Lee’s Summit R-7 School District Jan. 30, 2014
Citizens’ Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

FUTURE MEETINGS/EVENTS:
- CAC Legislative forum from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, April 3, at SLC

Attachment: New Path to Excellence resolution

CAC Talking Points from Jan. 30 Meeting
- CAC members endorsed a resolution supporting the New Path to Excellence, an alternative plan developed by Missouri superintendents that provides support for struggling school districts and does not include transfer of students from one district to another.
- Members heard a comprehensive update from Dr. McGehee on the student transfer issue and were urged to stay informed on this topic and help us advocate our elected officials for a solution that is good for all students, all schools and all communities.
- The Superintendent's Leadership Team and CAC participated in a panel discussion focusing on topics such as the potential for student transfers, curriculum, the fourth high school, instructional technology and technology devices, preschool/Parents As Teachers and healthy lifestyles.

Opening / Welcome / Members Attending
Meeting opened at 6:32 p.m. CAC Chairperson Kent Kirby began the meeting and welcomed the group. CAC members attending included Chairperson Kent Kirby, Assistant Chairperson Elaine Bluml, Ron Baker, Dave Boulden, Diane Clark, Susan Coffman, Janis Duke, Dr. Jerry Evans, Trish Frevert, Mia Fulson, Eric Gibbs, Bob Gourley, Dr. Dale Greer, Terri Harmon, Pam Hart, Stephen Hill, Kimberly Hollins, Charlie Johnson, Mike Johnson, Valerie Jones, Jackie Knabe, Libia Kozisek, Dr. Tom Kurucz, Lora Ledbetter, Travis Loyd, David McCaughey, Dr. David McGehee, Judy Noland, Janice Phelan, Michael Shaw, Jan Smith, Dr. Ann Starlin-Horner, Linda Thee, Lisa Vaughn, Dorothy Walk, Cheryl Ward, Terry Watters and Ying Zurbuchen.

CAC History and Charter
Kent Kirby and Elaine Bluml presented information on the CAC Charter and history.

Student Transfer Update
Dr. David McGehee presented information on the student transfer situation, including:
- Missouri Supreme Court handed down its decision on Dec. 10 and ruled against Lee's Summit R-7 and several other area districts claiming that the student-transfer statute violated the state's Hancock Amendment. The current state statute allows students living in unaccredited districts to transfer to accredited districts within the county or any adjoining county. A total of 45 districts in the Kansas City metro area would be eligible for student transfers from Kansas City Public Schools under current law.
- Kansas City Public Schools has also filed a lawsuit against the Missouri Board of Education and the state's Department of Education (DESE) seeking to change the district's status to provisionally accredited.
- R-7 and educational leaders statewide are encouraging the General Assembly to address this flawed student-transfer law through legislation. Numerous bills have been filed.
- Transfers are happening on the St. Louis side with Normandy School District currently facing bankruptcy (by April 1) and DESE asking for a supplemental appropriation totaling $6.8 million to address this.
Dr. McGehee presented the following possible future scenario to further demonstrate the unsustainable component of the state law. Currently there are three unaccredited districts in Missouri (including Kansas City) and 11 provisionally accredited (including Hickman Mills). An additional 13 districts reached provisionally accredited status this year based on scores. If all these districts were to slip to unaccredited status and be eligible for transfer of students to accredited districts, 97,000 students would be able to transfer. If just 25 percent of these 97,000 students transferred, the tuition costs alone would be close to $300 million annually.

Dr. McGehee and superintendents from across Missouri have developed an alternative to the transfer statute, known as the New Path to Excellence. This plan includes early interventions for struggling schools, four district ratings instead of three and ability of students to transfer among schools within their own districts. Dr. McGehee is continuing to work on this plan with a group of superintendents to incorporate feedback and refine the plan. This week, Dr. McGehee and area superintendents meet with metro area mayors to discuss the situation with the mayors also agreeing that the transfer law is not the solution.

