment**



THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – JULY 18, 2022

The Local Investment Commission met at the Kauffman Foundation, 4801 Rockhill Rd., Kansas City, Mo.. Cochair **David Disney** presided. Commissioners attending were:

Bob Bartman
Bert Berkley
Jack Craft
David Disney
Rob Givens

Anita Gorman
Ken Powell
Marge Randle
David Rock
David Ross

Disney welcomed the attendees.

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 23, 2022, LINC Commission meeting was approved unanimously.

Superintendents Reports

- **Michael Weishaar**, Asst. Superintendent (Center School District), reported the district recently recognized teachers and support staff of the year. Commencement ceremonies were held at Church of the Resurrection, with 170 students graduating. The middle-school drum line performed at March of the Monarchs on May 7. District administrative offices will be moving to the third floor of the alternative school.
- **Yaw Obeng**, Superintendent (Hickman Mills School District), reported 291 students graduated at commencement, held last Friday at Children’s Mercy Park. The district will offer ESL classes for adults in partnership with LINC this summer and will hold two summer school sessions. The district held a vaccination clinic over the weekend. Next year the district will open a new Sixth Grade Academy. The district is working to increase compensation for staff, and several construction projects are under way.
- **Christy Harrison**, Asst. Superintendent (Kansas City Public Schools), reported 876 students graduated at commencement events held at Swinney Hall last week. Asst. Supt. **Derald Davis** was selected for the Anna Julia Cooper Excellence in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice in Experiential Education. Blueprint 2030 community meetings will be held this week at Rogers and Carver elementary schools.

LINC Financial Update

- Executive Vice President **Janet Miles-Bartee** reported LINC staff have been meeting with Mo. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education on Out of School Time funding. While there is a possibility of \$5.3 million of OST funding going out for bid, as of last week DESE assured LINC the funding will be available for the upcoming school year.
- **Rick Bien** of Lathrop GPM reported **Doug Nelson**, Lathrop GPM counsel located in Jefferson City, is assisting the LINC team on the matter of OST funding. Nelson anticipates meeting with state staff in the next 30 days while the next funding cycle is being planned.
- Deputy Director **Brent Schondelmeyer** reported the extension of OST funding is a reprieve not just for LINC but for the community and is a measure of the success so far LINC has had in educating DESE on LINC’s role as a provider of Caring Communities (not just Before & After School programs).

- Finance Director **Jeff Hill** reported Education Commissioner **Margie Vandeven** has been amenable to LINC's requests and to LINC's offers of assistance in early education.
- **Bob Bartman** reported Vandeven expressed her excitement about what LINC does and that her challenge is to create a methodology that provides the funding that LINC needs while satisfying the requirements of the auditor.
- Discussion followed.

Caring Communities Administrator **Sean Akridge** reported LINC will support extended learning by providing Before & After Summer School programs at 15 schools. Over 800 students are enrolled so far. The summer programs are also an opportunity for LINC staff from different sites to learn from each other. LINC partner Kansas City Young Audiences will offer an all-day arts camp for 80 LINC students later this summer. LINC will continue to serve families of all LINC sites, not just those holding summer programs.

Janet Miles-Bartee and Caring Communities Site Coordinator **Danisha Clarkson** reported LINC will hold its first Caring Communities Day event on June 11 at Morning Star Youth and Family Life Center. The event will be a fun carnival event including free food, ice cream, popcorn, music and games, and will also offer family resources including utility assistance, internet assistance, and other resources from community partners such as Kansas City Fire Department and League of Women Voters.

David Disney reported that LINC Commissioner Mark Flaherty passed away recently and was remembered for his kindness and his achievements at his memorial service. President **Gayle A. Hobbs** reported on Flaherty's efforts to ensure the proceeds from the sale of Health Midwest to HCA were used to benefit the community. A video tribute to Flaherty was shown.

The meeting was adjourned.

Simon says: No stopping the possibilities for LINC's big summer

June 8, 2022

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer



Tunneling fun marks some of the summer activities at LINC's Caring Communities at Lee A. Tolbert Community Academy.

"Simon says . . ."

A giggling pod of grade schoolers in LINC's summer Caring Communities program at Conn-West Elementary School in Grandview poised for the next directive. Frozen in anticipation.

". . . do your favorite dance move!"

For a moment the children looked wide-eyed at each others faces, their minds racing with so many possibilities.

And then they were off all at once — a dazzling array of gyrations, spins and leg kicks — as varied and entertaining as LINC's menu of summer recreational and educational fun.

"Stop," said the LINC staffer leading the game. And the dancers froze. And immediately they realized even as the game leader told them that she had not said, "Simon says," setting off a laughing, groaning wail as they tumbled to the carpet.

Whether Simon says it or not, there's nothing stopping the possibilities of what LINC has in store for its Caring Communities summer school programs this year.

LINC is running 15 before- and after-school programs at all of the sites holding summer school in LINC's partner schools in the Kansas City Public Schools, the Hickman Mills, Grandview, Center and North Kansas City school districts and Lee

A. Tolbert Community Academy Charter School.

LINC is also running several summer clubs at elementary schools in the Fort Osage School District.

