

parentlink

A newsletter for parents published by the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation • August, 2020

Kirkwood alum parlays early business acumen into successful restaurant empire

Sterling Coleman has been passionate about business since he was a child, even before he attended Kirkwood High School through the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corp. program.

Coleman, a 1988 Kirkwood graduate, is now chief executive officer and president of SJAC Food Groups Holdings in Atlanta. The company is the largest African-American licensee group in the Zaxby's Franchising Inc. network and it operates the franchise's top grossing location. He founded the company in 2001 to operate first-class brand restaurants, deliver an outstanding guest experience and achieve great results while positioning the company for continued growth. And grow it has. SJAC started with one Atlanta location with annual sales of \$1.5 million and has expanded to more than 17 stores in 12 cities with annual sales of over \$30 million.

It all started when young Sterling solicited neighbors to hire him to shovel snow, cut grass, carry groceries and pump gas. He also ran a paper route and a hot dog stand. When it came time for high school, his mother knew what to do.

Diane Coleman registered her four sons in the VICC program in the Kirkwood School District, wanting them to receive the high school education she did not have. She knew they would meet classmates from different economic, social and racial backgrounds and that would shape their future trajectories. "Kirkwood High School and its faculty opened my eyes to more possibilities and encouraged me to go to college and even beyond," Coleman said.

Coleman credits his accounting teacher at Kirkwood for giving him the all-important understanding of accounts payable and receivables and notes payable and receivable and other vital business concepts.

While at Kirkwood, he played on the varsity basketball and junior varsity football teams.

Former Kirkwood High Principal David Holley, also Coleman's basketball coach, saw the ingredients that would lead to business success for Coleman. "The hard work and positive attitude that he exhibited as an 18-year-old are the same traits that have surely contributed to his success in life," Holley said. "I can still see the furrowed brow when he was hunkered down in an intense situation. I also can see the wide smile and garrulous laughter when things had gone well. As a player, his most outstanding quality was the tenaciousness with which he played defense." Holley has no doubt that the same tenaciousness is evident in Coleman's business dealings.

Coleman was inducted into the Kirkwood Outstanding Alumni Hall of Fame in October 2019. He returned to the high school campus for the induction ceremony and related events.

After high school, Coleman earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Tennessee State University. A lifetime member of Kappa Alpha Psi, he was recognized for his academic achievements and earned a place on the Dean's List. In 2018, TSU awarded him the Entrepreneur Achievement Award, which honors alumni who are prominent, emerging leaders and have made a positive impact on the university's brand and community.



Sterling Coleman

Post-college, after working for a Fortune 500 company for a while, Coleman

followed his yearning to own his own business and bought his first Zaxby's franchise restaurant in 2003. Running the fast casual restaurant allowed him to put his business experience and education into action.

The business continued to grow, with nine Atlanta locations and nine locations built in Oklahoma. In January 2020, SJAC Holdings opened a new restaurant on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive in Atlanta.

Shortly after that opening, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, throwing the restaurant industry into disarray. With the company's dining rooms closed, Coleman and his team swung into action, converting the restaurant business into a meal preparation operation to feed healthcare workers tending to coronavirus patients in 42 of the city's hospitals. Regular Zaxby's employees arrived at the restaurants early in the mornings to prepare and pack 200 meals into colorful cardboard lunch boxes. Employees delivered the meals to the hospitals in Zaxby's vehicles.

"We think that this is a bridge for us to be able to help and support those people who are on the front lines," Coleman said. "We would hope to inspire and be someone who can help, and other restaurants will see what we're doing."

Coleman's other awards (so far) include the 2016 Game Changers Award from Who's Who in Black Atlanta, the 2016 Atlanta Business League's Men of Influence award, Sheen Magazine's 2016 Business Acumen Award. SJAC's South Fulton (Georgia) Zaxby's location received the Guest Service Award in 2008 and 2009, and the Mount Zion location received the Comparable Sales and COMP Sales Award in 2013.

Coleman and his wife, Shameka, have four children and live in Atlanta.

