



## PRESS ADVISORY

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# KCPS to provide Pre-K programs for 1,100 children at no cost to families

**KANSAS CITY, MO.** – After listening to families and early childhood education stakeholders in the community about the need for accessible Pre-K services, and now qualifying for a number of grants and a new source of funds from the State, Kansas City Public Schools is going to provide a seven-hour school day of high-quality Pre-K education at no cost for 1,100 Kansas City children for the 2016-2017 academic year. In addition, KCPS will rollout a new, tiered-fee system for families in need of an Extended-Day Pre-K program for their children (before- and after-school program).

Superintendent Dr. Mark Bedell made the announcement on his first day in his new post. Members of his Leadership Team, School Board members, Early Learning program administrators and staff, families and representatives from partner organizations joined him for his announcement. The decision marks an important step towards ensuring that three- and four-year-old children within the KCPS boundaries have access to high-quality Early Learning programs. KCPS and like-minded community organizations such as the Mid-America Regional Council and the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce have made Pre-K expansion a top priority for our community.

“This is a great day for KCPS and for the entire Kansas City community,” Dr. Bedell said. “We must do everything possible to make sure our children get the preparation they need to succeed in school and achieve their dreams. Expanding Pre-K services will be one very important part of our ongoing improvement process, and I can’t think of a better way to start my new job than to help make this announcement.”

KCPS officials spent several months gathering input from families and community members in the lead-up to this announcement. The decision is made possible thanks to an investment by KCPS, and new funds made available through the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The addition of state aid, combined with federal funds such as Head Start and other state and local grant funds, will allow KCPS to offer Pre-K programs – typically seven hours of academic programming – at no cost to approximately 1,100 children for the 2016-2017 school year. The average cost for a Pre-K program over the course of a school year is approximately \$7,300 per child.

While KCPS will have enough resources to cover the cost for the seven-hour academic Pre-K program, it does not have access to federal or state grants to support before- and after-school programs for Pre-K children. After gathering feedback from families, a sliding-fee scale, based on household income, was developed in order to provide the option of an Extended-day program for a limited number of Pre-K children whose parents are working full time and/or parents who are enrolled in school full time. In addition, families will be referred to the Missouri Department of Social Services in order to apply for State Child Care Subsidy to further reduce their cost for the Extended-day Pre-K program.

The total cost per month for a full-pay family is \$184 per month for families qualifying for the Extended Day program before school (typically 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.) and after school (typically 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.). Families that qualify for free or reduced-price lunch according to federal poverty guidelines would either pay \$138 per month or \$92 per month depending on income. All families will be referred to the Missouri Department of Social Services in order to apply for State Child Care Subsidy to further reduce their cost for the Extended-day Pre-K program.

*Kansas City Public Schools is dedicated to graduating students that are college, career, and workforce ready. This mission is supported by innovative classroom instruction, engaging programs, highly qualified employees, and an engaged and well-informed community. To learn more about the ways our community of schools supports students and the community-at-large, please visit [www.kcpublicschools.org](http://www.kcpublicschools.org), [KCMOSchools on Facebook](#), or [KCMOSchools on Twitter](#).*

**For more information, please contact Executive Director of Student Support & Community Services Dr. Tonia Gilbert at (816) 418-7406 or Public Relations & Marketing Manager Ray Weikal at (816) 418-7414.**

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