COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Founded in 1850 as a trading post at the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers, the trails west put Kansas City on the map. Today we are an American success story, the largest city in Missouri, growing from a muddy backwater to a booming metropolis in slightly over a century and a half.

Kansas City always has been a crossroads. The rivers brought traders and the explorers Lewis and Clark. The three great trails, Oregon, California and Santa Fe all launched from Kansas City.
Forged by the first bridge across the Missouri River and fueled by the livestock trade, Kansas City is where cultures have met, collided and often clashed. Some of the bloodiest fighting in the Civil War happened in and around our city limits.

From humble and tumultuous beginnings, Kansas City found its voice as it defied the Great Depression and built skyscrapers. The prosperity that reshaped our skyline attracted musical talent from across the nation. In Kansas City, the roaring twenties howled late into the night. Jazz may not have been born in Kansas City, but it was perfected here and became our city's gift to the world of music. The spirit of collaboration and innovation that was the Jazz Age sustains and drives us now as we tackle old challenges in new ways.

In 2010, Google announced that it had selected Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas City, Kansas to be the first cities in the world to receive its experimental ultra- high speed Internet service. Selected from over 1,100 other applications to build a network with Internet speeds 100x faster than anywhere in the world, Kansas City is poised to reinvent itself again. Born of the rugged individualism of the West, enriched by the ensemble approach that makes great jazz, Kansas City's heritage positions it to redefine what the future of innovation looks like.

The nation is noticing. *The Wall Street Journal* included Kansas City in a list of seven "up-and-coming" innovation centers. *Forbes* recognized Kansas City as the number five city in its "America's Biggest Brain Magnets" feature. *Frommer's* chose Kansas City as one of its top 10 destinations for 2012, the only U.S. city to make the list. *Forbes* has ranked our downtown as one of the top 10 in the country.

The Bloch School of Business at University of Missouri-Kansas City recently was named the best entrepreneurship program in the country. Kansas City is home to the Kauffman Foundation for Entrepreneurship and last fall opened the doors of the world's newest state-of-the art and iconic performing arts center also named for the Kauffman family.

The city boasts 240 neighborhoods, spans 319 square miles and its population growth outpaces the rest of Missouri and the nation as a whole. The city's population of 460,000 is a diverse mix with 29% African American, 10% Hispanic (our fastest growing minority) and nearly 10% other. The median income of a typical city household in 2010 was $46,184 and approximately 20,000 of the city's residents are between the ages of three and five years old. Fourteen separate school districts and more than 30 charter schools operate within the city's boundaries.

Effective January 1, 2012, the Kansas City Public School District lost its state accreditation and faces the possibility of a State takeover if it does not achieve acceptable performance pursuant to State guidelines. In light of these complexities and current challenges, the Kansas City community views this year's All America City Award process as an opportunity to unite and begin to overcome these challenges.

Last year, Kansas City elected Sylvester "Sly" James its Mayor. Mayor James grew up on Kansas City's segregated Eastside and entered public service with a focus on improving learning outcomes for our city's youth. This application, developed with the cooperation of nearly 50 of Kansas City's most active and effective organizations, furthers his priority objective for our city.

The unprecedented cooperation and effort to ensure that every child is reading at grade level by the time they leave third grade already has paid dividends. Since October, we have aggregated data from multiple school districts that has never been viewed comprehensively. The results are startling. *Only one-in-three students leave third grade reading at grade level proficiency*. In our best-performing school district that number is 56%; in our worst-performing district only 19% of third graders read at grade level.

The challenge ahead is clear, but the partnership and passion to engage the issue is strong in Kansas City. Our commitment to leverage our position as America's Creative Crossroads and the City of Entrepreneurship in order to make a significant difference in the lives of our young people is unquestionable. As the Mayor declared in his budget letter to the community, "If we can achieve this goal, it will be bigger than Google and will have an impact on the future well-being of our city.... It is also the right thing to do. This is my most important economic development priority.... We can choose to commit to raising the reading level of our youngest children. I am committing my political capital to the cause and together we will find a long-term solution that will provide every Kansas City child with a quality early learning program. Frankly, our future depends on it."

As a community, we are proud to commit ourselves to Kansas City's most important priority: "Turn the Page KC."

ASSURANCE #1

I. OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION. Kansas City faces significant challenges. Prior to our efforts in connection with the grade level reading campaign, a thorough aggregation of critical, city-wide education data and key indicators did not exist. Furthermore, there was little communication among school districts, early learning centers or other stakeholders around this important issue. The conclusion that can be drawn from the absence of this vital information is that education in Kansas City is often viewed through disconnected and isolated lenses. It's left to individual districts, the state, individual non-profits, and regional entities and has lacked a comprehensive approach.

Thanks to Professor Steve McClure of the University of Missouri -Kansas City and his colleagues with Kansas City Area Education Research Consortium, aggregated data for education within the metropolitan boundaries of Kansas City, Missouri, is now available. The findings are dramatic. The full report is included in the application as *Appendix 1,* including fully disaggregated data. Turn the Page partners are committed to collecting, sharing and aggregating necessary data on an on-going basis and participating in the collective effort to achieve common goals.

 A. Communication Arts/Reading. According to the Spring 2011 Missouri Assessment Program, only 33.8% of third graders in Kansas City, Missouri, currently are reading at or above grade level. For context, 43.8% of third graders statewide hit this mark.

As a subset of that number, it's important to state that among districts and charter schools located entirely within the bounds of the City of Kansas City, Missouri, only 22.8% of third graders are reading at grade level or above.

The percentage of proficient-or-above fourth grade readers is 43.3%, compared to 51.4% statewide.

