

2010 Commission

Testimony on School Finance

Presented by: Jim Lentz, Superintendent USD 402 Augusta, Kansas

June 29, 2009

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the commission today regarding the current status of school finance in Kansas and both the short and long term effects in USD 402 Augusta Public Schools.

Unified School District 402 will begin the 2009-2010 school year with \$317 per pupil or \$823,725 BSAPP less than we would have had if the Kansas Legislature had funded the existing law. USD 402 has been forced to reduce our budget for 2009-2010 (from the 2008-2009 Budget) by \$615,353 which includes \$397,571 BSAPP and \$217,782 Capital Outlay equalization aid. The number one goal for the Board of Education in USD 402 is "Increased Student Learning". Our mission statement is "Student Achievement is # 1." With that in mind, we made every effort to make cuts that did not affect the quality of learning in the classroom. Obviously our concern is that if budget reductions continue, the next major round of cuts will result in reduction of staff and will have a very negative effect on learning. A detailed list of budget cuts is attached. We have identified additional reductions should additional funding cuts become necessary for the 2009-2010 school year.

If the Legislature had funded the current law, including cost of living and not reduced the budget, we would have seen an increase of \$164 per student in Base State Aid or \$426,154. Those increases would have resulted in improved and more competitive salaries, increases in the number of staff serving in the classroom, increased learning opportunities for all students including at-risk and ESL, which would have resulted in continued increases in student achievement. If we are to continue to improve learning for students, we must also improve the knowledge and skills of our staff. Additional funding would have been used to provide professional development for improved Professional Learning Communities, Data Driven Dialogue and decision making, teacher mentoring, and implementation of MTSS. All of which are absolutely critical to future success.

The 2010 Commission has been proactive in supporting needed funding, needed change, and improved quality of Kansas public education. One of the biggest questions we face is how to persuade the legislature to follow your recommendations in the future. The Kansas Legislature has funded study after study in an effort to identify the cost of providing a quality education for the children of Kansas. The evidence of those studies was very clear and the Kansas Supreme Court found that Kansas schools were underfunded. As a result of the courts finding, the legislature did develop a plan and did increase funding over the past three years. As a result student achievement, as demonstrated on Kansas State Assessments, has increased dramatically. Unfortunately, with the current economic crisis and the unprecedented drop in state reserves, the legislature has now dramatically changed its course and has begun to dismantle a great funding system that has been serving the needs of kids and has led to those

dramatic increases in learning. I believe it is critically important to ask the question; what are the Legislatures plans to comply with the findings of the Kansas Supreme Court and its constitutional requirement to adequately fund public education? What revenue sources have been identified or created to meet those requirements?

My recommendations are as follows:

1. Develop a long range plan, at least five years, to fund education
2. Create dependable and consistent sources of revenue to fund education
3. Provide continuity of funding to enable long range planning within districts.
4. Fund the current existing laws for education
  - a. School finance formula
  - b. Cost of Living based on consumer price index
  - c. Capital Outlay Equalization
  - d. Local option Budget Equalization
  - e. Special Education
  - f. At Risk
  - g. Professional Development and Teacher Mentoring

The economic future of Kansas depends on the quality of its work force. There is no question that schools must rethink not only what and how we deliver learning, we must also retrain our staff and reorganize our schools to be even more effective. If the educational system in Kansas is to be successful in training our young people and retrain existing workers for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, adequate funding must be provided.

BUDGET CUT PROPOSALS (General Fund Savings)		BUDGET INCREASES	
Admin. Office		Admin. Office	
	Savings		Cost
District Activity Calendar-use website and limited printed copies	\$ 1,290		
District Magnet Calendar-do not produce	\$ 1,235		
Communicator-half printed and mailed while all at website	\$ 6,750		
School Recruiter-electronic application replace with free KEEB	\$ 1,700		
Office Overtime	\$ 3,000		
Flowers/Plants-replace with sympathy card	\$ 200		
Advertising-mainly glossy magazine ads, or new endeavors	\$ 1,500		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 15,675</b>		
<b>District</b>		<b>District</b>	
Energy Saving Plan-utilities at the building level (Building Initiatives)	\$ 12,000	Unknown increase in health insurance	?
Move cost of Service Center Memberships to Title IIA	\$ 9,400	Unknown additional State Aid cuts	?
Reduce Travel and Professional Dev. from Gen. Fund	\$ 1,000	Unknown increase to property, auto and work comp	?
Teacher supply reimbursements	\$ 20,000	Teacher substitutes over spent in FY09	\$ 17,500
Supplemental Extra Days (from nurses and counselor)	\$ 5,000	Extra days for new counselor	\$ 4,390
Supplemental Positions/Rule 10-stay within supplemental contract	\$ 3,500		
Field Trips and Activities (mainly cost of transportation)	\$ 5,000		
AMS Counselor (salary, fixed costs, benefits)	\$ 70,714		
HS Teacher (salary, fixed costs, benefits)	\$ 60,230		
Eliminate Cap. Outlay Transfer (Vehicles)	\$ 80,000		
Reduce Tech Budget LOB	\$ 20,000		
Move Personnel to Cap.Outlay (portions of maintenance contracts)	\$ 40,000		
SRO (1 position, currently vacant position)	\$ 39,000		
Pay for salaries, not materials for At Risk Reading	\$ 23,000		
Reduce transfer to Vocational Fund	\$ 80,000		
Eliminate ALC custodian position, reassign 2nd shift custodians	\$ 9,572		
Reduce payment to KPERS for retiree fee	\$ 7,356	Increase in retirement/leave/new teacher adj.	\$ 46,400
Reduce 4th grounds position to seasonal (wage, benefits)	\$ 18,000		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 503,772</b>		
<b>Building</b>		<b>Building</b>	
Building/Student Activity Budgets 10%	\$ 22,000.00		
Move Instr. Aides to Title I	\$ 100,000.00		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 122,000.00</b>		<b>\$ 68,290</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>\$ 641,447.00</b>		
<b>Target reductions from General Fund \$450,000</b>	<b>\$ 573,157.00</b>		