

2024

LSR-7 School Board

Candidate Profiles



2024 Lee's Summit R-7 School Board Elections

Six candidates have filed to run for three available three-year terms on the Lee's Summit R-7 Board of Education. The Chamber is hosting the LSR-7 School Board Candidate Forum from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 6, at the Missouri Innovation Campus, 1101 NW Innovation Pkwy. The forum offers a great opportunity to meet the candidates and learn more about their stances on certain issues. The candidates are:

- Dan Blake
- Bill Haley
- Reuben Mitchell
- Stacie Myers
- Rodrick King Sparks
- Juanice Williams

The Chamber encourages residents to make an educated vote on Tuesday, April 2, 2024. Contact Chamber President, Matt Baird, at 816.524.2424 or mbaird@lschamber.com for more information.

Please Note: All answers were copied directly from answers provided by candidates and were not edited by the Chamber.

This Program was paid for by the Lee's Summit Chamber of Commerce, Matt Baird, President.

Current School Board



Rodrick Sparks President
Jennifer Foley Vice President
Heather Eslick Member
Ryan Murdock Member
Regina Garrett Member
Kamile Johnson Member
Erica Miller Member

Special thanks to our forum sponsors



Dan Blake

Education: Bachelor of Engineering – BE, Mechanical Engineering
Business Name: Burns & McDonnell
Occupation: Project Manager
Political Experience: None
Memberships/Activities: ASHRAE – Associate Member – Kansas City Chapter ASPE – Full Member – Kansas City Chapter VP Legislative (2012 – 2014) , VP Technical (2014 – 2016)
Campaign Web Address: www.danblake4lsr7.com

1. What compelled you to run for the R7 School Board?

My motivation to run for school board starts with our young daughter. I want to ensure that she—and all our students—are receiving the best possible education. The job market is becoming increasingly competitive as technology continues to evolve. We need to equip students with skill sets that will empower them to live successful lives post-graduation. With 25 years' experience in engineering, construction and large capital project execution, I bring a unique perspective to the table, one that prioritizes efficiency, innovation, and problem-solving.

2. If elected what would be your top three priorities during your term?

- Student Success: Every student is diverse with unique learning styles and deserves the opportunity to thrive.
- Recruiting and Retaining Quality Teachers: Supportive working environments, reduce classroom sizes, Provide training and mentorship programs.
- Enhancing access to resources: Invest in updated educational materials, technology, and facilities to provide students with the tools they need for success.

3. What do you see as your primary job as a school board member?

My primary role will include Policy Development and Oversight, Budget Oversight and Financial Management and Superintendent Oversight. I am committed to representing the community interests by improving educational outcomes, ensuring responsible stewardship of resources, and supporting the educators who play a critical role in shaping the future of students.

4. What three qualities do you have that you think will allow you to be a successful school board member?

- Commitment to Education – I am deeply committed to the mission statement.
- Collaborative and Communication Skills – I foster relationships with all stakeholders for an actionable outcome.
- Integrity and Ethical Leadership – I have previous board experience on a national engineering board as acting VP. I lead a \$100M business in the engineering and construction industry and am held accountable for measurable results.

5. How will you as a school board member connect, engage and communicate with the community?

Attending public meetings, committees, school visits and events in addition to making myself available through social media and even a personal phone call for one-on-one discussion will demonstrate my commitment to transparency and accessibility. Community members will have the opportunity to voice concerns directly.

6. Although standardized test scores show increasing improvement in our schools, significant differences among economic and cultural groups still exist. What can the District do to continue the overall success in academic achievement while significantly closing the achievement gap?

Addressing the achievement gap begins with acknowledging the differences between economic and cultural groups. We must emphasize the role of families in supporting student success, prioritize fiscal responsibility and direct resources towards initiatives that support student learning and achievement. This is achieved by creating a culture of accountability, high academic standards and parental involvement.