STARTING DATES

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Afton | August 24 |
| Bayless. | August 24 |
| Brentwood | August 24 |
| Clayton | August 24 |
| Hancock Place | August 24 |
| Kirkwood | August 24 |
| Mehlville. | August 25 |
| Parkway. | August 24 |
| Rockwood. | August 24 |
| Special/Tech | August 24 |
| STL Public School | August 24 |
| Valley Park | August 24 |
| Webster Groves | August 24 |

Starting dates may change due to COVID-19 precautions. Please check with VICC or the school district's contact person in advance to verify the starting date.

VICC: Still caring for students in the time of COVID-19

Mid-March of 2020 started a "new norm" for most area school children, VICC students included. St. Louis city and county school superintendents, following the CDC guidelines for a stay-at-home order, called for schools to close their buildings and transform to school online.



Many of these students relied on those brick and mortar schools to not only provide daily nourishment of their minds but also daily nourishment of their bodies. The number of VICC students who normally participate daily in the free- and reduced-lunch program at their school exceeds 85% percent. Many school districts immediately opened sites for students and families to pick up food for a day, a few days or even for the week.

Knowing some of our families may not have the means to get to those sites, our transportation department designed and implemented 11 daily food routes that delivered meals throughout all three of our city zones, with food donations coming from the school districts of Afton, Bayless, Kirkwood and Rockwood. Hundreds of breakfasts and lunches were delivered daily through the end of the 2019-20 school year and are still being delivered Monday through Wednesday during the summer months.

VICC workers load food and supplies for delivery to students.

2020

OUTSTANDING GRADUATES

Each spring, the participating VICC school districts choose an outstanding graduating senior from each high school to represent the students' achievements and the schools' exemplary efforts in preparing them for the future.

These are the 2020 outstanding graduates.

Afton High School



Alexis Fisher was a hardworking and ambitious student at Afton High School. She earned a 3.1 GPA and always strove to challenge herself academically. Her

extracurricular activities included playing bass clarinet in the AHS Band and participating in women's wrestling and supporting the full coed program. She is highly respected by her peers and faculty, and school staff all know she will be successful in college and in her career. Alexis plans to attend the University of Missouri in the fall, pursuing a degree in Civil Engineering.

Bayless High School



LaJoya Williams is an exceptional Bayless High School student who is motivated to seek greater opportunities for herself. While in high school,

she participated in the Washington University College Prep Program, she is a scholar of the Washington University Pre-Medical Institute and has been recognized by Bayless High School and St. Louis Community College for academic honors. LaJoya will graduate high school with over 40 college credit hours. LaJoya is a band member and a two-year captain of the BHS Color Guard squad. LaJoya plans to attend St. Louis University in the fall and has earned the St. Louis University Dean's Scholarship. Her plan for the future is to become a medical doctor.

Brentwood High School



Madison Lawrence is an all-around top-notch student at Brentwood High School. When it comes to academics, she has challenged

herself with the school's most demanding course load, taking only advanced placement (AP) courses and advanced college credit classes in English, foreign language, science and mathematics. Madison serves as Student Council president, is a multisport athlete and has been active

in class officer roles, Spanish Club, National Honor Society, playing the piano for 10+ years, and more. She also represented BHS at the Missouri Scholars Academy, a program that brings together about 300 of Missouri's top rising juniors. Madison plans to attend the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill to major in biology and hopes to be a pediatrician someday.

Clayton High School



Lailah Hall was an energetic and enthusiastic member of the Clayton High community, consistently praised by teachers for her diligence.

She served as president of the Black Student Union, treasurer of Best Buddies, a member of Student Council and a representative of the All-in Coalition. In sports, she was the junior varsity Lacrosse defensive captain and the junior varsity volleyball co-captain and team manager. She earned certification as a Learn2Serve Food Handler and an AllerTrain Master Trainer. With an eye toward business, Lailah won first place in the St. Louis 2109 Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship BizCamp as well as the accounting Careers Awareness Program's 2019 Shark Tank business competition. During school, she also found time to volunteer with Good Life Growing, the Clayton New Student Orientation team, the Glenridge Strawberry Festival, and Clayton Arts Fair and worked as a St. Louis Science Center teen ambassador, as a lifeguard and as an associate at Vitality Bowls.