District	Center	Avg. all Charters	Hickman Mills	KCPS	North KC	Park Hill
3rd Grade Communication Arts Scores	34%	22.3%	31.3%	19.1%	43.1%	55.2%

B. Enrollment. The approximate total number of students enrolled in public schools in Kansas City, Missouri is 68,920. The approximate total number of students enrolled in districts or schools entirely within the bounds of the City is 33,692. The approximate total number of students enrolled in districts located partially within the bounds of the city ("partial districts") is 35,220.

Enrollment numbers for African American students in the districts and charter schools located entirely within the bounds of Kansas City, Missouri, exceeds those in partial districts by nearly 17,000.

There are approximately 2,000 more Latino students inside the Kansas City districts than in partial districts.

C. Graduation Rate. The graduation rate for all schools and districts located totally within the bounds of Kansas City, Missouri, is 79.3%. The statewide graduation rate is 86.7%.

The graduation rate for the partial districts is 87.2%, whereas; the rate in schools and districts located totally within Kansas City, Missouri, is 70.3%. It is believed that improving data collection and accuracy for drop-out rates could have an instant and material effect on these numbers.

D. Free and Reduced Lunch. Free and Reduced Lunch rates are used as a key poverty indicator for educational systems. For the entire enrollment of students in schools within the bounds of Kansas City, Missouri that number is 60%. In comparison, 47.8% of students across the state qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch.

Breaking that 60% number down, 37.7% of students in the partial districts are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch, compared with 83.4% of students in the districts and schools entirely within the bounds of Kansas City, Missouri.

E. Attendance. The Average Yearly Progress (AYP) standard for average daily attendance in the State of Missouri is 93%. The statewide number reported for 2011 was 94.4%.

For the entire enrollment in Kansas City, Missouri, the student attendance rate in 2011 was 92%. The rate was 94.7% for the partial districts and 89.2% for the districts entirely within the bounds of the City.

The breakdown of attendance for grades K-3 in the Turn the Page KC school districts are:

District #'s 2011	K	1	2	3
Center	93.52%	94.57%	95.18%	94.95%
Hickman	94%	94.11%	95.14%	94.95%
KCPS	90.5	91.0%	91.4%	93.0%
Park Hill	95.17%	95.53	95.51%	95.52%

F. Adult Illiteracy. According to Literacy Kansas City, the estimated number of functionally illiterate adults (defined as sixth-grade reading level or below) in the Greater Kansas City region (the bi-state & multi-county area) is 225,000. The impact of these illiteracy rates on the current and future workforce and economic opportunity for the community is difficult to measure but readily apparent. Without question, children of parents or primary caregivers who are not functionally literate begin life at a deficit. Without early access to literacy and intervention, the cycle of illiteracy is likely to repeat.

II. <u>OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY SUPPORTS FOR EDUCATION.</u>

A. **Local Investment Commission (LINC).** The most wide-reaching and systematic school support system in Kansas City is LINC, begun in 1992. A non-profit which is primarily state-funded (85%), LINC is a unique community intermediary which coordinates the delivery of child, family and senior supportive services while forging connections between neighborhoods and government agencies. LINC partners with school districts across the region both inside and outside of Kansas City, Missouri. Working within school walls to connect students and families with resources they may need, LINC also provides the majority of before-school and after-school care at school sites and plays a role at the designated summer feeding sites as determined by the state.

B. **Designated Feeding Sites.** The City of Kansas City, Missouri, operates 10-12 year-round feeding sites for low-income children and families, which will increase to 35 sites this summer. Harvesters, the regional food bank, has operated the local Kid's Cafe program since 1993, providing after-school and summer meals for eligible children. All these sites provide excellent opportunities to reach parents and children to aid reading proficiency.

C. **Supports for Early Years Education**. The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) manages the Head Start program in the Kansas City region and serves as convener for the Metropolitan Council on Early Learning (MCEL), which seeks to improve both access to and quality of early learning programs in metropolitan Kansas City. Parents as Teachers, Reach Out and Read and Raising A Reader operate in Kansas City and the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education furnishes guidance including common core standards, which are anticipated in the near future. All these programs suffer from lack of funding and from gaps in service throughout the city. For example, only 15% of eligible children in the region currently participate in Head Start.

D. **Supports to Improve Attendance**. Supportive and follow-up services offered to students who are chronically absent vary widely by school and district. Varying procedures, including personal calls, parent meetings and home visits, generally are implemented where staff is available. Unfortunately, budget cuts and staff reductions have interfered with these efforts in most districts. A major strength, however, is the Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City, a diverse educational cooperative representing 30 school districts in the region which provides state-of-the-art collaborative professional development services. Its members meet regularly, leveraging their combined strengths to provide high-quality and cost-effective services and resources to maximize learning for all students.

Student mentoring programs also exist throughout the City but vary by school environment and are hampered by serious funding reductions. Big Brothers Big Sisters, Kauffman Scholars, and YouthFriends are some of the larger and more successful mentoring programs in Kansas City. YouthFriends, a school-based model for K-12, reaches the widest range of districts within the city.

E. **Career/Post-Secondary and Adult Learning.** Examples of supports to keep students on track for graduation and post-secondary plans include without limitation:

    1. Kansas City's Partnership for Regional Educational Preparation (PREP-KC) works to increase college readiness and access to high-quality employment for the more than 60,000 mostly low-income students, providing independent and timely data management for the community.

2. Kauffman Scholars is a comprehensive, multi-year program designed to help promising, yet challenged, low-income urban students in grades 7-12 prepare for and complete a college education.

3. Project Rise, a pilot project facilitated by the United Way and its partners, the Full Employment Council and Catholic Charities, assists with education and job skills for high school dropouts.