R-7 is encouraging individuals and community groups to contact their state legislators and support the New Path for Excellence as an alternative to the student transfers. The New Path to Excellence would require actions by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and a minor action from the General Assembly (waiving the two-year delay to change a district's accreditation).

Read more about the plan at Dr. McGehee's Dec. 12 blog: http://lsr7supt.blogspot.com/.

R-7 currently has several teams working to prepare for the possibility of student transfers in 2014-15.

The following graphic displays the differences between the current state law and the New Path to Excellence.

### What changes are proposed in New Path to Excellence?

**CURRENT APPROACH**

- Accredited districts
  - Three ratings of accreditation
  - Focus on consequences
  - No help for struggling schools
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) takes over district
  - Some students transfer out of district
  - No intervention at provisional accreditation
  - No outside review team assistance
  - Limitless provisional accreditation possible
- No DESE designated position/department to assist struggling schools
- No required models for improvement
  - No set time for lapsing a district’s accreditation

**NEW PATH TO EXCELLENCE**

- Focus on individual school accreditation
  - Four ratings of accreditation
  - Focus on intervention and support
  - Specific support from Missouri DESE
  - DESE Achievement District takes over struggling schools
  - Some students transfer within the district to successful schools
  - Intervention begins at provisional accreditation
  - Expert review teams assess, set goals and make recommendations
  - Five-year limit for provisional accreditation
    - State improvement director serves over State Achievement District for struggling schools
  - Research-based models for improvement
    - Five-year limit for academically stressed districts before loss of accreditation
Resolution in support of New Path to Excellence Plan
CAC members attending agreed to approve a resolution in support of the New Path to Excellence plan.

Panel Discussion
Members of the Superintendent's Leadership Team served on a panel with CAC members asking questions. Leadership Team members participating were Dr. David McGehee; Dr. Tom Kurucz, deputy superintendent of operations; Dr. Don Andrews, assistant superintendent of secondary instruction; Dr. Katie Collier, assistant superintendent of elementary instruction; Dr. Judy Hedrick, assistant superintendent for business services; Dr. Jeff Miller, assistant superintendent of human resources; Dr. Ann Starlin-Horner, assistant superintendent of instruction and leadership; Dr. Amy Gates, executive director of technology; Dr. Emily Miller, executive director of special services; and Janice Phelan, executive director of communications. Also serving on the panel was Dr. Matt Miller, R-7 director of student services.

Questions included the following topics:
- The more rigorous curriculum this school year.
- Helping any potential transfer students (who may need academic assistance) succeed in R-7.
- The fourth high school and the possibility of incorporating more online and virtual learning while reducing high-school building square-footage. The fourth high school is under study at this time.
- Universal preschool and expansion of the Parents As Teachers program, which would both require state funding.
- How potential transfer students would be placed at schools and how they would be selected, which would be through a random process.
- How CAC members can help make sure the New Path to Excellence plan is selected.
- Walkability and healthy lifestyles as well as physical education and work-out facilities at schools.
- How Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) would set standards for its schools, which would be up to KCPS.
- The introduction of Google Chromebooks and other devices in classrooms.
- Any requirements for potential KCPS students who want to transfer.
- How R-7 would handle additional students while still serving current students.
- Potential transfer students in the same family.

Legislative advocacy, website and e-newsletter
Kent Kirby and Elaine Bluml urged CAC members to help advocate for R-7 issues. All CAC members are subscribed to the district's "R-7 Advocacy," an e-newsletter focusing on legislative issues. Members received half-page sign-up recruitment sheets to distribute to others to help them get involved. You can also visit the district’s legislative advocacy website for news about legislation, a toolkit for advocacy, elected officials' contact information and voting records from the previous General Assembly session. The website is at: http://www.lsr7.org/district/2013-legislative-platform/

Roundtable/Closing
Kent Kirby concluded the meeting and thanked all for attending. Meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Thank you for being a part of the Citizens' Advisory Committee!!
Please visit the CAC website at: http://www.lsr7.org/district/community/citizens-advisory-committee/