7. What do you think the R7 District does well and what do you think they could improve on?

The district and the board have done a great job at creating community conversations, but they could improve on taking action on the lessons they have learned from the feedback. It would be nice to hear positive changes that took place as a direct result of the feedback from the forums. One suggestion on how the district could improve their process:

Feedback Analysis and Action Plan: After each community conversation or forum, the district and the board should dedicate time to thoroughly analyze the feedback received. They should identify common themes, concerns, and suggestions. From there, they can develop a clear action plan outlining steps to address the issues raised.

Please Note: All answers were copied directly from answers provided by candidates and were not edited by the Chamber.

For more information about the School Board or School District, visit LSR7.org.



Bill Haley

Education: Graduated Owensville High School 1979
Studied Business Management: East Central College, Union, MO 1985-1990
Studied Business Management: Tarrant County Collage, Ft Worth, TX 1993-1998
Business Name: On Target Ammunition, LLC
Occupation: Owner
Political Experience - NA
Memberships/Activities – NA
Campaign Web Address: www.billhaleyforschoolboard.com

1. What compelled you to run for the R7 School Board?

I have been encouraged by friends and family. In the last 10 years my wife and I have been volunteering and doing community service work and this is an effort to continue to return to my community.

2. If elected what would be your top three priorities during your term?

- Ensuring transparent fiscal responsibility for the taxpayers
- Working to close the achievement gap
- Providing a safe, efficient, and rewarding learning environment for our teachers and students

3. What do you see as your primary job as a school board member?

Guiding policy making for improved educational results for our students and ensuring the employees of the school district have competitive pay/benefits and a safe rewarding work environment. Ensuring transparency and responsibility to taxpayers.

4. What three qualities do you have that you think will allow you to be a successful school board member?

- The ability to listen
- The ability and experience working successfully in large organizations with complex requirements, processes and a variety of dynamic challenges
- The ability to work with diverse groups of individuals coming from different backgrounds

5. How will you as a school board member connect, engage and communicate with the community?

I love face to face meetings and getting to know people and I much prefer that to “on-line” connections.

I attend many local events and engage personally.

6. Although standardized test scores show increasing improvement in our schools, significant differences among economic and cultural groups still exist. What can the District do to continue the overall success in academic achievement while significantly closing the achievement gap?

We need better results in early education in Kindergarten thru 3rd grade to ensure that foundational skills are mastered before learning more complex skills.

7. What do you think the R7 District does well and what do you think they could improve on?

The R7 District does a good job of preparing our children academically for higher education.

The achievement gap continues to be a challenge that needs our attention.



Reuben Mitchell

Education: Bachelor of Arts from College of the Ozarks
Business Name: Federal Government
Occupation: Data analyst
Political Experience: None
Memberships/Activities: Cedar Creek PTA
Campaign Web Address: www.reubenmitchell.com

1. What compelled you to run for the R7 School Board?

My base motivation for running are my three

young boys ages 8,6, and 3 with another boy due in June. Family is the only legacy you can create that will outlive you or anything else you can build. I want to be an example of service that they will want to emulate.

2. If elected what would be your top three priorities during your term?

My top three priorities are

- unifying the district around issues everyone can get behind. Second, focusing on the
- classroom level to further enhance that experience. And to focus on our finances to
- acknowledge the financial pain our community has been experiencing.

3. What do you see as your primary job as a school board member?

To provide direction and oversight for the district to reflect the community’s vision of education. Board members are also champions for the district to both advance their mission but also to hear grievances and keep the district on the right path.

4. What three qualities do you have that you think will allow you to be a successful school board member?

I have 19 years of experience as a civil servant where I have honed my skills as a communicator who reaches across great divides to bring diverse people together. My career has afforded me a front row seat on how government works and the best ways to get things done in the sea of policies, regulations, and laws. I also am a data analyst that works through complex problems with various teams to find solutions.