Summer programs are working once again with the many LINC partners like Mad Science, Kansas City Young Audiences, Fitness 4 Life, Urban TEC and Scouting. And field trips are back in business as many of the previous restrictions during Covid have been eased.

“In addition to the many enrichment activities, students will also attend field trips,” said LINC Caring Communities Administrator Sean Akridge.

Some of those events, he said, include trips to Lake Jacomo for fishing in partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Wonder Scope Children's Museum, the KC Zoo, I-Fly Indoor Sky Diving and more.

LINC is also partnering with Kansas City Young Audiences to provide scholarships for 100 LINC students to participate in a week-long summer camp in dance, music, theater and visual arts.

Photos and videos from the opening days of summer school programs capture the scenes at a collection of LINC Caring Community sites across several school districts.

To see the full collection, go to our Facebook page, [facebook.com/kclinc](https://www.facebook.com/kclinc).



Simon Says games helped get the first summer school after-school-day going at Conn-West Elementary.



Enjoying s'mores at Carver Dual Language Elementary



Playground fun at Topping Elementary School.



Art with geometric shapes at Ervin Elementary School.

Caring Communities' big, big day: A thousand celebrate at LINC's summer fair

June 14, 2022

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer

A thousand faces. A thousand smiles. Food for everyone. Games, prizes . . .

The first annual LINC Caring Communities Day in Kansas City was a huge hit — all under a big bowl of blue sky.

“This is the happening place for taking care of our community,” said Jackson County Executive Frank White, one of several public officials who joined the summer fair outside the Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church Youth and Family Life Center at 27th Street and Prospect Avenue.

“Whatever it might be (that a family needs),” White said of the services and activities sprawled across the church campus, “it’s here today.”

The rhythm hits you first. Dance beats shook the soundstage, luring the approaching crowd ahead of the smell of grilled hamburgers and hot dogs.

Group dances on the asphalt followed soon after: “*To the right, to the right, to the right . . .*”

But while partying to tunes like *The Cupid Shuffle* and the laughter of children made the day, more serious work really hit home, said LINC Caring Communities Coordinator Danisha Clarkson.

Because the fair also helped dozens of families and households get help with rent, utility bills and other services.

“The standout moment for me,” Clarkson said, “was helping a Wendell Phillips (Elementary School) family whose lights were cut off, and being able to immediately restore their service.”

The list of service partners was long: The Kansas City Fire Department, Community Action Agency of Greater Kansas City, Evergy, Spire, Justice in the Schools with Legal Aid of Western Missouri, voter registration with the League of Women Voters, job information with the Full Employment Council and take-home children’s books that LINC purchased through First Book .

“What a beautiful Caring Communities Day we had!” Clarkson said.

This is what LINC does, said Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas, who joined the crowd at the fair.

“Caring Communities LINC is invested in our city in so many different neighborhoods,” Lucas said. “You see so many people doing the work that makes a difference in our community each day. . . . The truth is, we (city government services) can’t do it all. It’s groups like this that do.”



Among the many attractions for children were the “Hi-Striker” bell-ringer, above, and Hula Hoops, below.



Free ice cream and KC Wolf from the Kansas City Chiefs helped make Caring Communities Day a special treat for kids.



The fitness dance team NickiFit leads some fair attendees in a dance in front of a stage filled with raffle prizes of air fryers and outdoor grills.

Children went home with some 1,500 new children’s books.

Families and children won more than a thousand game prizes. Eight raffle winners went home with an air fryer or outdoor grill.

University Health distributed 125 bags of fruit.

Adults and kids ate some 1,300 hamburgers and hot dogs and 500 ice cream treats, plus snow cones and cotton candy.

Dozens more registered to vote, learned about free legal services, applied for home internet discounts or got help with utility bills and rent.

“It was just terrific, terrific, terrific,” said Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church Pastor Rev. John Modest Miles.

“You could see the community really, really enjoyed it — the hundreds and hundreds of people. It meant so much.”

Miles thanked the many partners in the effort with the church and LINC, especially the Kansas City Fire Department which was a key collaborator in putting together Saturday’s fair.

Fire Chief Donna Lake said she had to come out and see the celebration of “being able to give back” to the community.

“We really wanted to be out here for a great event like this,” Lake said, “with all these kids and families.”

While the fitness dance team NickiFit and DJ Carl led the show from the soundstage, one special performance dazzling the crowd was LINC’s drum line and drill team from Smith-Hale Middle School in the Hickman Mills School District.

Hickman Mills Superintendent Yaw Obeng watched their show as he joined the celebration of the community’s strength together.

“It sends a message to our students and our families that people do care,” Obeng said. “And the opportunities (families have) to reach out to the many organizations that are here — and (enjoy) ice cream and food — brings fellowship and camaraderie.”



LINC team members keep score at the Pop-a-Shot game.

Missouri state Rep. Ashley Bland Manlove surveilled the scene Saturday and saw everything that’s possible with so many neighbors binding together.

“I see a lot of families,” she said. “I see a lot of potential. I see a lot of room for engagement.”

