JCPRD’s Out of School Time Program
Performance Audit

Audit Services

August 17, 2023

Report #2023-02

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Acknowledgements

John Halliday and Huguette Essoh Latte, CIA conducted this audit. Please contact Harry Heflin, County Auditor, at 913-715-1827 if you have any questions about this audit report.

All photos from JCPRD’s website.
Summary

Our audit objective was to answer:

*Does the Johnson County Park and Recreation District (JCPRD) Children’s Services use leading practices in its Out of School Time (OST) program to ensure children are offered a safe, healthy, and enriching after school program.*

The OST program is before and after school care held at elementary schools. The activities children and youth engage in outside of school hours are critical to their overall development, highlighting the need for quality afterschool programs in all communities.

The JCPRD Out of School Time program follows the Kansas Enrichment Network (KEN) leading practices. While recognizing all KEN guidelines are being practiced, we recommend developing a more formal process to evaluate and monitor the parent survey results. This could help identify opportunities for program enhancements.

The report includes one recommendation to implement a process to review, prioritize, and monitor parents survey results.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.
Out of School Time program

The Johnson County Park and Recreation District (JCPRD) Children’s Services provides before and after school care for families in the County. The children in the program are provided a safe, enriching, and fun place to be. Each site offers a variety of group and self-selected activities. Choices offered include physical activities, games, and social time as well as creative arts and quiet time for homework, reading, or relaxing. Program sites may also include special projects, field trips, parties, and other activities based upon the interests of the children. JCPRD provides the OST program to families at an affordable cost. The total expenditures for the OST program have averaged a little under $8 million for the last 4 years. This program is an Enterprise Fund operation, and no tax revenues are used to support it.

The OST program offers a multi-age group setting, which offers opportunities for:

- Social and emotional learning, and
- Peer mentoring and modeling.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) licenses the JCPRD Children’s Services OST program sites on an annual basis. Program directors have advanced degrees from accredited colleges and universities. These directors plan a variety of interesting and age-appropriate activities for the children.

The Children’s Services department runs its OST program out of 65 schools from four districts:

- De Soto
- Gardner-Edgerton
- Shawnee Mission
- Olathe

Children can attend an OST program at their elementary school if the school is a designated program site and if there is availability.
The map below shows the OST program sites by school district. Olathe has 36 sites, Shawnee Mission 15, while DeSoto and Gardner-Edgerton have 7 each. JCPRD is the exclusive after school care provider in DeSoto, Gardner, and Olathe. The YMCA is the exclusive provider of after school care in the Blue Valley and Spring Hill school districts. YMCA also provides services in the Shawnee Mission district. A list of schools can be found in Appendix I on page 11.
As of September 2022, over 1,700 children were enrolled in morning OST program and 2,600 were enrolled in the afternoon program. Some students attend both sessions.

### Out of School Time Program Licensing

The State requires the OST program locations to be licensed. The Department of Health and Environment’s Child Care Licensing Division (CCL) inspects the OST locations. The CCL visits prior to site openings. They also perform annual, unannounced site visits, as well as scheduled follow-up or compliance visits in response to findings from the annual visit.

We verified that all OST program sites went through an annual CCL inspection within the past year and any issues identified were resolved.
Kansas Enrichment Network Guidelines

Kansas Enrichment Network (KEN) created the Kansas Afterschool Program Quality guidelines in 2011 to aid program staff in providing services for the youth. They were revised in 2021. KEN’s goal is to provide out of school time professionals with a set of guidelines and self-assessment tools to help provide quality programming.

The guidelines are broken into 5 categories:

- Operations,
- Programming,
- Relationships,
- Family Involvement/Engagement, and
- Professional Development.

These categories have 21 supporting guidelines, which are further broken down into sub-guidelines. These guidelines are considered leading practices and discussed in further detail in the audit scope and methodology section of the report.

OST follows KEN leading practices

We found JCPRD uses the KEN guidelines to help ensure children are offered a safe, healthy, and enriching OST program.

We reviewed the OST Staff Training Academy Manual to gain an understanding of current expectations and intended functioning of the OST program. We compared the topics covered in the training manual to the Kansas Afterschool Program guidelines to determine whether the training manual includes leading practices from KEN. Through documentation review, observation, interviews, and inquiries, we compared expectations in the training manual and KEN guidelines to current practices.

We also selected a sample of 23 employees (10% of the population) and verified:

- They read and signed the training manual
- Orientation occurred within 30 days of hire
- Background checks were completed timely

During our review of the KEN leading practices, we noted management requests annual feedback from families through online surveys. The results of the surveys are then shared with OST specialists involved in day-to-day activities at each program location. While recognizing all KEN guidelines are being practiced, we recommend developing a more formal process to evaluate and monitor the parent survey results. This additional focus could help identify program enhancements.
Recommendation

We recommend the Executive Director of JCPRD:

1. Implement a formal process to review, prioritize and monitor the parents’ survey results.

Management’s Response

The Children’s Services team appreciates the acknowledgement that we are meeting all KEN guidelines, as well as the recommendation to go above and beyond those guidelines to improve our processes by implementing a formal process to review, prioritize and monitor parent survey results. We will work to develop a formalized process to be implemented no later than July 14, 2023. Thanks again for your work on this and for assisting us as we strive for continuous improvement.
Audit Scope and Methodology

Scope

We reviewed the JCPRD Children’s Services Out of School Time Program to determine if it was using leading practices when developing its program.