5. How will you as a school board member connect, engage and communicate with the community?

I like to meet people in person. Social media creates a false sense of connectivity, but true relationships happen in-person, one-on-one. Availability and approachability are key aspects of my reputation I will continue to build on. I want to be known as a down to earth person who will engage and not just spout talking points.

6. Although standardized test scores show increasing improvement in our schools, significant differences among economic and cultural groups still exist. What can the District do to continue the overall success in academic achievement while significantly closing the achievement gap?

We have identified who these struggling kids are and can focus on them. We have excellent staff and community who are willing to put in work to help these kids overcome any barrier holding them back. I am confident the district merely needs to acknowledge these gaps and focus on them.

7. What do you think the R7 District does well and what do you think they could improve on?

The district has a mountain of opportunities for kids to explore their world in a wide range of activities. I feel this is probably the biggest draw our community has for kids. There is no end to the interesting things they can pursue where their own motivation carries them to achieve greatness. To improve, the district can focus on those kids who appear to be left behind. I am positive the district can rise to the challenge of helping those kids.



Stacie Myers

Education: BSE, Social Studies – University of Central Missouri
MSE, Secondary Administration – University of Central Missouri
Occupation: Retired
Memberships/Activities: None
Political Experience: None
Campaign Web Address: Facebook: Stacie Myers for LSR7 Board of Education

1. What compelled you to run for the R7 School Board?

I was compelled to run for the R7 School board because a teacher’s voice on the school board is needed and is currently unheard. Supporting our community’s education needs means supporting our students, staff, families, and teachers. Having a member with classroom experience is a benefit to the board as it works to support all of these groups.

2. If elected what would be your top three priorities during your term?

My top priorities include the following:

- Helping students achieve academic excellence and work to their full potential. The district vision is to prepare all students for success in life and the board works to support this goal.
- Making sure an educator’s perspective is shared & considered before big policy decisions are made and implemented.
- Protecting public education in our community. Our school district has been the backbone of our community and I want to ensure we continue to be a destination district.

3. What do you see as your primary job as a school board member?

The primary responsibility of a board member is to see that starting at the top of the organization an environment is being created that children thrive in, teachers feel appreciated and want to work in, and parents have the confidence in sending their most treasured family members to school daily.

4. What three qualities do you have that you think will allow you to be a successful school board member?

Resilient. Active listener. Forward thinker.

5. How will you as a school board member connect, engage and communicate with the community?

As an elected official I will have a responsibility to be approachable, to reply to communications in a timely fashion, and to be involved in community events as a representative of the board.

6. Although standardized test scores show increasing improvement in our schools, significant differences among economic and cultural groups still exist. What can the District do to continue the overall success in academic achievement while significantly closing the achievement gap?

As a lifelong educator, I could write a book on how to close the achievement gap initiatives, but the bottom line is this. It all comes down to the environment. Closing the achievement gap is the hundreds of teachers district wide reaching students and developing authentic relationships with them. This is accomplished hundreds of different ways as we each have our own style and personality. It is about the district providing the environment with small enough classes for these relationships to become personalized, it is about allowing teachers time to think and plan for student differences, it is about supporting students when they do struggle to maintain motivation, it is about removing things from the ever growing list of to-do’s each year that students and teachers get overwhelmed with, and it is about consistent administrative support.

7. What do you think the R7 District does well and what do you think they could improve on?

We do a good job in providing a large variety of learning opportunities and activities, designed to meet different interests and strengths of our students. It begins at the Pre-K and elementary school with the age appropriate hands-on activities including the Makerspace rooms and other manipulatives, it then continues at the secondary level with elective courses, after school activities, and includes off campus course offerings designed to target very specific interests for our high school students.

In terms of improvement, our students deserve to be surrounded by the best teachers and support professionals in the area. We must continue to recruit and retain the highest caliber certified and professional staff possible. The School Board is ground zero for creating a work environment that makes people feel welcome, feel supported in their work, and excited to build a professional life in our district.