The message is particularly important for the students and young adults she saw enjoying the fair.

“Our young people need to be stimulated,” she said. “Events like this help them see what giving back means.”

LINC [has been teaming with Morning Star](#) for more than two years, setting up a service hub for surrounding Kansas City neighborhoods that were most stressed by the pandemic. Services gathered at the site distributed more than 26,000 Covid vaccinations, accessed more than \$1.8 million in utility bill and rent assistance and distributed more than 3 million pounds of food since early 2020.

Saturday’s Caring Communities Day celebrated that work and the work of all of LINC’s Caring Communities serving neighborhoods throughout the area including in the Kansas City Public Schools and the Hickman Mills, Grandview, Center, North Kansas City and Fort Osage school districts.

LINC intends to make this an annual celebration, taking a Saturday each year in June to bring everyone together in a really big way.

Meanwhile, the work goes on and we’ll be together in the small ways — and all the ways in between.



A member of Hy-Vee’s catering team grills some of the 1,300 hotdogs and hamburgers served at Caring Communities Day.

LINC shares the power of Caring Communities at MAACCE conference

June 27, 2022

By Joe Robertson, LINC Writer



LINC Executive Vice President Janet Miles-Bartee presents a workshop at the MAACCE conference June 22.

Parents know the truth. They see right through you.

That’s why, LINC Executive Vice President Janet Miles-Bartee told her roomful of after-school educators and programmers, the heart of caring communities has to be honest, generous and genuine.

Miles-Bartee and LINC Caring Communities Program Specialist Carl Wade led a LINC team that presented several workshops at the annual conference of the Missouri Association for Adult Continuing and Community Education at Osage Beach at the Lake of Ozarks June 21-23.

And LINC Caring Communities Coordinator Jason Ervin won the 2022 Outstanding MAACCE Member of the Year Award.

The conference theme was “A World of Opportunities,” and the powerful potential of caring communities has been freshly revealed to all after-school programs, especially through the pandemic, Miles-Bartee said.

“People have been asking how do you do what you do?” she said. “How do you get the families — not just the children — but the families, the neighborhoods and the communities involved in the work that you do?”

The answer, Miles-Bartee offered in her presentation — “Do you really want them there?” — has been revealed in the way that parents in need sought out their LINC Caring Communities Coordinators for help during Covid-19.

All after-school programs have this same opportunity of service, she told her audience.

“These are the people they have relationships with,” she said. “These are the people they see every day when they drop their children off . . . when they pick their children up.”

“It’s about zoning in on who is important in the work, who we have to listen to and our responsibility to the families that we serve.”

Wade, in a pair of workshops — “Building Community” and “Managing Behaviors” — presented classroom tools and strategies that likewise were grounded in caring relationships.

In demonstrations of ice-breaker games and behavior intervention strategies, Wade showed the vital joy and comfort of a classroom where everyone knows each other’s name and cares for each other.

“Do you feel needed and important and valued in this room?” he asked his workshop participants as they stood laughing together, no longer strangers at the end of the hour.

“I want you to go back to your home sites,” he said, “and go out and build community.”

LINC communications team member Joe Robertson carried the caring communities theme into a workshop on how after-school programs can expand the reach and depth of their work through websites, social media and newsletters that act as community hubs for information and resources.

“We need to be problem solvers,” he said. “It’s about information. It’s about giving aid. It’s about inspiring joy and confidence . . . in a caring community your families want to be a part of.”

Honoring Ervin

Middle school students have a way of testing the strength of a Caring Communities after-school program in ways elementary children don’t, Wade said while presenting LINC’s Jason Ervin with the Outstanding MAACCE Member of the Year Award.

Middle schoolers, Wade told the conference awards luncheon audience, are old enough to “vote with their feet.”

“If they’re truly staying, you must be doing something right,” he said. “And Jason is doing something right.”

Much of Ervin’s 23 years of service with LINC has been leading middle school Caring Communities programs, including his current work at Grandview Middle School.

“Jason has been a pillar in his community,” Wade said, “by leading and participating in efforts that provide resources to families such as utility assistance, food drives, pantries, clothing give-aways” and Covid-19 vaccinations.

The award comes in recognition of work “that comes naturally to him,” Wade said. “There’s no slowing him down.”



LINC Caring Communities Program Specialist Carl Wade preps for an ice-breaker demonstration.



Carl Wade, left, presents the MAACCE Outstanding Member of the Year Award to LINC’s Jason Ervin.

Remembering Juneteenth: LINC marks history with dance, word and song

June 14, 2022

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer



Dancers from the Esoke Cultural Arts Center perform for the LINC summer program at Ingels Elementary School.

LINC Caring Communities are celebrating Juneteenth in a host of events across many of our Caring Communities sites.

One of the special occasions shown here was at LINC’s summer program at Ingels Elementary School in the Hickman Mills School District where dancers and drummers from the Esoke Cultural Arts Center in Kansas City performed for — and with — the students and staff.

See more of the event, including videos, on our facebook page, [facebook.com/kclinc](https://www.facebook.com/kclinc).