4. The Urban League of Kansas City sponsors an Education Empowerment Center (ECC) which works with students and families to ensure that urban students are equipped with the skills, tools, and resources they need to achieve academic and career success.

5. Literacy KC is one of the only providers of illiteracy intervention for adults in the metropolitan area. It offers one-on- one tutoring, classroom-based teaching proven to help adults improve literacy skills in order to enroll in community college. They also have a specific program to work people on parole and probation to improve their reading skills.

F. **Supports for After School and Summer Learning.** The YMCA partners with the Center School District, charter and private schools to provide after-school and summer programs. Effective programs operated by two regional library systems, Boys & Girls Clubs, The Upper Room and the WEB DuBois Center furnish excellent additional support for after school and summer learning.

G. **Kauffman Foundation.** The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the world's largest foundation focusing on entrepreneurialism and education, is an enormous resource for innovation and expertise, as well as funding.

H. **Children's Mercy Hospital**. The Developmental and Behavioral Sciences Section has enthusiastically endorsed Turn the Page KC and is committed to leading efforts to develop the necessary links between the health care community, schools and early learning centers. Children's Mercy also is a founder and facilitator of the Reach Out and Read program.

I. **Unique School District Supports.** State-mandated ELL programs operate in all districts, with the most robust in North Kansas City and the Kansas City Public School District. Parents as Teachers programs, while highly effective, have been drastically reduced in all but one school district.

J. **Supports from Higher Education.** Colleges and universities provide resources to support education at all levels. The University of Missouri's Education faculty have analyzed and aggregated data to help establish a baseline for Turn the Page KC and will continue in that role. The initiative will continue to engage other partners in high education.

III. <u>CAUSES OF PERFORMANCE GAPS BETWEEN LOW-INCOME CHILDREN AND PEERS</u>

A. **Many Districts with Little Communication.** Fundamental to an understanding of education in Kansas City, Missouri, is that the city covers a very large geographical area (319 square miles) filled with many small school districts *([See Appendix 2](#).).* Kansas City contains numerous educational systems with insufficient communication or alignment among them. Fourteen separate and independent school districts have a footprint inside the city, with all but four of those (the partial districts) crossing into different municipalities within the greater metropolitan area. Additionally, within the boundaries of the Kansas City Public School District (KCPS), which enrolls approximately 15,000 students in the urban core, 30 charter schools enroll approximately 10,000 students. High mobility among students and their families increases the need for communication and alignment among districts, service providers and the health care community.

B. **Inadequate Resources.** In recent years, the State of Missouri has substantially reduced education funding, particularly for early years. Most affected have been early childhood programs, summer school programs, and programs supporting school readiness, including Parents as Teachers and YouthFriends. In Kansas City, most districts have been forced to cut back or eliminate Parents as Teachers, creating a long waiting list for parents just to receive an initial home visit. The Center School District is a notable exception, where voters passed a district-wide property tax levy in summer 2011, enabling a consistent level of funding for Parents as Teachers.

Access to educational resources requires effective transportation. However, funding for public transportation also has been cut, affecting both school bus routes and public bus transportation. In the majority of school districts the radius for school bus pick-up and drop-off of students has been expanded to 1.5 miles, a significant barrier to school attendance, especially in inclement weather. After-school and summer learning programs also suffer from low participation due to lack of transportation for students. The Boys and Girls Clubs, for example, currently operate with significant excess capacity for that reason.

C. **Too Little Information.** Parents throughout the city, in the urban core and beyond, lack information about their vital role in their children's school readiness and frequently lack access to information about where to receive the resources they need. Reduction of funding for Parents as Teachers has exacerbated this problem. The Kansas City Public School District has received much public attention, but the community-at-large is unaware that even in some of Kansas City's best-performing districts, fewer than half of the students currently are reading at grade level. As a result, the community has failed to perceive the size or the urgency of this problem or to prioritize the issue as a community issue.

D. **Insufficient Coordination.** Kansas City never has had a city-wide, systems approach to aligning community support for education, raising student achievement, identifying appropriate funding priorities, or seeking funding. Nor does it have a central repository for the collection, measurement, aggregation or dissemination of vital student achievement data to enable the community appropriately to identify issues and respond accordingly. The resources that do exist are siloed within the 14 districts, individual schools, community agencies and volunteer programs, but seldom shared, compiled or analyzed on a systemic basis. This is a clear and urgent need.

ASSURANCE #2

I. GOALS

A. **Proficiency Goal:** In 2017, 70% of third graders in Kansas City, Missouri will read at or above grade level based on performance in the top 30% of the grade level. The number of students reading in the top 30% of the grade level will improve by approximately 8% each year until 2017 and then increase by 5% annually.

B. **School Attendance Goal:** In 2017, 95% of students enrolled in grades K-3 in Kansas City, Missouri will attend school 95% of the time. By 2013, Turn the Page KC will aggregate data and a standing committee of the Coordinated School Districts of Kansas City will oversee activities to raise school attendance in the community.

C. **School Readiness Goal:** By 2013, existing and additional partners will develop and begin to implement an agreed upon framework for determining, assessing and promoting school readiness. In addition, a baseline of aggregated data will be used to measure the effectiveness of pilot programs focused on early learning assessment and teacher training. In 2015, participation in early learning programs among children in Kansas City, Missouri will have increased by 20% over the baseline number established in 2013, with at least 70% in programs utilizing the recommended framework. In 2017, 20%

gains will be realized from the baseline results of school readiness assessments collected in 2015, with at least 80% in programs utilizing the recommended framework. 10% gains in participation will be realized for each year thereafter.