Please Note: All answers were copied directly from answers provided by candidates and were not edited by the Chamber.



Rodrick Sparks

Education: Some college (Liberty University)
Business Name: Security First Title
Occupation: Escrow Assistant
Memberships/Activities: LS Cares, Wedgewood Pointe POA, St. James Masonic Lodge #59
Political Experience:Current R7 Board President
Campaign Web Address: Facebook.com/SparksforLSR7

1. What compelled you to run for the R7 School Board?

Having served as a board member for the past three years, my decision to seek re-election stems from my strong belief in the necessity of a community voice on the board. I advocate for a collaborative relationship between the board and various community stakeholders, including teachers, parents, students, and the business community, as I firmly believe that such collaboration enhances overall outcomes.

I am committed to the principle that decisions affecting the community should not be made solely through centralized power but should instead involve input from the people directly impacted by those decisions.

2. If elected what would be your top three priorities during your term?

Onboarding New Board Members:

- Ensure a smooth transition: Create a supportive environment for new members, providing necessary resources and mentorship for a quick acclimation to their roles.
- Foster collaboration: Promote effective communication and collaboration among board members to enhance governance cohesion.

Student Academic Achievement:

- Implement evidence-based strategies: Focus on proven educational approaches to boost academic achievement for all students.
- Address equity gaps: Advocate for policies eliminating disparities in resources, access, and educational outcomes to ensure equal opportunities for success.

2025 Bond Approval and Oversight:

- Community engagement: Prioritize engaging with the community to understand needs and concerns related to the potential 2025 bond. Transparent decision-making: Advocate for clear communication on fund allocation, project timelines, and significant bond-related developments to foster trust and accountability.

By focusing on these priorities, I aim to contribute to a board that is united, focused on academic success, and responsive to the needs of the community, ultimately ensuring a positive impact on the educational experience for all students.

3. What do you see as your primary job as a school board member?

The main responsibilities of a board member encompass hiring, managing, and evaluating the performance of the superintendent—the sole employee of the board. Additionally, the role involves being a responsible steward of the budget, actively supporting the district’s mission, and aligning with the priorities set by the board.

4. What three qualities do you have that you think will allow you to be a successful school board member?

Empathy, emotional intelligence, and humility are integral qualities I value. Recognizing the significance of empathy and emotional intelligence in governance, especially during critical moments, is paramount. I emphasize the importance of finding common ground with those holding fundamentally different views. I view humility not as a weakness but as a strength, essential for effective leadership within a diverse community with disparate ideas. Prioritizing the concerns of others and understanding that leadership is more about service than being “right” forms the basis for building enduring relationships.

5. How will you as a school board member connect, engage and communicate with the community?

I am passionate about building relationships beyond the boardroom, connecting with students, staff and families to understand the real impact of our decisions. Our accomplishments include adding student representatives, expanding community and business advisory boards, and hosting events like “Dinner with the Board” for public engagement. I am committed to accessibility, whether online, over the phone, or within the community, to better serve the people. We need to be creative and purposeful in reaching out to everyone that’s willing to connect!

6. Although standardized test scores show increasing improvement in our schools, significant differences among economic and cultural groups still exist. What can the District do to continue the overall success in academic achievement while significantly closing the achievement gap?

Personalized interventions. While we’ve taken steps like LETRS training for teachers, early intervention, MTSS action steps, and exploring early childhood expansion, there’s more to be done. The term ‘equity’ has garnered misconceptions, potentially overshadowing the needs of our district’s most challenged students. These students face reading difficulties, lack early childhood education, or cope with trauma, reflecting in disruptive behavior or self-isolation. As leaders, we must meet each child where they are, guiding them to their highest potential. Embracing equity is crucial to fulfilling our mission for all families.