Juneteenth, which was designated a federal holiday in 2021, dates back to June 19, 1865, which has historically been identified as the date when Union Troops after the Civil War finally got word to slaves in south Texas that they had been freed by President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation of Jan. 1, 1863.

It had taken 2½ years for the news of Lincoln’s proclamation to spread across the country all the way through Texas — and it also took time, and often Union troops, to enforce the order.

Juneteenth has become a celebration of the freedom from slavery and of Black culture throughout the U.S.

Ready transition: Bedell says KCPS will be in good hands with Collier

June 10, 2022

By Joe Robertson/LINC Writer



Resigning Kansas City Public Schools Superintendent Mark Bedell introduces Jennifer Collier at a press conference June 10. Collier, the deputy superintendent, was unanimously chosen by the school board to be interim superintendent. Bedell's resignation takes effect Aug. 5.

Kansas City Public Schools Superintendent Mark Bedell has always wanted students to have “shoot-for-the-stars dreams.”

He has his own: Someday to be named U.S. Secretary of Education Mark Bedell.

That, along with the satisfaction of seeing the school district finally enjoying long-sought respect and stability, were some of the reasons he said “it feels like it’s time,” to move on from Kansas City.

He is headed back to Maryland where he previously served as an administrator in Baltimore, closer to his family in Rochester, N.Y., and where he will get an opportunity to widen the education experience he hopes will spur him on toward his loftiest goals.

He will leave behind a district that finally achieved full accreditation after more than two decades of a highly-dramatized, up-and-down public struggle through many superintendents and administrations.

When Bedell’s resignation takes effect, Aug. 5, he will have served more than six years in the role, the longest tenure of any of the 27 superintendents and interim superintendents who passed through the top office over the past five decades.

“I don’t want anyone to feel sad or feel down,” Bedell said. “Things are different.”

His confidence in the state of the district starts with his successor, Deputy Superintendent Jennifer Collier, who the

school unanimously chose to be the interim superintendent.

Collier has been part of the Kansas City Public Schools for more than 22 years, enduring through what Bedell called “the good, the bad and the ugly.”

Collier has served at almost every level from teacher to deputy superintendent. She has been at the front of the district’s most significant work with Bedell — the member of his cabinet “who has been with me since Day One,” Bedell said.

“She has the right heart, the right focus,” Bedell said, “to continue the work of the school district on behalf of our kids.”

“As Dr. Collier takes over,” Bedell continued, “there are opportunities for stability that were not here before. This district is in good hands.”

Collier joined Bedell at the June 10 press conference and reaffirmed her commitment to the work — stressing a dedication to strengthening literacy and continuing the work of the Blueprint 2030 long-range planning process that aims to give Kansas City children expansive and life-changing educational experiences.

“The great work must continue,” Collier said.

Under Bedell, community partnerships have strengthened and support from business has prospered, and those relationships must continue to grow, Collier said.

“We still need the commitment of this community,” she said.

LINC has been one of the school district’s most reliable and durable partners through all the many changes since the mid-1990s. Bedell and Collier have praised the value of LINC’s Caring Communities programs that are anchored in all of the district’s elementary schools.

In July 2016, less than two weeks after he had started his work as superintendent, Bedell spoke at LINC’s Commission meeting, promising to address “the culture, climate — and most importantly — curriculum, instruction and assessment [to do what we have to do](#) as a school system to obtain full accreditation.”

He had inherited a district under provisional accreditation that was only two years removed from being unaccredited — and hadn’t been fully accredited since 1999.

A year later, in September 2017, [he told the LINC Commission](#) about the district’s strategic plan and the pillars that he was determined to see built to get KCPS to the level of expectations that he said were shared by the superintendents from other LINC partner districts sitting around the board room table.

“We want to do some innovative things to provide more opportunities for our kids to get across the line,” he said that day. “Because I have expectations just like these other superintendents.”



In this image from July 2016, KCPS Superintendent Mark Bedell addresses the LINC Commission 10 days into his new job, saying regaining accreditation was the No. 1 mission.



Interim Superintendent Jennifer Collier

In January 2022, the state board of education unanimously voted to restore the district to full accreditation, effective immediately. Performance was key, but so was the stability and continuity of leadership that had been so long missing, board members said.

Bedell always valued and emphasized an intimate role with his community. He played basketball with students on the weekends. His wife mentored district students and served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) helping children who were victims of abuse or neglect. Two of their children graduated from KCPS.

When Covid-19 was threatening the health and safety of the district's community, Bedell was one of the community leaders who came to LINC's vaccination clinic at Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church's Youth and Family Life Center to be seen and recorded [getting his shot](#) to help inspire others to do the same.

In October of 2021, when discussing the Blueprint 2030 work and the weighty process of reshaping the district for the future, [he posed the question](#): "How do we come out on the right side of history?"

Getting accreditation was a critical step. In a celebratory event at Rogers Elementary School Jan. 12, Bedell and Collier [talked about the journey they had shared](#) with so many other members of the staff, the community partners, parents and students.

"This school district isn't easy," Bedell said then. "But brighter days are ahead."