Hancock Place High School



Mariah Stewart is a natural-born leader who has thrived both academically and in extracurricular activities. She has a heart of gold and a passion

for helping others, which has been showcased by her work as a senior mentor, innovative technology intern, college ambassador and student council member. In addition to her work in multiple clubs, Mariah was a dominant basketball and volleyball player during her four years at HPHS. In basketball, she was named the 2020 Conference Player of the Year for the South Central Athletic Association conference and also recognized as a 2020 All-District Team member. She has set school records for rebounds and blocked shots. Mariah has earned a scholarship to continue playing basketball at Mineral Area College, where she will major in child psychology in order to begin her journey to become a pediatrician.

Kirkwood High School



Kaleb Owens made his mark at Kirkwood High, not only as a Gold K recipient with a 3.85 grade point average but also as an athlete and a musician. He

served as captain of the cross country team. As a member of the track and field team, he was a two-time state champion in the 4x800 meter relay. Off the field, he played with the Kirkwood symphonic orchestra. Kaleb will attend the University of Iowa, studying either physical therapy or athletic training.

Mehlville School District

Mehlville High School



Jacobi Shelton was in the Mehlville School District since kindergarten. During his four years at Mehlville High School, he was a dedicated

student who was very involved in clubs and athletics. Jacobi always had a smile on his face and was willing to lend a hand to help someone out. His advisory teacher described him as extremely kind and a friend to everyone. He was a member of the Pro Start Culinary Arts program that helped coordinate several catering events in the school and community. He also volunteered as a buddy for our Special Olympic Track and Field event. Jacobi was a four-year member of the football program, playing three years on varsity, and was named as First Team All-Conference Running Back during his senior season. Jacobi also wrestled and ran track at MHS. He was named Team Captain of the track team for his senior year and was a District medalist and Sectional qualifier in the 200 meter and 4 X 100 meter relay during his junior season. Jacobi plans to attend either Maryville University or Lindenwood University to continue his academic career and will also participate in track. He plans to major in biology on a pre-veterinary track. His passion for animals was on display during the extended school closure — he built a chicken coop and a cage for his new pet lizard while at home. The staff at Mehlville could not be prouder of the young man Jacobi has become and wish him well in the future.

Mehlville School District

Oakville High School



Gabby Cooper attended South Technical High School, where she was part of the Cosmetology Program. She will continue her studies at St.

Louis Community College. She has expressed interest in expanding her cosmetology experience into a possible career as a dermatologist.

Parkway School District

Parkway Central High School



Michelle Harris knows she is a force to be reckoned with. In fact, if there is one thing she learned from participating in the VICC program,

it's perseverance. While at Central High, Michelle had been pushed to take challenging classes and while they did not always end with an A, she learned that grit and perseverance were essential to achievement. She balanced her academic rigor with involvement in several clubs and organizations that included High School Heroes, Project Help, RAA Committee, Rock the Wall Street, Young Ladies of Excellence and Mission Outreach. She credits her participation in the VICC program with allowing her to forge very diverse friendships and allowing her to be a positive difference in people's lives. Her continued persistence and sunny disposition has helped Michelle map out her goals, which include enrollment at St. Louis Community College this fall through the A+ Program. After earning her general education credits, she plans to transfer to the University of Missouri-St. Louis to earn a bachelor's degree in business administration with a minor in art and design.

Parkway School District

Parkway North High School



Napier Perkins gets it, he knows people judge him as the typical All-American jock. He is aware of the stigma and knows all about preconceived

notions. During his time at Parkway, he strove to break down barriers and stereotypes. In addition to being a strong member of the Parkway North Vikings Varsity Football team, this gridiron hero was designated gifted and was a member of Parkway's District Wide African American Achievement group since 2011. Napier used his time at Parkway to develop an interest in entrepreneurship, business, and multimedia marketing. He credits his family and the VICC program as a secret to his success. He is adamant that during his tenure at Parkway Schools, his exposure to diversity and challenging curriculum gave him the opportunity to develop into a strong leader and team player.