7. What do you think the R7 District does well and what do you think they could improve on?

Listing all the positive aspects would take up too much space, but it’s worth highlighting that R7 has exceptional teachers and staff. Our focus on students and academic achievement is unwavering, and we’re making significant strides in real-world learning and trade opportunities. We are actively improving our communication by promoting transparency, streamlining processes, and ensuring effectiveness. Initiatives are in place to enhance openness, simplify procedures, and deliver messages that are easily understood and impactful. Our aim is to cultivate a communication environment that is clear, straightforward, and facilitates the seamless flow of information.



Juanice Williams

Education: Bachelor degree of Social Work from Central Missouri State University Warrensburg, MO

Master degree of Social Work from the University of Kansas, Lawrence KS

Business Name: University of Central Missouri

Occupation: Associate Instructor of Social Work and Director of Field Education

Activities & Organizations: I am a member of the Missouri National Association of Social Workers (MO-NASW), the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the School Social Workers Association of Missouri (SSWAM)

Political Experience: None

Campaign Web Address: www.ElectJuanice.com

1. What compelled you to run for the R7 School Board?

I have been in this community for over 20 years. I have four children who attended and graduated from LSR7 schools. As a professional social worker I have worked with students and families within this community as well as the schools. I see efforts being made to address the multifaceted needs of students and I think I have the skills and the knowledge to mainstream and connect struggling students and families with resources to help them reduce stress and increase student learning.

There is overwhelming research indicating children are facing many mental health concerns and the concerns continue to go untreated for a variety of reasons. As these needs are not being met, it leads to children that are unable to learn in school. I have a passion to see children succeed and receive a high quality education without falling through the cracks. As a social worker, a big part of my job is to listen and be present while building bridges with people to create success.

I have a daughter that is a teacher in this district and see her giving so much to this system and still feeling like it's not enough. I want to decrease educational disparities by increasing educational specialists such as reading and math specialists to meet the needs of struggling students and to help already overburdened teachers. The beautiful thing about public education is that we can all come together to share ideas and create solutions to prepare students for an increasingly diverse and global world.

2. If elected what would be your top three priorities during your term?

Increase comprehensive in- school resources to address the national mental health crisis facing kids.

Continuing to provide high quality education to all students regardless of their circumstances.

To decrease educational disparities within the school district.

3. What do you see as your primary job as a school board member?

Work as part of a team to create policy for the district, manage and maintain the budget for the district, advocate for all students in the school district at the local and state level, and evaluate the Superintendent. Actively engage with the community and be transparent in our decisions.

4. What three qualities do you have that you think will allow you to be a successful school board member?

I have lived in this community for over 20 years and I have 4 children that went through and successfully graduated from LSR7. As a social worker I have the skills to listen and communicate to build a shared community. I have worked in a neighboring school district and I have an understanding of how complex schools are, and I understand the struggles to meet the needs of the most vulnerable students while remaining a district with distinction.

5. How will you as a school board member connect, engage and communicate with the community?

Attending events at the schools, meeting with students at their clubs, Townhalls, emails, social media, phone calls.

6. Although standardized test scores show increasing improvement in our schools, significant differences among economic and cultural groups still exist. What can the District do to continue the overall success in academic achievement while significantly closing the achievement gap?

The district can use the Title 1 funds that are given to the most at risk schools within the school district in a fiscally responsible way. We know that the children that attend Title 1 schools are the children that are most at risk that is why those schools are given those funds by the government.. Those funds should be used as intended to provide resources to those schools not split between several schools. Meeting those children's needs in a responsible way will aid in closing the achievement gap.

7. What do you think the R7 District does well and what do you think they could improve on?

Academics. We are a very academically sound school district. We have regularly proven that students receive a high quality education that ultimately prepares them for the world.

Educators. We have dedicated principals, teachers, and support staff. They strive to help all students be seen and feel cared for daily. Our educators have proven they are dedicated to the children in this district during these challenging times to be a teacher.