Now Bedell makes ready to take on the superintendent role at [Anne Arundel County Public Schools](#) in Maryland. And Collier, Bedell said, is already taking over the reins in Kansas City, even though he will remain on the job until August.

"It's her show now," he said.

And Collier takes charge of a district she knows and understand deeply over 22 years, believing that "the best days are yet to come."



Bedell celebrates KCPS's newly declared full accreditation at Rogers Elementary School, Jan. 12, 2022.

KANSAS CITY

PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Community Chat

Scenarios in Support of KCPS Commitments

Desired KCPS Academic and Programmatic Opportunities

- Full expansion of curricular resources and services to students and schools
- Full expansion of foreign language, instrumental music, and science labs into the elementary schools
- Strong increase of elective courses at the middle and high school level
- Project-based learning experiences at all schools
- More efficient staffing model for content and support
- More equitable student experiences within KCPS and among other school districts
- Greater opportunities for innovation and differentiation to meet the needs of all students

Scenario 1

Academic/Programmatic Opportunities

- Allows for full expansion of curricular resources and services to students and schools
- Full expansion of foreign language, instrumental music, and science labs into the elementary schools
- Strong increase of elective courses at the middle and high school level
- Project-based learning experiences at all schools
- Create a more efficient staffing model for content and support
- More equitable student experiences within KCPS and among other school districts
- Greater opportunities for innovation and differentiation to meet the needs of all students

This scenario allows for full academic/programmatic opportunities

KCPS Action	Elementary (PK/K-5) & K-8	Middle (Gr. 6-8)	High (Gr. 9-12)
Continue Operating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14-16 Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Schools (Including an additional middle school to support 6th grade moving into middle school) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-5 Schools
Closure/Consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9-10 Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 Schools

Cost Savings	Needed Investments	Creation of Future-Ready Spaces
\$37.5 million	\$172.5 million	\$140 million

Change in number of schools operating 37 to 25

Scenario 2

Academic/Programmatic Opportunities

- Allows for full expansion of curricular resources and services to students and schools
- Full expansion of foreign language, instrumental music, and science labs into the elementary schools
- Strong increase of elective courses at the middle and high school level
- Project-based learning experiences at all schools
- Create a more efficient staffing model for content and support
- More equitable student experiences within KCPS and among other school districts
- Greater opportunities for innovation and differentiation to meet the needs of all students

Highlighted items indicate potential limited, reduced, or eliminated opportunity

KCPS Action	Elementary (PK/K-5) & K-8	Middle (Gr. 6-8)	High (Gr. 9-12)
Continue Operating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16-18 Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Schools (Including an additional middle school to support 6th grade moving into middle school) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Schools
Closure/Consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6-8 Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Schools

Cost Savings	Needed Investments	Creation of Future-Ready Spaces
\$32 million	\$186.3 million	\$155 million

Change in number of schools operating 37 to 27

Scenario 3

Academic/Programmatic Opportunities

- Allows for full expansion of curricular resources and services to students and schools
- Full expansion of foreign language, instrumental music, and science labs into the elementary schools
- Strong increase of elective courses at the middle and high school level
- Project-based learning experiences at all schools
- Create a more efficient staffing model for content and support
- More equitable student experiences within KCPS and among other school districts
- Greater opportunities for innovation and differentiation to meet the needs of all students

Highlighted items indicate potential limited, reduced, or eliminated opportunity

KCPS Action	Elementary (PK/K-5) & K-8	Middle (Gr. 6-8)	High (Gr. 9-12)
Continue Operating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19-20 Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Schools (Including an additional middle school to support 6th grade moving into middle school) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Schools
Closure/Consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-6 Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Schools

Cost Savings	Needed Investments	Creation of Future-Ready Spaces
\$21.5 million	\$207 million	\$165 million

Change in number of schools operating 37 to 30

Kansas City schools superintendent warns against KCATA giving development incentives

[BY KEVIN HARDY](#)

UPDATED JUNE 30, 2022 12:08 PM

Outgoing Kansas City Public Schools Superintendent Mark Bedell issued a stark warning about the future of local development in a Wednesday letter to civic leaders and elected officials.

Specifically, Bedell raised concerns about the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority's foray into economic development projects. That agency, which does not fall under control of city leadership, allows developers to shop around for tax incentives and is not subject to recent incentive reform measures, Bedell said.

"Let me be clear: Adding another agency, especially one that operates as covertly as the RideKC Development Corporation has, will halt any progress the City and the School District have made and will likely squash any hope our region has for more equitable development practices," the superintendent wrote. "Financial decisions are moral decisions."

Bedell's letter was sent to elected and appointed city leaders, transit agency leaders and board members and U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver. Officials with KCATA could not immediately be reached for comment.

Last year, the transit agency announced plans to leverage its unique bi-state position to influence economic development across the Kansas City region. Now, it offers tax abatements directly to developers playing a similar role as the agencies under the umbrella of the Economic Development Corporation of Kansas City.

