Choice in a school landscape can be a gift. Imagine if you have a child with special needs or if your family has challenges with logistics. What if the school that you are assigned to based on your zip code is a failing school? Having educational options can be critical for parents. Having options can also pose difficulty and stress. In Kansas City the average Kindergarten parent has 24 options for free public education in our district boundaries. This can be difficult for all families to find the means, time, and ability to understand and to navigate.

**Show Me KC Schools set out to change that.**

By democratizing information and delivering it in a way that is accessible to all, we can change the way families access schools to create a more equitable system.

**Our Mission**

Show Me KC Schools is a nonprofit organization that helps families make well-informed decisions about their children’s education by providing vital information about district, charter, faith-based, and independent-private school options in Kansas City. The idea for Show Me KC Schools grew from a group of parents with school-aged children who were committed to living in Kansas City, Missouri and eager to find the right education for their children. Today, Show Me KC Schools provides unbiased information and access on over 90 schools through a robust website, (complete with comparison tools and virtual tours), the City School Fair, school tours, parent workshops and one-on-one support. Despite the worldwide pandemic this year, we were still able to reach families in a meaningful way. Here is how we did that...
THE SERVICES

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY TOURS

WEDNESDAY WORKSHOP SERIES

CITY SCHOOL FAIR

PRINTED SCHOOL GUIDE

NAVIGATION

ONLINE SCHOOL GUIDE

SCHOOLAPPKC
Director of Programs, Sabrina Dowdy, along with our team responded to the needs of families who still wanted to understand their options even though we were unable to get into school buildings. This year we moved entirely to virtual school tours.

Our team hosted 6 virtual tours with 141 total parent and community member participants. While our reach in the virtual platform grew, parents still reported that they felt a disconnect with the inability to be inside of school buildings.

We showcased 21 schools across the KCPS and Charter sector. We broke those down into 7 elementary options, 7 middle school options, and 7 high school options.

We changed our Wednesday Workshop series to an online platform with recordings that were later archived on social media. We found that this allowed us to reach more families than we ever have before.

This year our team hosted 5 workshops virtually and recorded 11 parent navigational videos. While our in person events reached on average 20 people per event, our reach with the online platform grew. For the 16 recorded events we received an average 776 views per recorded video.

The attendance for the online events increased as well. We had 100 attendees to our in person workshops last year, while this year we had 168 attendees for the online workshop events.
CITY SCHOOL FAIR

Due to the pandemic we made the decision to pivot to an online event. We still saw a large number of participants and the event was a success. Additionally, we hosted for the first time a PreK focused fair.

We reached 940 participants with the PK and K-12 City School Fair. This is an increased reach of 23% from the previous year of 2019-2020 SY. Hosting a PreK fair was valuable to parents and gave us an opportunity to increase the reach to more young families.

In a follow up survey we asked if families felt that the school fairs helped to increase their knowledge and confidence about their school options. 83% of families felt the fairs did that.

ONE ON ONE NAVIGATION

Our two school navigators, Danielle Dispenza and Jessica Peña, sought to help families understand their options through meetings, emails, calls, texts and social media. Zoom became their platform of choice when reaching families virtually.

We reached 142 families with one on one services, answering specific questions about the needs for their child for the upcoming school year.

Through an informative video series navigators explained the four part process to understand your options. These helpful videos were viewed 1130 times on social media platforms.
 Reacting to the needs of our community during the pandemic, Nicole Becker, Director of Communications, and our staff swiftly put together a new community resources page on our website. In addition, we posted all school reopening plans with links to their published reopening documents.

Traffic to the website remained high despite the confusion around school openings. We saw 38797 visits to showmekcschools.org

One of our goals was to increase the time spent on the website researching schools. Since January 1st of this year, 1056 families have spent more than 5 minutes looking through our informative data.

Being proactive in outreach to the Hispanic community, we produced our first ever school guide entirely in Spanish. This increased our ability to reach the goal of service to all families in all communities in Kansas City.

Since November of 2019 we have distributed 12,500 printed school guides. 500 of those were printed in Spanish, creating access for Spanish speaking families

We added 64 new locations that currently distribute school guides to families in KC. These sites include pediatricians offices, preschools, day cares, hair salons, grocery stores, laundromats, and cafes.
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Our Community Outreach Specialist, Miss Diane Charity, represented Show Me KC Schools at multiple city events. She shares resources and our message of support and assistance for families living in KC.

• 12 monthly community meetings with the Urban Neighborhood Initiative (UNI) making presentations and giving SMKCS updates.
• 10 canvassing events, including food drives and door to door resource sharing in Manheim, Santa Fe, Marlborough, Heart Village neighborhood meetings and - in collaboration with Community Builders and KC Tenants.
• Distributed 7 boxes of School Guides and 300 SMKCS Resource flyers at grocery stores, restaurants, convenience stores.
• Made SMKCS presentations as a radio guest on 3 outlets - KKFI, KPRT and KPRS.
• Promoted SMKCS at monthly meetings of the Kansas City Public Television Community Advisory Board - (watch special documentary on Channel 19 about Gordon Parks School - “Hidden Pandemic” - Trauma Informed Schools in KCMO).
SchoolAppKC seeks to streamline the application process. Leslie Kohlmeyer, Director of SchoolAppKC worked with our team to increase the reach of SchoolAppKC despite the confusion caused by Covid.

By the first day of school for the 2020-2021 school year:

- 8604 applications from
- 4528 students

We saw a 16% increase in the number of students who applied during the lottery in year 2 over year 1, giving students a better chance at getting their first choice of seat.

93% of families who used SchoolAppKC reported that the system was easy or very easy to use and had no issues when applying to schools.

58% of families who used SchoolAppKC accessed the application on their phone or mobile device.

51% of families who were made an offer in SchoolAppKC had accepted their offer and began registration within one week of being made an offer.
Participation in SchoolAppKC continues to grow. While we saw a slight decline in the year 2 applications due to the pandemic, we have seen complete recovery in year 3 which will not end until November 2021.

Year 1: 13825
Year 2: 11464
Year 3: 10191

The number of schools in the application platform also continues to grow. The first year we launched with 16 schools and now entering year 4, we have 21 participating schools:

- Académie Lafayette
- Academy for Integrated Arts
- Brookside Charter School
- Crossroads Charter Schools
- Cristo Rey Kansas City
- Citizens of the World KC
- DeLaSalle Education Center
- Ewing Marion Kauffman School
- Frontier School of Excellence
- Guadalupe Centers Schools
- Genesis School
- Gordon Parks
- Hogan Preparatory Academy
- Hope Leadership Academy
- KIPP Endeavor Academy
- KC International Academy
- KC Girls Preparatory Academy
- Lee A. Tolbert Community Academy
- University Academy
- United Inner City Services
- Emmanuel Child and Family Center
SchoolAppKC serves all families within the Kansas City Public School District boundaries. 75% of applications come from zip codes that are classified as low or very low income as rated by the American Community Survey.