2020

OUTSTANDING GRADUATES

Parkway School District

Parkway South High School



Jonica Dandridge was a shining star in the Parkway School District since she arrived years ago as a quiet, meticulous 5-year-old who had a penchant for deep thinking. She has blossomed into a young woman with a long list of accomplishments, which include YMCA teen leaders, South High South Talks committee member, Social Justice Reform and Ethnicity United Founder, National Honors Society Member, AV Crew, and Fashion Club associate. Her proclivity for leadership demonstrated at South High spread to her community as well. Jonica volunteered for years at several law enforcement agencies. She also worked with summer programs that empowered Northside children, giving them the ability to overcome adversity and thrive. Jonica credits the VICC program for exposing her to new environments. She says this exposure has led her to be equipped with knowledge that takes others to build. Jonica takes this skill with her as she attends St. Louis Community College in the fall using her A+ Scholarship.

work ethic. Her leadership role was invaluable as she continually strived for more knowledge and skills. She is a leader by example and has succeeded by her willingness to go the “extra mile” without being asked or told. Taji was a first-rate competitor in Lafayette’s newly developed girls wrestling program. She also excelled as a cadet of the MO-8151 Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFJROTC) program. As a cadet, she exuded leadership in a way that demonstrated love and a caring for others and was a natural wingman to her fellow cadets. While earning excellent grades, Taji still found time to bake to earn extra money and to volunteer at food pantries and veterans cemeteries and perform community service projects. Taji made herself a significant force of positive change and influence within the community.

Parkway School District

Parkway West High School



Jameah Collins is a self-starter who arrived at Parkway West High School every day with a smile on her face and determination in her heart. She was an all-around wonderful student who received the Spirit of Excellence award all four years of her high school career. While being enrolled in AP classes, she consistently proved to her peers that whether they lived in the county or city, students should not be defined by their address or ethnic group. Throughout her high school career, Jameah excelled in academics while being involved in Longhorn Council, cheerleading, and serving as a South Tech ambassador for her junior and senior years. Jameah will continue to Langston University in the fall after being awarded a top academic scholarship and placement within the McCabe Honors Program.

Rockwood School District

Rockwood School District

Eureka High School



Coreyn Mason has always had a passion for advocacy and standing up against injustices in the community. During freshman year she joined Eureka Equity and as a senior year she became a peer facilitator for the group’s dialogues. Continuing with her advocacy work, she participated in Anytown Youth Leadership Institute, an intensive program for students dedicated to increasing their social awareness and positively impacting their communities. The following summer, she returned on

Anytown’s staff as a delegate leader. In sophomore year, she was recognized at Eureka’s Leadership Ceremony for her involvement as a mentor for incoming Black freshman girls in the Women Empowering Women Club. One of Coreyn’s greatest honors of her high school career was receiving the Glory of Missouri award for upholding the virtue of equality. She also received a Gold Standard award, for which she was nominated by Ms. Warren, one of Coreyn’s role models. Coreyn will be a first-generation student on a full ride at the University of Michigan, where she will double major in Public Policy and Law, Justice & Social Change.

Rockwood School District

Rockwood School District

Lafayette High School



Tajirisha Israel-Cazembe was a mature, focused Lafayette student who is highly motivated, personable and responsible with an outstanding

work ethic. Her leadership role was invaluable as she continually strived for more knowledge and skills. She is a leader by example and has succeeded by her willingness to go the “extra mile” without being asked or told. Taji was a first-rate competitor in Lafayette’s newly developed girls wrestling program. She also excelled as a cadet of the MO-8151 Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFJROTC) program. As a cadet, she exuded leadership in a way that demonstrated love and a caring for others and was a natural wingman to her fellow cadets. While earning excellent grades, Taji still found time to bake to earn extra money and to volunteer at food pantries and veterans cemeteries and perform community service projects. Taji made herself a significant force of positive change and influence within the community.

Rockwood School District

Marquette High School



Autumn Brown is an Honor Roll student who has excelled in sports as well as academics during her time at Marquette. She played on the Marquette Women’s

Basketball team all four years while in high school. She has signed a letter of intent to play basketball at Lindenwood University.