D. **Summer Learning Goal:** By 2013, school districts will be sharing data, using annual assessments to inform non-district providers (libraries, after-school and summer learning centers) about student performance improvements based on participation. In 2015, 50% of students in grades K-3 in Kansas City, Missouri who are reading below grade level based on performance in the top 30% of the grade level will attend a summer reading program. In 2017**,** that number will be 70%, with 10% annual improvement in that number thereafter.

E. **Volunteer Goal:** The Kansas City community will donate at least 750,000 volunteer hours each year to elevate early literacy through mentoring and other adult-to-child activities.

ASSURANCE #3

I. OVERALL STRATEGIES

A. **Memorandum of Understanding.** The participating school districts and community partners have agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) setting forth their commitment to Turn the Page KC, including common language, data collection and data sharing. The MOU will serve as a model for city-wide collaboration and provide a simple method for additional partners to join the effort.

B. **Scalable Existing Programs.** Promising practices and model programs have been, and will continue to be, identified throughout the city. These practices and programs will be replicated or enhanced to address school readiness, attendance and summer learning.

C. **Pilot Project in Urban Core.** A pilot project implementing Turn the Page recommendations will be conducted in the urban core neighborhood designated by the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce for its Urban Neighborhood Initiative (UNI), as described more fully in Assurance 4 (*See Appendix 3*.).

D. **Community Outreach.** Sustained community-wide communications will be implemented through participation of radio and television media outlets, school districts, the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, and healthcare and faith communities.

E. **Structure to Ensure Sustainability.** A not-for-profit corporation, Turn the Page KC, Inc, will be created to coordinate and oversee implementation of the plan, including data management, fundraising and community outreach, with ongoing support from the Mayor's Office.

II. GOALS AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS KEY FOCUS AREAS

A. **Attendance**

1. Key Findings.

     a. The State of Missouri defines chronic absenteeism as 10 or more days of consecutive absence, a broad definition that is not particularly useful to identify children who are at-risk of falling behind in school due to poor attendance. Problems often develop when students miss only one or two days in a weekly or bi-weekly pattern that frequently adds up to dozens of absences per year.

     b. Funding cuts have left many districts with reduced staff and critical tasks such as absentee follow-up are not the priority they once were.

c. Attendance barriers for many children include, but are not limited to:
- chronic disease or other health problems left untreated
- inadequate transportation
- inclement weather
- behavioral issues
- lack of safe streets and neighborhoods for walking to school
- parents with stresses and distractions that inhibit them from getting their children to school on time, or at all, on a regular basis
- school readiness gaps, which often leave low-income children developmentally behind their peers
- high mobility in their living situation, including homelessness

d. One of the biggest factors in establishing good attendance is whether or not the student feels safe in a caring and positive learning environment that is enforced by participating adults.

e. Attendance problems in Kansas City are aggravated by high mobility among low-income families, many of whom move with great frequency among the City's 14 school districts and 30 charter schools.

2. Recommendations:

a. **Common Language and Methods**. Utilizing a definition of Persistent Absence, missing three or more days in a quarter, students will be identified as "at risk" and tracked accordingly for intervention.

b. **Recommended Procedures for Intervention with "At-Risk" Children:**

- 2 Days- Phone Call to Family
- 4 Days- Phone Call and Letter
- 5 Days- Phone Call and Home Visit
- 8 Days- Phone Call and Family Meeting
- 10 Days- Phone Call, meeting, notice of ability to drop student enrollment

Personal Messages and direct, persistent school-to-parent connections are required, and contact from a teacher or someone who knows the child well is most effective. The Mayor's Office also will seek letters from county prosecutors to help school districts reinforce school attendance laws.

c. **Ensuring positive and caring school environments that are welcoming for parents and children, utilizing positive reinforcements to reward desired behaviors.** Systematic and consistently-applied methods of fostering caring environments go by many names, but Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), and Behavior Intervention Support Teams (BIST) are three effective, research-based examples currently utilized in Park Hill, Center and Hickman Mills Districts, which will serve as pilots for this recommendation. (See Appendix 4 for description.)

d. **School-based Mentoring & Volunteering**

(1) Scalable Program. YouthFriends, a school-based program operating in multiple school districts and charter schools in Kansas City, connects students, teachers and schools with inspiring mentors and real-world learning experiences to promote success and encourage healthy behaviors. (*See Appendix 5.*) Though severely reduced by funding cuts, YouthFriends structures are in place in Turn the Page KC partner school districts, with familiar processes and designated staff already coordinating YouthFriends activities in these districts. What is lacking is capacity to recruit and coordinate volunteers--and more volunteers.

(2) <u>Additional Volunteers.</u> A city-wide publicity campaign and ongoing outreach efforts in the business and faith communities will yield volunteers to serve as mentors.

(3) <u>Volunteer Coordination and Training</u>. The Mayor's Office has submitted an application for five Americorps Vista volunteers to support enhanced mentoring within the YouthFriends framework over a three-year period by assisting districts with volunteer recruitment, training and coordination. A city-wide publicity campaign and ongoing outreach efforts in the business and faith communities will yield volunteers to serve as mentors.

e. **Monitoring and Documenting Progress.**

(1) <u>Structure.</u> To ensure ongoing, organized and collaborative efforts, commencing in fall 2012, the Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City (CSDGKC) will convene and facilitate a standing committee to collect and monitor attendance data, develop reports and provide continuous support for the Turn the Page KC initiative. All school districts and the sponsoring university offices of local charter schools will be invited to participate in this standing committee.

(2) <u>Responsibilities</u>. Attendance data will be collected on a quarterly basis to fit the template provided by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for the June report currently made by all districts   Additional templates will be developed to measure the impact of absentee follow-up procedures within the districts.