Our audit scope excluded the following programs offered by JCPRD:

- Early Childhood
- Camps
- Special Populations

Criteria

The criterion for the audit is the 2021 Kansas Afterschool Program Quality Guidelines developed by the Kansas Enrichment Network. These guidelines are broken into five categories listed below:

**Operations** - A quality program employs reliable systems that foster responsible fiscal management, address program sustainability, and project the need for continuous enhancements of the program, safety, staff, and youth through evaluations.

- The program has a clear mission statement and business plan.
- The program is guided by clearly written policies and procedures for staff, volunteers, board members, and the administration.
- Maintain accurate and ongoing written documentation in multiple facets of the program.
- Recruit, hire, and work to retain qualified staff members.
- Indoor and outdoor spaces adequately meet the needs of all youth.
- The program provides an emotionally and physically safe, sanitary, and secure environment to meet the needs of all youth.

**Programming** - A quality program provides a safe, healthy, and stimulating learning environment that promotes physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth and development for all youth. Activities allow for choice, discovery, and progression.

- Program provides an emotionally safe environment that fosters positive physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth and development for all participants.
- Program offers rich, meaningful, and engaging experiences to enhance learning, promote student success, and provide opportunities for youth development.
- Program supports learning and engagement through outreach to the schools, community, and volunteers.
• Schedule reflects offerings conducive to the needs of the youth, families, and community served.
• Program provides a platform for active youth voice.

Relationships - A quality program provides a safe, healthy, and stimulating learning environment that promotes physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth and development for all youth. Activities allow for choice, discovery, and progression.
• Program staff members engage youth in positive ways and intentionally build individual relationships.
• Program staff members engage in positive staff relationships.
• Program youth engage in positive youth relationships.
• Staff and program members engage in positive program/facility relationships.

Family Engagement - A quality program develops strong partner relationships and interactions between families and staff, youth, programs, facility, community, afterschool administration, and school day administration.
• Program youth engage in positive youth relationships.
• The program environment supports community connections for families.
• Program policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of the youth, their families, and the community.

Professional Development - A quality program offers ongoing training for volunteers/staff members that encompasses advocacy for youth and positive youth development.
• Leadership, staff, and volunteers display professionalism in practice.
• Organization ensures opportunities for ongoing professional growth.
• Program advocates for the needs of the youth in their community

Methodology
Audit services performed the following:
• We verified that all 65 OST program sites went through a KDHE Childcare Licensing inspection within the past year and were compliant or addressed any issues noted.
• We reviewed the OST Staff Training Academy Manual to gain an understanding of current expectations/intended functioning of the OST program. Then, we compared the topics covered in the training manual to the KEN guidelines to determine whether the training manual includes leading practices from KEN.
  o Through documentation review, observation, interviews, and inquiries, we compared expectations in the training manual and KEN guidelines to current practices.
We reviewed the 21 guidelines and a judgmental sample of 31 sub guidelines. Additionally, we sampled 23 employees (10% of the population), including specialists, and performed the following:

- They read and signed the training manual
- Orientation occurred within 30 days of hire
- Background checks were completed timely
### Appendix I

#### Table 1: Program Locations by School District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Program Locations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>De Soto</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Belmont Elementary</td>
<td>Prairie Ridge Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mize Elementary</td>
<td>Starside Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clear Creek Elementary</td>
<td>Horizon Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riverview Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gardner-Edgerton</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Edgerton Elementary</td>
<td>Madison Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gardner Elementary</td>
<td>Moonlight Elementary</td>
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<td>Grand Start Elementary</td>
<td>Nike Elementary</td>
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<td>Sunflower Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shawnee Mission</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brianwood Elementary</td>
<td>Rhein Benninghoven Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corinth Elementary</td>
<td>Shawanoe Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merriam Park Elementary</td>
<td>Broken Arrow Elementary</td>
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<td>Sunflower Elementary</td>
<td>Lenexa Hills Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trailwood Elementary</td>
<td>Oak Park-Carpenter Elementary</td>
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<td>Brookwood Elementary</td>
<td>Rushton Elementary</td>
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<td><strong>Olathe</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Arbor Creek Elementary</td>
<td>Cedar Creek Elementary</td>
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<td>Black Bob Elementary</td>
<td>Central Elementary</td>
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<td>Bentwood Elementary</td>
<td>Clearwater Creek Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brianwood Elementary</td>
<td>Countryside Elementary</td>
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<td>Brougham Elementary</td>
<td>Fairview Elementary</td>
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<td>Canyon Creek Elementary</td>
<td>Forest View Elementary</td>
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<td>Mahaffie Elementary</td>
<td>Prairie Center Elementary</td>
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<td>Manchester Park Elementary</td>
<td>Ravenwood Elementary</td>
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<td>Meadow Lane Elementary</td>
<td>Regency Place Elementary</td>
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<td>Millbrooke Elementary</td>
<td>Ridgeview Elementary</td>
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<td>Northview Elementary</td>
<td>Rolling Ridge Elementary</td>
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<td>Pleasant Ridge Elementary</td>
<td>Scarborough Elementary</td>
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<td>Green Springs Elementary</td>
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<td>Heatherstone Elementary</td>
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<td>Heritage Elementary</td>
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<td>Indian Creek Elementary</td>
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<td>Madison Place Elementary</td>
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<td>Sunnyside Elementary</td>
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<td>Tomahawk Elementary</td>
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<td>Walnut Grove Elementary</td>
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<td>Washington Elementary</td>
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<td>Westview Elementary</td>
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<td>Woodland Elementary</td>
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Source: Audit Services obtained from the JCPRD website.