Programs and Community Partnerships for student success. We offer many programs to students to ensure student success. From IB programs, AP class, to Grow Your Own and Teacher Educator Academy, STEM/STEAM, Vocational Programs, and Community Partnerships like Youth Court with the Lee's Summit Police Dept. and many many more.

Improvements in transparency around policies that are implemented and better communication and understanding of family needs and community members concerns in the school district.

2024

MAKE AN EDUCATED VOTE

April 2, 2024



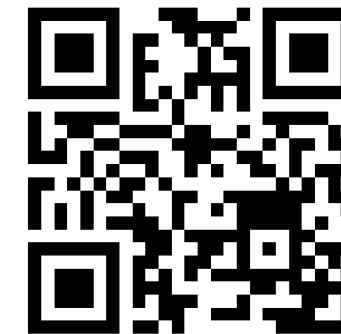
Voters must be registered by March 6, 2024.



Absentee requests must be received on or before Wednesday, March 20, 2024.



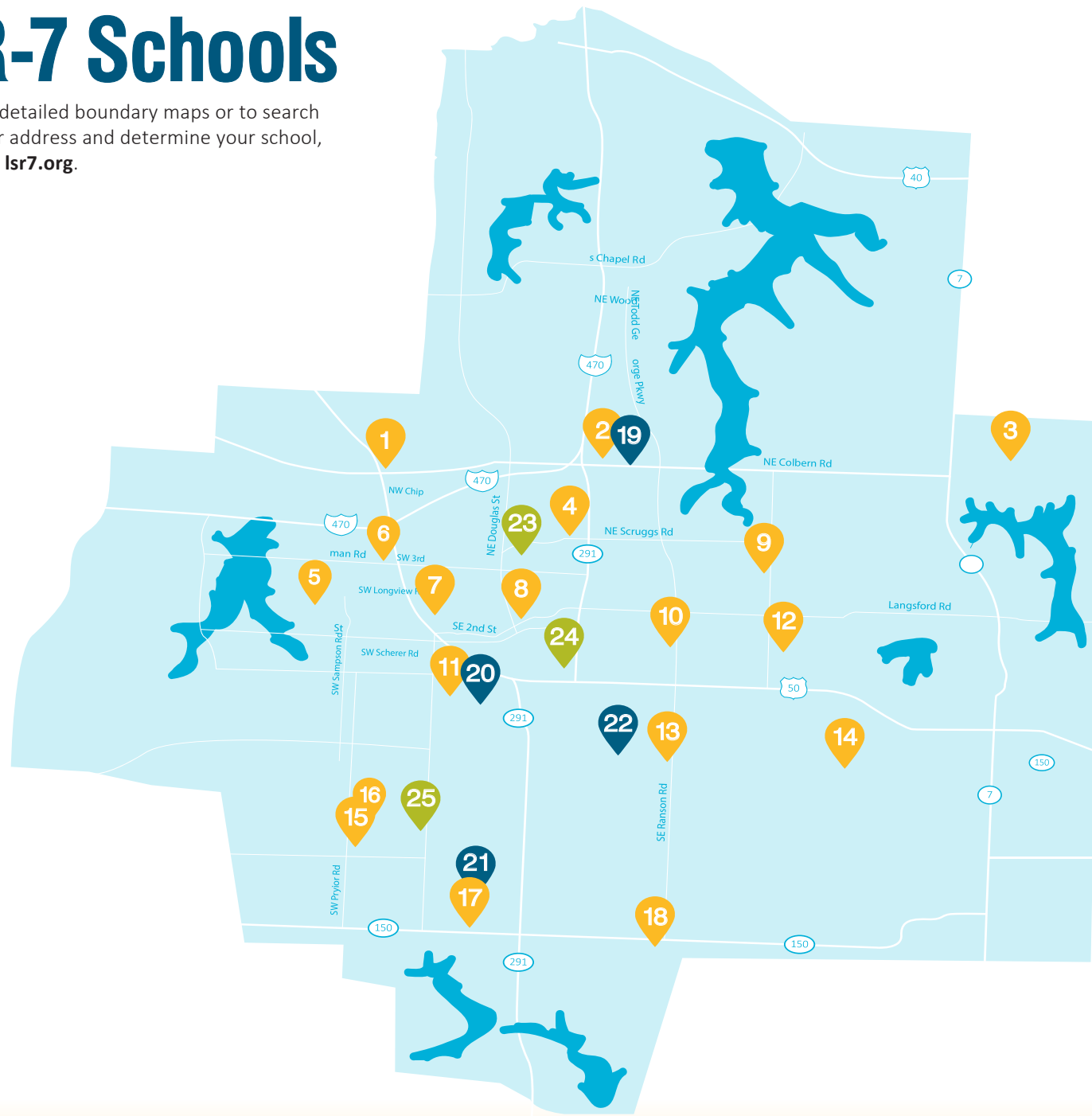
For more information scan the QR code below