B. **School Readiness**

1. **Common language**

a. **School Readiness Definition.** Turn the Page KC partners have agreed to adopt the American Academy of Pediatrics definition as the community standard for school readiness: "School readiness includes the readiness of the individual child, the school's readiness for children, and the ability of the family and community to support optimal early child development."

Parents are the child's first teacher and must be integrally engaged in every aspect of the child's learning and education. The school has a responsibility to the parents and child to help provide the family with specific activities, suggestions, and training to enable the parents to work in partnership with the school. Community engagement must become the new norm for early learning.

b. **Early Learning Indicators.** Below are initial school readiness indicators for children, families, schools, and the community which can be easily understood by and communicated to families and the community. Specific indicators for assessment and measurement will be developed over the next year and a promising early years pilot program, incorporating assessment, curriculum and teacher training, will be augmented and evaluated.

	Family Indicators	Prospective Outcomes
Family Engagement & Education	Families will: ● Provide a supportive, interesting home environment and join their children in learning experiences such as talking, playing, and reading. ● Establish routines at home that include preparation for regular attendance at school, play time, shared meals and conversations, regular visits to libraries and playgrounds, and bedtime rituals such as bath	Families will act as the director of their children's learning and become full partners with school/program and community organizations.

	and stories. ● Partner with teachers and school/program by participating in parent/teacher conferences, classroom volunteer work, and other school activities; accessing information, policies, and resources; and advocating for their children's unique learning characteristics. ● Participate in parent education activities provided by school/program, community organizations, and libraries or engage in self-learning efforts.	
Health & Medical	● Identify primary health care providers and schedule regular screenings, physicals, and follow-up treatments for their children. ● Promote children's health, nutrition, and safety by providing balanced meals and snacks, regular sleep, opportunities for physical activity, routine hygiene practices, and a safe home environment. ● Talk with teachers about children's health, abilities, medications, and other treatments and provide the school/program with appropriate documentation of children's health or developmental conditions and immunization status.	Families will ensure their children receive health care and will promote health and safety knowledge and practices at home.
Social & Emotional Development	● Provide a nurturing home environment and talk to their children daily about feelings and concerns, respectful interactions with other people, and social problem solving. ● Partner with schools and community organizations to establish realistic expectations for their children, use positive behavior guidance strategies, and develop a healthy parenting style. ● Avoid exposing their children to unnecessary stressful, traumatic situations or environments that can cause negative social-emotional development.	Families will plan and use strategies that encourage positive social-emotional development and mental wellness for their children.
	School / Early Learning Program Indicators	**Prospective Outcomes**
Foundations	Schools/programs will: ● Employ qualified administrators and staff to oversee effective systems of human resources and professional development, fiscal operation, program planning, record-keeping and reporting, and communication. ● Employ qualified teaching staff and ensure appropriate adult-child ratios. ● Develop reciprocal relationships with families and community organizations aimed at supporting children's learning and development. ● Provide a safe physical environment. ● Contribute to meeting children's health, nutrition, and mental health needs. ● Provide opportunities for parents to participate in school activities, volunteer, and learn more about	Schools/programs will employ qualified staff and establish effective systems in order to provide comprehensive services for children.

	parenting and educating children.	
Children's Learning & Development	• Provide organized classroom environments with age-appropriate, inviting materials and equipment. • Follow a consistent yet flexible daily schedule which includes a balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities. • Create a positive, welcoming social-emotional climate and use positive behavior guidance strategies. • Implement a research-based curriculum which includes identified goals for children's learning and development. • Offer meaningful experiences to increase children's competence in the areas of cognition, language and literacy, physical development and health, social and emotional development, and approaches to learning. • Encourage the sort of responsive, individualized teacher-child interactions that enhance child outcomes. • Use multiple forms of assessment in order to track children's progress toward goals, communicate with families, and inform program planning.	Schools/programs will provide developmentally appropriate and effective curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

c. **Assessment.** Among the dozens of early learning providers in Kansas City, many different assessment methods currently are used with varying curricula. Over the next year, Turn the Page KC, facilitated by MCEL, will develop a thorough, high-quality and congruent method of assessment in order to quantify readiness for kindergarten across the city. By summer 2013, Turn the Page KC will be ready to capture data and report assessment numbers for the 2013-2014 school year.

2. **Scalable solutions in classrooms**

a. Operation Breakthrough Collaborative (OB Collaborative). OB Collaborative is an innovative approach to ensure that young children, particularly those living with risk factors, are cognitively, socially and emotionally ready for lifelong learning. Operational for five years and now encompassing more than 300 inner-city children ranging in age from 6 weeks to 5 years, the program is grounded in research-based best practices and national early learning standards. Based on a comprehensive assessment of children's developmental levels, it employs a cross-disciplinary, computerized approach to educational programming, strategic interventions and targeted professional development for staff to address each child's individual needs. Utilizing computerized systems for facility and child assessments, the program has shown remarkable results: from just 17 percent of children performing at age level in language skills in 2005 to 90 percent in spring 2011. This readily scalable program (with patent pending) will pilot curriculum, assessment, teacher training and family partnerships to improve early learning and school readiness in Kansas City.

b. Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). The **CLASS** for teacher training will expand from approximately 80 classrooms currently in 2012 , to total of 110 classrooms in the region by the end of 2012. (*See Appendix 6*). Since many early learning teachers in Kansas City are equipped only with an associate's degree, additional training is critical to achieve the kind of student outcomes the community desires.

c. Curriculum Alignment. Even within school districts, it's not uncommon to find preschool teachers disconnected from what K-grade 3 teachers are doing in the classroom and vice versa. Just as Turn the Page KC is down-breaking barriers between districts; silos must be eliminated between grade levels within districts. In summer 2012, Center School District will train teachers for age 3 through grade 3 to align their curriculum and provide a seamless transition for their students.

