

TESTIMONY FOR THE 2010 COMMISSION

Dennis R. Stones, Superintendent

Sabetha USD 441

June 29, 2009

Sabetha USD 441 is a farming community in Northeast Kansas that has several manufacturing companies. Our student's parents are in all parts of the world selling the products of these businesses. Our students truly do receive a global education. We cover 305 square miles and have a student head count of 971. We have three buildings in Sabetha and one K-12 building in Wetmore. Our Wetmore facility houses 185 students and is 25 miles from Sabetha. Our Wetmore facility is approximately 10.99% in the high school and 35.88% in the elementary and the Sabetha facility is 21.87%(SES), 21.18% (SMS), and 13.27% (SHS) free lunch.

All of our buildings have met AYP for the last several years. The Sabetha Elementary, Wetmore Elementary, and the Sabetha High School have met the Standard of Excellence requirements each year. The Sabetha Middle School and the Wetmore High School have met standard of excellence each year as well as being presented with the Governors Excellence in Education award in 2008. We believe this is due to the commitment of the board to focus on K-3 reading and math and being able to utilize the increased amounts of money to improve programs and add quality teachers to the staff. We try and maintain a 1 to 20 teacher/student ratio.

We are very concerned with the cuts that are being required that we will be able to maintain the high standards of the district and state. I would like to list some of the cuts that we have made for next year. They are as follows:

1. Eliminated one elementary principal and move the assistant principal/AD at Sabetha High School to the elementary.
2. Eliminated ½ time Spanish teacher
3. Eliminated ½ time first grade teacher.
4. Eliminated 1 full time middle school teacher.
5. Eliminated ½ time Reading Recovery teacher.
6. Negotiated down a salary with a retired teacher.
7. Cut seven assistant coaching positions
8. Eliminated an entire Family and Consumer Science teacher.
9. Eliminated the FACS program
10. Cut back on the text book adoption

11. Eliminate one unit of the Parents as teachers program.
12. We have also negotiated with the teachers to freeze all salaries for FY10.

If deeper cuts would have been made by the legislature we had a plan that would have cut another 20 staff. It would have devastated our district and the opportunities of the students. The cuts that we did make will save the district approximately \$279,000.00. We are also only replacing buses that are 20 years old.

IMPACT:

It is my belief that we will see a decline in student achievement over the next few years if we continue to cut programs and staff. I also believe that the teachers and administrators that are left will work very hard to make sure the decline will be as minimal as possible. The other problem will be staff morale and decline in stamina. We will see excellent young and experienced teachers leave the field because they are either burnt out or lost their jobs. If this happens they may not return to the profession.

CONCERNS:

1. Post audit requirements. While I believe in accountability there is an opportunity for the state to save some money and rely on the State and independent audits that every school must comply with each year.
 2. More cuts in the budget will require more staff layoffs and reverting back to ½ day kindergarten. Half-day kindergarten will save our district 2.5 teachers and set the students back. This has been a program that has really benefited our students in preparation for the next level.
 3. We will also look at reducing more classified staff, extra-curricular activities, further reducing staff development opportunities, cutting all field trips, and reducing staff/programs.
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