Rockwood School District

Summit High School



While at Summit High, **Jasmine Manuel** enrolled in honors and Advance Placement courses for college credit. In athletics, she was basketball Conference Player of

the Year in 2020 and played on the Post-Dispatch All-Metro First Team in 2020, the First Team All-State in 2020, First Team All-District in 2019 and 2020 was Summit’s Career Leader in total points and rebounds. She also received the Falcon Flight Award in 2020. She has signed to play basketball at Tuskegee University in the fall.

Valley Park High School



Ahmed Suada plans to use her A+ Scholarship to attend St. Louis Community College, pursuing a degree in nursing. Her grade point average is 3.236. She is a good friend and a

positive mentor to those around her. She has grown in maturity and confidence since freshman year and will no doubt be successful in her chosen career path.

Webster Groves High School



Tanys Giles, enrolled in the Webster Groves School District since kindergarten, appreciates the close-knit community the school system provides for all

students. “I also liked how caring the teachers are with each student and how the staff made sure each student had the support and all the resources needed for their classes,” she said. At the High School, she participated in track and field, the Step Team, Yearbook, Black Student Union, Webster Challenge, WGHS Crew, DECA, Speak Up/No Place for Hate, WGHS Choir and Statesmen Preschool staff. Her accolades include the Renaissance Award, National Society of High School Scholars induction, Honor Roll, Scholar Athlete and WGHS Top Hat Award. Tanys, whose favorite subject was philosophy, plans to attend the Pierre Laclède Honors College at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, majoring in psychology. She hopes to become a clinical psychologist specializing in treating adolescents. She has received a Rotary Club scholarship, the Ivory Crockett Scholarship, the Webster Groves Family and Friends Scholarship, the UMSL-Bound Scholarship, the Diversity and Inclusion Scholarship and Honors College Scholarship to help her achieve her goals.

VICC: still caring from page 1

Food was not the only thing our buses delivered. They also carried cleaning supplies, Chromebook computers, Hot Spots and even some caps and gowns for graduation ceremonies.

A few of the area businesses also participated by donating their goods, including personal pan pizzas from Papa John’s and breakfast pastries and sandwiches from Panera.

These are just some of the many ways the St. Louis educational community is taking care of each other in a time of crisis.



MESSAGE from the CEO

It is hard to believe, but I have now had the privilege of serving as VICC’s CEO for over 10 years. Because of the

courage and truthfulness of coworkers and friends whose skin hue is different than mine, I have grown to better understand the problem of systemic racism. The love, patience and candor offered by people of color in my life has given me a new set of ears. While I now recognize that I have failed many times, particularly considering recent events, my goal is to listen carefully and emphatically to my black brothers and sisters.

While COVID-19 has certainly been tragic, sad and unbelievable, those words apply as well to the most recent events involving Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Christian Cooper, George Floyd and Rayshard Brooks. I was recently struck by a quote from a webinar when it was stated that if we all approached systemic racism with the same focus and emphasis upon which we are placing COVID-19, imagine how much progress we could make! With COVID-19, there is targeted funding and expected outcomes and accountability as well as the best and brightest minds working together

on treatment plans and a vaccine. We need similar resources and focus to address the consequences of systemic racism and unconscious bias.

In the current issue of the ParentLink, we celebrate Sterling Coleman, a 1988 graduate of the VICC program, as well as numerous outstanding recent graduates of the program and we look forward to them having success similar to Mr. Coleman’s. Their success is the result of someone lifting them and helping them get across the finish line. In lifting all people up, the system helps itself to learn more, become more just, and reach new levels of humanity previously missed and misunderstood. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all of us to mentor and advocate for people who do not look like ourselves. It enhances and progresses all of us. Progress in this area will not be made overnight, but our resolve must be unwavering to make progress, no matter how long of a commitment is required.

This process calls to mind the Bill Withers song, “Lean on Me.” I think the last few lines are particularly relevant:

*We all need somebody to lean on
If there is a load you have to bear
That you can’t carry I’m right up the road
I’ll share your load If you just call me.*

We are not far away. Call me or anyone at VICC if your load is too heavy to bear.