3. **Scalable solutions outside classrooms**

a. Technology. Not every home will have a home computer, but cell phones and Smart phones are used even by most low-income families. As the Kansas City region becomes the first to have Google fiber technology, we will leverage this opportunity to reach kids and families. Over the next year, Turn the Page KC will develop content for a downloadable application and calendar to provide a platform for families to plan their own daily literacy and school readiness activities and receive tips on age-appropriate activities for their children.   Tracking utilization of the application and surveying users will provide a process for evaluating this tool.

b. Promising Programs.

(1) Head Start. The Head Start framework, currently utilized in approximately 75% of Kansas City's early learning sites, provides a solid basic structure for implementing effective early learning when enhanced by links to health care and accompanied by an effective assessment and measurement system to permit aggregation of data across the city.

(2) Raising A Reader. In fall 2011, a pilot site for Raising A Reader (RAR) was launched in conjunction with the Upper Room for 25 preschool children and their families; funding has been obtained to expand by 1000 children over the next three years. RAR is an easily scalable program that can be replicated all over the city in different settings. Faith communities, schools, community centers, libraries, and existing after-school and summer learning providers can support this model.   This model provides considerable outcome assessments Models like RAR are congruent with interventions studied a United Kingdon report: *Helping Children Achieve*. This study cites that beyond improving reading skills, positive behavior improvements can be made which help overall academic achievement (*See Appendix 7)*

(3) Parents as Teachers. Though significantly reduced by funding cuts, Parents as Teachers provides powerful results during the critical early years. Turn the Page KC will seek additional state funding for Parents as Teachers and encourage school districts to prioritize funding so as to support this program to the greatest possible extent.

(4) Made Smart. In August 2012 the Center School District will launch its "Made Smart" program, including simple research-based materials to educate parents about basic developmental indicators for children from birth through grade 5 and the parental role in enhancing early learning. This program will serve as a pilot for Turn the Page KC and will be expanded outside the Center District for use throughout the city. (*See Appendix 8*.)

C. Summer Learning

1. Community standard for summer reading programs. Summer reading efforts in the City of Kansas City, Missouri will be guided, developed and assessed based on an agreed-upon set of community standards. The following lists an initial set of standards:

- Use a pre- and post-test measure that shows total growth toward a grade level benchmark
- Use a monitoring tool that is used regularly and frequently to track performance toward the benchmark and provide feedback to the student
- Use data to inform decisions about the appropriate text level

- Combine core instruction and additional tutoring
- Students read text at their reading level, not grade level
- Students read with a caring adult regularly
- Use a standardized orientation process for all tutors
- Academic time takes priority by consistently happening in the morning
- Students choose the books they read
- Use incentives for successful performance (possible)

2. **Key Findings.**

    a. Summer school may be unavailable or have insufficient capacity. Resources for summer school have been on the decline for public school districts. Frequently, summer school is focused only on remedial students. **b. Summer activities are available but can be inaccessible, unaffordable and of insufficient length.** There are many summer activities for young people but transportation frequently is not available. **c. Summer reading is a strong programmatic focus for public libraries.** The two public library systems – Kansas City and Mid-Continent Public Library – have strong summer reading programs and are open to greater community outreach and organizational efforts to more thoughtfully address summer reading loss. **d. Successful summer reading programs may have limited geographic reach. e. Summer activities have a strong youth development orientation.**

3. **Recommendations.** In general, our plan will consistently and broadly:

- **Promote** family reading habits, programs and practices through community outreach.
- **Provide** training and professional development, possibly including cooperative book buying on their behalf, to youth-serving agencies that provide quality reading programs and time during summer programs.
- Expand successful public summer school models to serve more children, expand successful local models like the Upper Room (*See Appendix 9*) and Park Hill's Smart Start (*See Appendix 10*), integrating key components into other summer programming.
- **Explore** unusual or unlikely locations to promote summer reading such as summer feeding sites
- **Identify** "summer reading deserts" which will be used to eliminate service areas voids due to transportation or other considerations.
- **Develop** a strong public policy stance on state funding and support for summer school programs.

4. **Scalable & Accessible Programming**

    a. Year One.

- Implement summer reading data-sharing, focusing with Kansas City Public Schools and Kansas City Public Library, and Center School District and Mid-Continent Public Library while developing a broader data sharing plan to possibly include youth development agencies and faith-based groups.
- Work to expand faith-based efforts utilizing the Upper Room model.
- Introduce more structured reading programs (including training of staff) among youth serving organizations including the Boys & Girls Clubs and the YMCA.

    b. Year Two. Work with public school districts on expanding the number of days for summer school to serve all students – not merely students needing remedial aid or credit recovery.

- Expand summer reading efforts to summer feeding sites, parks, and other community gathering points.
- Work to provide summer reading activities to the "summer reading deserts" identified in Year One.
- Challenge the public libraries to extend or develop programming to serve the "non-summer" readers.

- Expand volunteer recruitment and training.