But Bedell noted that the KCATA, along with the Port Authority of Kansas City, does not rely on third-party financial analyses of proposed incentive projects like other city agencies require. And like the Port Authority, KCATA has recently limited opportunities for public comment at board meetings.

Kansas City Public Schools, along with other taxing jurisdictions like the Kansas City Public Library, frequently weighs in on development projects. That's because incentive agencies offer tax breaks that can reduce future potential property tax revenues for schools, libraries and other services.

The transit agency says its START incentive program can help develop or redevelop areas near existing and proposed transportation corridors.

But Bedell cited "red flags" about the new program, including a lack of communication and openness from the KCATA about projects that will affect school funding. And he noted that its development deals have so far benefited projects in wealthier parts of the metro like downtown and the River Market.



Mark Bedell talks to district patrons at a forum at the Paseo Academy of Fine and Performing Arts. JOE LEDFORD jledford@kcstar.com

“This Agency has become the way to circumvent appropriate process and they appear poised to ignore incentive reform recommendations, including caps on longer-deeper incentives,” Bedell wrote.

“So much has been done in darkness when it comes to the creation of the START program that the list of questions is long. Most importantly, though, why add another development agency to the landscape other than to cash in on the practice of ‘incentive shopping’?”

KCATA AND DEVELOPMENT

The seven-county KCATA was created in the 1960s as a result of a bi-state “compact” approved by state legislatures in Kansas and Missouri and ratified by Congress. While its position is unique, president and CEO Robbie Makinen has said the KCATA has never fully utilized its potential.

“The KCATA had over the years become a very good bus company,” he said last June. “What it needs to be is a transit authority.”

Makinen has long planned for the transit agency to do more than run buses.

Several years ago, KCATA launched Ride KC Development Corporation, a separate nonprofit overseen by the KCATA squarely focused on economic development.

Last year, lawyers told transit leaders that they were empowered to issue bond financing, which allows KCATA to take title of land from developers, award property and sales tax abatements and enter into lease-back agreements with developers. That’s similar to how agencies like the Port Authority offer incentives to developers.

In recent years, Kansas City has sought to tighten incentives for development projects. The City Council in 2019 capped the amount of property tax abatements for most developments. And last year, the city implemented new rules that require developers to include a certain amount of affordable housing in new housing projects that receive tax subsidies.

But those rules don’t necessarily apply to agencies like the KCATA or the Port Authority.

Still, City Hall has influence over the Port Authority as the mayor appoints all board members.

The KCATA is another story: It has ten board members – five from Kansas and five from Missouri. Of the Missouri members, Kansas City’s mayor appoints three.

As the agency is working with developers, it has come under scrutiny for not fulfilling its core mission.

Bus route cuts made early on in the pandemic have still not been fully restored, leaving many passengers to battle long waits and infrequent service.

Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas has publicly criticized the bus service.

“KCATA is not delivering services at the level we would expect right now,” he told The Star last month.

“...Kansas City has put in too much money year after year to have substandard services.”

The transit agency’s budget of about \$105 million is funded by local, state and federal dollars.

KCPS PUSHES BACK

After six years at the helm, Bedell last month announced he would resign to take the top leadership post at a Maryland school system.

The superintendent notably condemned a 2020 proposal to shower tax breaks on BlueScope Construction,

after the firm flirted with leaving its West Bottoms headquarters for a site in Kansas. The company had already benefited from a 20-year, 100-percent property tax break, but sought 13 more years of tax breaks.

“I am exhausted with the development community pitting the City against the public entities that are doing the work of trying to give our students and their families access to the world they deserve,” Bedell wrote in a scathing letter to the City Council. “This is systemic racism.”

He accused the city of frequently offering incentives that harm Kansas City Public Schools while sparing districts in the Northland where white students are the majority.

The day after Bedell’s letter was publicized, the City Council voted down an incentive request for the company.

Economic development incentives cost students of Kansas City Public Schools three times as much as students in other local school systems, according to a 2020 city analysis.

Between May 2018 and April 2019, property tax abatements cost school systems in Kansas City a total of \$46.7 million, according to a city analysis of disclosure documents.

Of that total, Kansas City Public Schools lost out on \$28.8 million in potential revenue — more than \$2,000 per student. That was well above the \$650 average for all school districts within Kansas City limits. Over the same time period, tax abatements in Hickman Mills deprived each student of \$651 in revenue. In North Kansas City, that figure was \$379.

Bedell underscored that disparity in his letter on Wednesday.

“Economic development is an equity issue that we cannot hide from as a City, not when suburban communities around us aren’t diverting money from their schools at the same amount per pupil,” the superintendent wrote.

“We cannot continue to pay for development in this way and at this rate — with a significant amount of money that could otherwise go to the education of Kansas City’s Black and Latino students.”

MISSOURI INDEPENDENT

Kansas City's eviction legal service helps nearly 150 residents in first month

Since June 1, contracted attorneys have provided free legal representation to all KC residents who requested services

BY: [REBECCA RIVAS](#) - JULY 11, 2022 5:55 AM

April Shabbaz lives in a Kansas City apartment with her brother, son, daughter and 20-year-old grandson.