Counseling Staff

The Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation (VICC) staff includes five counselors/social workers who can assist families with issues related to their school transfers. Counselors are happy to respond to concerns and/or questions from parents or students regarding any issue that would interfere with the success of a child in the school setting, such as attendance, disciplinary issues, curriculum, achievement or other concerns. They also can provide counseling assistance for students and help parents understand their educational rights. Counselors generally are assigned according to the first letter of the student's last name. They can be reached by calling 314-721-8422, and dialing the extension number below, or via email.



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Ms. Vesna Hajric
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Parkway

Ms. Rakiyah "Rocky"
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Dr. Charlotte Ijei
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Rockwood

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Special School

District-STL County

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St. Louis Magnet

Mrs. Lori Merlo
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Valley Park

Mr. Tad Savage
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Webster Groves

Mr. John M. Thomas
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Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation complies fully with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA is a law that affords parents and students 18 years of age and older with certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. A copy of VICC's FERPA statement is included in the VICC student handbook, which can be requested by calling 314.721.8422, ext. 3012. The handbook also is available on the VICC website at www.choicecorp.org. Click on the link for "City Residents Currently Enrolled in County Schools," and then click on "Voluntary Transfer Program Handbook." The full policy will be published in the next issue of the *ParentLink*.

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

COVID-19 — Please see additional guidelines for 2020–2021 listed on VICC website (www.choicecorp.org) that must be followed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

Transportation to and from school is provided by the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corp. so long as your child goes to a school in the correct attendance area. The phone number for the transportation staff is 314-721-8657. Transportation cards with the bus stop location and time are mailed to all transfer families about two weeks before school begins in the fall. If you do not receive your card by one week before the start of school, contact the principal at the school your child will be attending. Please do not call the transportation staff. After the regular school year begins, new cards will be mailed only if it is necessary to make a change to the bus/cab route. Please review each new card carefully, including the effective date, stop location, times and transporter. Destroy all old cards. Any day-to-day transportation problems or concerns you may have should be addressed by first calling the bus (or cab) contractor. These include normal operating issues, such as the following:

- Looking for lost items left on the bus/cab
- Checking on activity bus location
- Questions or cancellations when VICC Transportation office is closed. Refer to your child's bus card for the appropriate bus/cab company. If the contractor is unable to resolve a concern, or if you have one of the following issues, please call the VICC transportation staff at 314-721-8657:
 - Overall routing issues or concerns
 - Pick-up or drop-off location concerns
 - Concerns with driver or contractor
 - Requesting cab or other alternative transportation service in the event your regular bus does not show.

Taxi Cab or (non-yellow bus transportation)

VICC now incorporates individual providers along with traditional taxi cabs in the daily operation of transporting students. These individual providers will be under the direct supervision of our service providers, St. Louis County/Yellow Cab and Laclede Taxi. All drivers will be certified to the following Missouri Department of Education specifications:

- Will hold a school bus endorsement on their state driver's license;
- Pass a thorough fingerprint criminal background check in accordance with VICC guidelines;
- Pass a yearly physical in accordance with State of Missouri School Bus Driver specifications;
- Pass a Motor Vehicle Driver background check in accordance with VICC guidelines;
- Carry commercial auto liability insurance in accordance with VICC guidelines; and
- Comply with all state and local laws governing student transportation.

All vehicles will be marked with signage and an App will be made available for use by parents/guardians to provide parents/guardians with the driver's facial picture, make of vehicle and license plate number.

Student Responsibilities

Students are to board their bus/cab only at their assigned stop. They must arrive at their designated pick-up location 5 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time, and remain at least 15 minutes after the pickup time before calling the transportation staff at 314-721-8657 for advice on alternative transportation. If your child is not at the bus/taxi stop a full 5 minutes before the scheduled arrival time and does not wait the full 15 minutes after the scheduled time and misses the bus or taxi, it will be your responsibility to get him or her to school. The transportation staff does not send alternative transportation in such instances. All students must be visible at their assigned bus or taxi stop. Also, all students must get off at their assigned stop on their ride home. Exceptions will not be granted while COVID-19 procedures are in place. For the safety of all children, students must obey general safety rules as well as those established by the school district they are attending. You should obtain a copy of your district's bus regulations and review them with your child. Violations of bus rules can result in a student being removed from riding the bus either on a temporary or permanent basis. If a bus suspension occurs, it becomes the parent's responsibility to transport the child to and from school (including activities) for the duration of the suspension.