5. <u>Measuring our efforts.</u> Our plan will measure summer reading gain/loss through an agreement between the public libraries, youth serving agencies and faith-based efforts to share summer reading activity data by means of the following:

a. Public schools test student reading level in the spring (prior to summer) and in the fall (when students return), providing a pre- and post-assessment of summer reading gain/loss.

b. Organizations operating significant summer reading programs–public libraries, youth development organizations, and faith-based organizations–will track summer reading activity including hours read and other data.

c. Through a data match utilizing existing testing procedures, we can assess whether summer reading efforts result in gain or loss for participating students. We can also compare results of participating students and non-participating students.

d. Results from the data match (done in the fall) will be shared with the school where the students are attending. Individualized results (gain/loss) and summer reading activity will be shared.

e. The first-year assessment will provide significant accomplishments:

- Documenting at a broader community level existing summer reading programs and activities
- Identifying whether those efforts affected reading gain or loss
- Comparing those students who are active summer readers with those who are not participating in structured institutional summer reading programs.
- Sharing individual efforts with teachers so they can understand how summer reading efforts affect (or not) performance on fall reading assessment.
- Geo-coding data from participating summer reading students to see if there are some identifiable "summer reading deserts" – limited access to summer reading programs – and identify needs for broader outreach or program development

f. The major institutional partners--school districts, libraries and major youth serving agencies--have agreed to data sharing, recognizing that a fuller data plan can and will be developed. LINC has agreed to receive and manage the data.

ASSURANCE #4

I. <u>TURN THE PAGE KC WILL CONNECT WITH AND/OR BENEFIT FROM THE FOLLOWING ONGOING EFFORTS IN KANSAS CITY</u>:

A. **United Way.** The United Way of Greater Kansas City spearheads a a regional effort to improve <u>Out of School Time</u> (OOS) by providing training and coaching for youth program staff. (*See Appendix 11*).

B. **Libraries.** Kansas City's library systems are working together to implement a single library card system. The "Building a Community of Readers" campaign aims to achieve an 80 percent penetration rate (defined as people having or using a library card in the past 12 months), and increase participation in summer and winter reading by 23 and 10 percent, respectively. The "<u>Every Child Ready to Read</u>" program will support our efforts. (*See Appendix 12*.)

C. **Talk, Read, Play.** The Family Conservancy launched a well-developed campaign called "Talk, Read, Play" in 2011 to reach families and equip them with tools to develop their children's early literacy. This organization reaches just over 900 early learning and child care sites within Kansas City, Missouri.

D. **Big Five Urban Core Initiative**. In summer 2011, after a year of unprecedented community input and planning, the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce selected five transformative ideas for priority community action. The Urban Core Neighborhood Initiative (UNI) will provide a unique opportunity to pilot Turn the Page KC recommended strategies in a defined area in Kansas City's urban core. (*See Appendix 3*.)

E. **Big Five Entrepreneurism Initiative.** The Big Five initiative to make Kansas City America's Most Entrepreneurial City will provide new and innovative ways to ensure that all third graders are reading at or above grade level (See Appendix 13).

F. **Google Fiber.** In spring 2011 Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas City, Kansas were selected to be the first metropolitan area with Google's high-speed fiber network, providing citizens with Internet speeds more than 100 times faster than what is currently available in most of the United States. Turn the Page KC is working with Google to identify and implement technological tools to assist with parent outreach and education, to provide enhanced learning opportunities for children, and to furnish additional resources for schools and early learning centers.

ASSURANCE #5

I. DATA MANAGEMENT

A. **Data Sharing Agreement.** The Memorandum of Understanding outlines responsibilities and ensures ongoing availability of and access to necessary data to achieve Turn the Page KC objectives, including establishment of baselines and tracking progress.

B. **Aggregated Data.** The University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Education will collect and analyze annual reportable data like that contained in Appendix 1.

B. **School Readiness Data.** The School Readiness data alignment process and aggregation will be facilitated by the Metropolitan Council on Early Learning at the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), which will collect data and report to Turn the Page KC.

C. **Summer Learning Data** will be collected by the Local Investment Commission (LINC), and summer learning providers will enter into bilateral agreements with school districts to share data for students who participate in summer learning opportunities.

D. **Attendance Data.** Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City will convene a Cross-District Standing Committee for Improved Attendance to collect attendance data on a quarterly basis.   The group will seek to improve data tracking and quality, and to enhance student outcomes, by raising attendance standards across districts.

E. **Turn the Page KC, Inc.** To ensure on-going stability and momentum for Turn the Page KC, as well as to solicit and receive funding, an independent not-for-profit corporation will be established.   This entity and its staff will be responsible for managing all data, finances and programming of the grade level reading campaign.

II. UNDERSTANDINGS AND AGREEMENTS FOR DATA SHARING AND AGGREGATION

A. **Memorandum of Understanding.** A Memorandum of Understanding will be signed by all Turn the Page KC partners to ensure short-term and long-term collaboration and data sharing.

B. **Additional Agreements.** Separate agreements will be executed to reflect the agreements of school districts and summer learning providers who serve district students. These bilateral agreements will fully

enumerate the specific indicators and data to be shared, with whom, and on what timetable and will be completed by the fall 2012.

C. **Data Sharing Pilots.** Data sharing pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding will be piloted as set forth in the Attendance section above.

ASSURANCE #6 AND CSAP CONSIDERATIONS

I. SUCCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY.

A. **Broad-based Community Support.** Turn the Page KC began in October 2011 with approximately 30 community organizations and since has grown to almost 50 dedicated partners who are committed to long-term efforts and ultimate success. The initial three-year plan will be used to set a 10-15-year horizon for the community's commitment to student achievement in reading.

B. **Engaging Key Stakeholders.** Approximately 100 individual participants engaged in thoughtful discussions and completed assignments to collect and aggregate data, identify best practices, and evaluate opportunities. Numerous meetings informed and solicited input from the philanthropic community, civic leaders, political leaders, the faith community and members of the media.

C. **Messaging and Outreach**. A leading advertising agency, Barkley Worldwide, provided pro bono services to assist with a communications strategy, including a name, logo, and a video to communicate the importance and urgency of the issue to various target audiences: families educators, funders, business, and civic leadership and the community-at-large (See Appendix 14). The award-winning children's book author and illustrator, Shane Evans, who has spent his career speaking to and empowering young students with his books, lent creativity and an inspirational tone to conversations about how to message to children and inspire them to love reading. Constituencies as diverse as the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, the Baptist Ministers Union and the Latino Civic Engagement Collaborative committed support for the initiative, including member communications and volunteer solicitation. A detailed communication plan will be developed, including grassroots organizing to reach parents and support from all major media outlets in the region, led by Kansas City Public Television (KCPT).