All of the adults have low-wage jobs. This past fall, one of them abruptly lost their job, and the household fell behind on rent.

“Once you get behind on something, it is extremely hard to catch up because... you still have your new bills that are coming in,” she said.

Shabbaz applied for rental and utility assistance and ended up on a waiting list. At the same time, her landlord filed for an eviction, and Shabbaz didn't receive the court summons until two days before her hearing date.

She was able to quickly get support from a free lawyer from the [Heartland Center For Jobs and Freedom](#) nonprofit law group, who got her court date postponed to allow her rental assistance applications to go through.

Shabbaz was able to stay in her home. But she knows many people haven't been so lucky.

“If you're already a low-wage worker...you don't have money to get a lawyer,” she said. “These landlords, they have lawyers. So you're standing there in court, and you don't have nobody to represent you. You're basically being railroaded.”

Across the country, 90% of landlords have access to attorneys during eviction proceedings, compared to 1% of tenants, according to estimates from the National Coalition for a Civil Right to Counsel. It's a [trend that Missouri](#) follows as well, advocates say.

After years of Kansas City housing advocates pushing to address the problem, the city launched its new right-to-counsel program on June 1, where 12 attorneys from Heartland, the UMKC Truman Fellows program and Legal Aid of Western Missouri are now dedicated to representing people like Shabbaz.

Since the program went into effect on June 1, the attorneys collectively have taken on 139 new cases. And now, no Kansas City resident has to face an eviction without an attorney.

“Right to counsel is one of the best things that can happen for tenants, especially low-wage workers,” said Shabbaz, who is a member of advocacy group Missouri Workers Center that pushed for the program. “Because 98% of the time it's some low-wage worker that's being evicted.”

The right-to-counsel [ordinance](#) passed the city council unanimously in December. Yet despite its successes, its implementation has seen some snags.

Some of the city's outreach efforts have yet to begin. The program still doesn't have a permanent director. And an advisory committee of seven mayor-appointed Kansas City tenants will meet for the first time next week – months behind



On Dec. 9, the city council for Kansas City unanimously passed one of the most aggressive “right to counsel” ordinances in the country to ensure any Kansas City resident facing an eviction has the right to an attorney, similar to public defenders in criminal cases. (Photo courtesy of Missouri Workers Center.)

schedule.

“The swearing-in might have been months overdue,” said committee member Sabrina Davis, a leader with KC Tenants advocacy group that helped draft the ordinance, “but now that I’m in, you bet your bottom dollar I’m going to hold this city accountable to delivering our rights.”

Beginnings of citywide right-to-counsel initiative

Heartland initially grew out of the [Stand Up KC](#) movement of low-wage workers fighting for \$15 an hour, focusing primarily on unemployment and consumer rights cases.

In 2017, [Heartland co-founder Gina Chiala](#) and a co-worker felt compelled after hearing the workers talk about the threat of evictions to go down to eviction court in Kansas City and observe.

“That’s when we saw four courtrooms evicting tenants simultaneously in really large numbers,” she said, “and they’re not represented by counsel.”

Yet, landlords’ attorneys would be there representing “giant stacks” of eviction filings one after the other, she said.

“People are walking in the court with a roof over their head, and they’re walking out evicted — en masse,” Chiala said.

In 2018 and 2019, they began floating the idea of a citywide right-to-counsel initiative with elected officials and other movement leaders, but no one was able to make the campaign a top priority, Chiala said.

In January 2020, Chiala and other attorneys presented the possibility of right-to-counsel legislation to Mayor Quinton Lucas and Councilwoman Andrea Bough, who would later champion the policy this year. Both balked at the cost of a full program to give everyone the right to public defense, Chiala said.

However, right before the pandemic hit in March, the city did agree to pay for three attorneys, two with Heartland and one with the nonprofit agency [Legal Aid of Western Missouri](#). Those attorneys ended up preventing evictions during the pandemic, starting in June 2020.

And it provided them an opportunity to collect data on how publicly-funded attorneys impacted the outcomes of eviction cases, Chiala said.

Since June 2020, Heartland and Legal Aid attorneys represented hundreds of people facing evictions, and almost all of those cases ended in dismissals with the client and their families staying in their homes.

Backed by federal relief funds

The new program will cost around \$2.5 million a year, Chiala said, which largely will come from federal COVID-relief funds for now. City is paying \$700,000 and the remaining costs will come through [federal dollars funneled through Missouri Housing Development Corporation](#).

As of July 8, [MHDC has awarded](#) \$6.1 million in federal relief funds to 38 groups statewide assisting in housing case management, legal services and making sure families get rental assistance before they’re evicted.

Kansas City is among the few cities where attorneys are taking an active role in working with rental assistance funders, such as the United Way, to get payments directly to landlords.

“We can administer the settlement,” Chiala said. “So we’re not just waiting for the tenant to navigate a really difficult system. We have the ability to communicate directly with the funder to ensure that the funds are received in time to stop the eviction.”

While Heartland has one attorney that’s working on eviction cases, the firm’s main role is training the attorneys at UMKC and Legal Aid. They had their first training session last week.