Parent Responsibilities

Transportation may run late and/or routes may not be firmly in place during the first few weeks of school. Please make sure your child knows exactly what to do if the bus does not arrive. This includes knowing where to go and whom to call. Also make sure your child knows what is expected when he or she is dropped off at the end of the school day. If you normally meet your child at the bus stop, be sure he or she understands what to do if you are not there. If the transportation route to which your child is assigned does not operate in a timely manner, or other problems arise, please communicate with the VICC transportation office. It is important for parents to keep the school as well as

the district contact person informed of any changes in either the home phone number or the cell or alternate/emergency phone number for your child. Also, be sure to request that this information be forwarded to the transportation staff.

If You Move

If you move during the summer, call the principal at the county school your child has been or will be attending or that district's contact person immediately. All districts have central office personnel who work during the summer to handle such situations. Please remember, it takes up to 10 working days to make a transportation change. If you plan to move during the academic year, be sure to notify your building principal or district contact person at least two weeks before you move. If you move outside of your school's attendance area, you will need to request a transfer to a school in your new attendance area, or else provide your own transportation in order to remain at your original school.

General Safety Rules

- Obey the driver promptly.
- Smoking, eating and drinking are not permitted.
- Remain seated until the bus arrives at your stop.
- Refrain from using loud or obscene language.
- Do not damage the bus/cab in any way.
- Do not throw objects on the bus/cab or out of the windows.
- Do not extend head, arms, legs or hands out of the windows.
- Do not tamper with the emergency door except in the case of a real emergency and only under the instruction of the driver.
- Fighting, scuffling or creating loud disturbances are not permitted.
- Avoid the Danger Zones next to the bus where the driver can't see you. This distance is approximately 10 feet around all sides.
 - If you must cross the street after you get off the bus, wait for the driver's signal to you and then cross in front of the bus.
 - Don't try to pick up something dropped near the bus because the driver might not see you.
 - Remember that other motorists don't always stop for a stopped school bus. Use extreme caution when getting on and off the bus.
 - Never run back to the bus, even if you dropped or forgot something.

Student Safety

Help us protect your child as he or she travels to and from school. Certain types of children's clothing can create a hazard as your child exits the bus. Especially dangerous are jacket and sweatshirt drawstrings, long backpack straps, long scarves or any other loose clothing. Such clothing could become caught in the bus handrail, door or other bus equipment as the child exits the bus. Please take the time to check your child's clothing. Also talk with your child about the behavior and safety rules.

Trespass Policy

To bolster the safety of students riding buses to school, the VICC Board adopted the following trespass policy: "Trespass occurs when anyone boards a school bus without prior approval from VICC. Any VICC-designated person (including students), contractor or school staff whose job responsibilities require him/her to be on a school bus shall be authorized and not be considered trespassing. Only with prior approval from VICC or a contractor may any parent, guardian or member of the general public be allowed on a bus at any time." Be sure to review the transportation section in the Voluntary Transfer Program Handbook (pages 8-17) with your child before the start of school. If you need a handbook, please call 314-721-8422, ext. 3012, or visit our website: www.choicecorp.org.

EMERGENCY Communication System

To improve communication with parents regarding transportation and their child's participation in the St. Louis Student Transfer Program, the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corp. uses a telephone broadcast system, similar to ones used in many participating school districts. This system, provided by School Messenger, allows VICC to quickly send all households and parents a pre-recorded message by phone within minutes of a transportation emergency or unplanned event that could significantly delay a child's pick-up or drop-off time. These emergencies include traffic jams, bus breakdowns, inclement weather, accidents, etc. The service may also be used from time to time to communicate general program announcements or reminders. This system will simultaneously call a home and one additional cellphone or alternate number for each student's family who needs to be contacted and will deliver a message from Tami Webb. In order for you to receive such messages it is critically important that we are provided accurate and up-to-date telephone numbers.