D. **Technology.** Google Fiber is expected to provide unprecedented opportunities for technological development and entrepreneurial endeavors in Kansas City. For example, in April 2012, Turn the Page KC partners will attend a "start-up weekend," hosted by Office Port, to more fully to develop concepts for the school readiness calendar and other online applications that will support this initiative. This event, called CityCampKC , will be an ideal opportunity to create innovative technology applications for Turn the Page KC (See Appendix 15).

E. **Political Leadership**. Kansas City's popular Mayor, Sly James, has made this initiative the cornerstone of his administration, emphasizing the importance of literacy to quality of life, economic development and the future of Kansas City. The value of his leadership and public commitment to this issue is inestimable.

F. **Ongoing Dialogue.** Literacy Round Table, Partners in Quality, Latino Civic Engagement Collaborative, LINC, MCEL, Cooperating School Districts of Greater KC, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, Superintendents' Forum, and Junior League of KCMO all provide ongoing venues for community conversation, joint planning, volunteer solicitation and collective action. Additional planning and feedback are contemplated throughout all aspects of the Turn the Page KC plan and organizational structure.

II. FUNDING AND VOLUNTEERS

A. **Philanthropic Dollars**. Conversations with the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, the Hall Family Foundation, the Hallmark Corporate Foundation, and the Trust Department of one of the City's largest banks have been encouraging. Although no request for funding has yet been made, these leading local funders have been enthusiastic about the need for this effort and will continue to have input into its structure. Meetings to date have focused on the unique opportunity for the local philanthropic community to play a key role in shaping community priorities around education, eliminating duplicative and competing grants and ensuring compliance with the newly-established community norm. These leading funders understand and welcome the opportunity and have volunteered to identify and help convene other funders for the cause.

B. **Public Funding**. The Mayor's Office has committed to seek city funding for this initiative. Through the City's annual budget, the Mayor's Office is requesting $50,000 in seed money for Turn the Page KC. Additional support from the City budget will be available through synergies with existing programs. For example, summer interns with the City will serve as volunteers and tutors in summer reading programs. The Mayor also has committed ongoing staff support for the initiative and will lead efforts by Turn the Page KC to seek increased and continuous funding from the State of Missouri in support of early years education programs.

C. **Private Funding.** Boulevard Brewery will designate a certain amount of funds raised during the summer months of 2012 to Turn the Page KC. This will be a prime-time as the Major League Baseball's All-Star Game is in Kansas City. Additional private dollars and in-kind contributions from corporate sources in sponsorship of Turn the Page KC will be sought.

D.. **Volunteers**. The Mayor's Office has submitted an application with the Corporation for National and Public Service requesting five Vista volunteers over the next three years who will lend capacity to school districts to recruit and retain more mentors and volunteers. Initial feedback on the application is very positive. Extensive community outreach will yield the needed volunteers.

E. **In-Kind Contributions.** Pro bono support already has been secured for brand messaging, video production, communication planning and ongoing media support. Additional in-kind contributions will be sought throughout the community.

F. **Existing Funding Support**. Existing funding in the community will align well and support Turn the Page KC. Examples include:

- a $1.2 million dollar grant for work with early learning providers on "building better teachers" through the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS),
- funding for the OB Collaborative being piloted at Operation Breakthrough and recommended for replication in the Big Five Urban Core Neighborhood (See Assurance 4),
- Raising a Reader expansion to 1000 children over the next three years, and
- development of Center School District's "Made Smart" materials.

G. **Ongoing Efforts**. As the Turn the Page KC initiative has not yet been publicly announced, community interest and financial commitments are only just beginning. Kansas City has a strong culture of corporate social responsibility and proud tradition of philanthropy. Mayor James enjoys widespread popularity and his inaugural year in office has set a tone for renewed engagement and enthusiasm across the city. His personal commitment of leadership for this cause, and the on-going support of the Mayor's Office, should not be underestimated. Fundraising will be a principal responsibility of Turn the Page KC, Inc.

III. <u>STRUCTURE FOR INTEGRATION, ALIGNMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY</u>.

Kansas City benefits from several concepts and circumstances that are intrinsically intertwined and complementary. Examples of these include: organizing collective action toward curriculum alignment,

linking health care needs with child care needs, identifying successful strategies to replicate throughout the city, using Google technology and entrepreneurial applications to reach parents and teach reading, streamlining business, faith, and educational community resources, and rallying around leadership from an energetic Mayor. Turn the Page KC is an unprecedented convening of stakeholders, cutting across boundaries that typically have not been crossed in this city.

To be sustainable, however, it is essential for an effort like this not only to be broad-based and expansive. The commitment must be long-term, not just three years, but 20 or more, and bench strength among and within partners will be essential to long-term success. While starting small, we hope to build a framework that is adaptable, beneficial and easily replicated throughout the city, the region, across the state line, and even upward through the elementary years to high school graduation.

Turn the Page KC, Inc., will be the central repository and driver for aggregation of data, development and maintenance of community tools and resources, and consistent assessment to improve performance and bridge the current gaps in educational programming. An Executive Director, Development Manager and Information Officer will be responsible for implementation.

Turn the Page KC will obtain local funding for start-up costs and develop a three-year budget.

"Turning the Page" on this vitally important issue won't happen in one year, or three. Kansas City is focused instead on a generational change and the sustained effort it will require.