“The attorneys were really enthusiastic,” she said, “and I think we’ve got a really good army of tenants rights lawyers.”



Gina Chiala, the executive director and co-founder at the Heartland Center for Jobs and Freedom, speaks at a rally in support the Tenants’ Right to Counsel ordinance on Dec. 1, 2021 at city hall in Kansas City (Photo courtesy of Heartland Center).

Kansas City has an average of 9,000 evictions every year, according to Harvard University’s [Eviction Lab tracking](#). However only about a third of eviction cases end up at the hearing phase – where an attorney would be necessary, Chiala said.

The program’s attorneys have not had to turn away anyone who has requested the services yet.

Currently, when a person receives notification about their eviction proceedings, the court also sends information about the right-to-counsel program. Heartland and other volunteers are still attending eviction court days and catching people before they go into eviction court to tell them they have a right to an attorney.

If individuals haven’t already received a “continuance” from the judge yet, then the attorneys can intervene. But they can’t help them if they are already at the trial phase.

That’s why the city needs to have an outreach team in place, Chiala said, as well as send out information about the program to people on eviction dockets.

Regarding outreach, Jane Brown, the interim director for the program and the city’s housing director, said [the city has been publicizing the program](#) “extensively” since June 1.

Regarding mailing out notices, Brown said the city entered into an agreement with the Jackson County Circuit Court in early June 2022. On a weekly basis, the circuit court has been providing names of individuals, who have had eviction cases filed against them, she said.

“Names provided by Jackson County are entered into a computer system and one of three organizations (Legal Aid, Heartland Jobs and UMKC) is assigned to represent the individual who is being evicted,” she said.

The Clay County court declined to enter into a similar agreement to provide the names, and the Platte County court request is still pending, she said.

Brown said she is “exploring other options to assist Kansas Citians in the Northland who are being evicted in the absence of a list of evictees similar to Jackson County.”

Next steps: Taking landlords to court

It’s been a long road since Chiala and her team began attending eviction court days in 2017.

“It’s still offensive that so many people are subjected to the potential loss of their housing,” Chiala said, “but it’s very thrilling that the courts are now swarming with tenants rights attorneys.”

However, right-to-counsel is just the first step, she said.

Almost a year ago, Evergy electric company came and took the meter outside Shabbaz’s home – leaving her family with no air conditioning or heat.

When she called Evergy last August, she found out that her landlord had known for 14 months that they needed to complete repairs on the meter.

“The apartments are responsible for those repairs, and they never did them,” she said. “I’m going on a year now with this meter being gone.”

Her family had to live in the living room during the cold winter months to stay warm. Having to buy heaters and AC units themselves, without reimbursement from her landlord, contributed to Shabbaz falling behind on her rent.

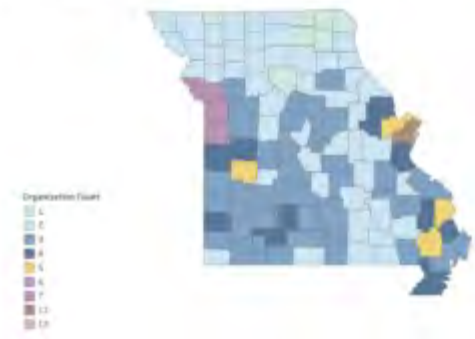
Still, her landlord filed an eviction. Her Heartland attorney was able to provide evidence in eviction court about the living conditions, which helped her win her case and have it cleared from her record.

Cases like Shabbaz’s have inspired Heartland to begin creating a new initiative to fund legal defense for tenants who want to fight these poor housing conditions in court.

“We’re looking at a habitability program, in an effort to try to get landlords to comply with the law around habitability,” she said, “because two thirds of low-income tenants have unlivable housing conditions. And so that’s where we’re going next.”

MHDC State Assistance for Housing Relief Program (SAFHR) Housing Stability Services Providers

MHDC has awarded \$6,085,870.80 to 38 SAFHR service agencies. Housing Stability Services Providers assist tenants and homeowners households with housing counseling, case management and legal services, including assistance preparing and submitting SAFHR applications.





2022 Summer Programs

District	Location	Before & After Summer School	Summer Clubs
Center	Boone Elem.	June 6–24	
Fort Osage	Cler-Mont Elem.		May 31–June 30
	Elm Grove Elem.		
	Indian Trails Elem.		
Grandview	Belvidere Elem.	June 7–28 7–9am & 4–6pm	
	Conn-West Elem.		
Hickman Mills	Ervin Elem.	June 6–July 1 7–9am & 3–6pm	
	Ingels Elem.		
	Smith-Hale Middle		
Kansas City	Garcia Elem.	June 6–30 7–9:30am & 3:30–6pm	
	Rogers Elem.		
	Phillips Elem.		
	Faxon Elem.		
	Hale Cook Elem.		
	King Elem.		
	Carver Elem.		
North Kansas City	Topping Elem.	June 6–30 (Mon-Thur.) 7–9:30am & 3:30–6pm	
Charter	Lee A. Tolbert Academy	June 6–July 8 7–8am & 3:30–6pm	

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