Production paid for by the Lee's Summit Chamber of Commerce, Matt Baird, President, 220 Main St., Lee's Summit, MO 64063

Map of Lee's Summit R-7 Schools

For detailed boundary maps or to search your address and determine your school, visit lsr7.org.



Elementary

- 1. Hazel Grove Elementary**
2001 NW Blue Pkwy
Lee's Summit, MO 64064
- 2. Underwood Elementary**
1125 NE Colbern Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64086
- 3. Mason Elementary**
27600 NE Colbern Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64086
- 4. Meadow Lane Elementary**
1421 NE Independence Ave
Lee's Summit, MO 64086
- 5. Longview Farm Elementary**
1001 SW Longview Park Dr
Lee's Summit, MO 64081
- 6. Cedar Creek Elementary**
2600 SW Third St
Lee's Summit, MO 64081
- 7. Westview Elementary**
200 N Ward Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64063
- 8. Lee's Summit Elementary**
110 SE Green St
Lee's Summit, MO 64063
- 9. Richardson Elementary**
800 NE Blackwell Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64086
- 10. Prairie View Elementary**
501 SE Todd George Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64063
- 11. Pleasant Lea Middle School**
630 SW Persels Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64081
- 12. Highland Park Elementary**
400 SE Millstone Ave
Lee's Summit, MO 64063
- 13. Sunset Valley Elementary**
1850 SE Ranson Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64082
- 14. Woodland Elementary**
12709 Smart Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64086
- 15. Hawthorn Hill Elementary**
2801 SW Pryor Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64086
- 16. Summit Pointe Elementary**
13100 E 147th St
Kansas City, MO 64149
- 17. Trailridge Elementary**
3651 SW Windemere Dr
Lee's Summit, MO 64082
- 18. Greenwood Elementary**
805 W Main St
Greenwood, MO 64034

High

- 23. Lee's Summit North High School**
901 NE Douglas St
Lee's Summit, MO 64086
- 24. Lee's Summit High School**
400 SE Blue Pkwy
Lee's Summit, MO 64063
- 25. Lee's Summit West High School**
2600 SW Ward Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64082

Middle

- 19. Bernard Campbell Middle School**
1201 NE Colbern Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64086
- 20. Pleasant Lea Middle School**
630 SW Persels Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64081
- 21. Summit Lakes Middle School**
3500 SW Windemere Dr
Lee's Summit, MO 64082
- 22. East Trails Middle School**
1001 SE Bailey Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64081

Yours Truly, **LS LEE'S SUMMIT CHAMBER**

Yours Truly, **LS LEE'S SUMMIT CHAMBER**



LEE'S SUMMIT CHAMBER

Production paid for by the Lee's Summit Chamber of Commerce, Matt Baird, President, 220 SE Main St., Lee's Summit, MO, 64063