

Pratt Unified School District No. 382

small schools, **BIG OPPORTUNITIES**

Suzan Patton, Superintendent • David Schmidt, Curriculum Director
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March 23, 2017

Representative Larry Campbell, Chairman, and Members of the Kansas House K-12 Budget Committee:

I want to thank you for your time and effort in developing House Bill 2410. Creating a new finance formula is a daunting task. I very much appreciate your willingness to *ask* for suggestions. Everyone must contribute in order to serve all Kansas school districts in the best possible manner.

Our district stands to gain from HB 2410, but the estimated foundation state aid of \$4,170 is not sufficient to keep up with our district's increases in property insurance, utilities, salary increases and health insurance. When the block grants were implemented, I cut \$270,000 out of our budget through personnel cuts and attrition. This was in addition to over \$350,000 in cuts that were made in 2010. We are at a point, due to enrollment increases, that I must add additional teachers. This formula, as it stands, will not help us keep up with the increased costs of running our district.

In addition, this formula fails to consider the Kansas Board of Education's outcomes. If we are to fulfill the goals of the Kansas Can initiative, this formula does not support them. Below is a short analysis:

KSBOE Outcome-Kindergarten Readiness: there are no provisions for preschool or all day kindergarten. The gap widens each year between 5-year-olds who are ready to begin kindergarten and those who are not. We must hire qualified early education teachers to prepare 4-year-olds for kindergarten. In addition we need the money to support special programs that target early reading/math for the students whose skills are deficient or the KSBOE Outcome of increasing high school graduation rates is unattainable.

KSBOE Outcome-Individual Plan of Study focused on career interest: the base state aid of \$4,170 does not begin to cover the increases in staff needed to meet with students and families, as well as set up community partnerships for job shadowing, college visits, and work study. This particular KSBOE goal will increase the state work force and increase student success, but if schools do not have the money to properly maintain the programs, the KSBOE goal is unattainable.

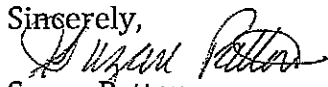
KSBOE Outcomes-Increase High School Graduation and Postsecondary/Completion and Attendance: The formula for figuring headcount is too complex and complicated. The second headcount day punishes districts with h students who graduate early and begin tech school or college. As your plan currently stands, this will impact our average for the following budget year. This

practice would not accurately reflect increased expenses needed for the next budget. Simply base the budget on the prior year's headcount.

Also, by not delineating funding for vocational education, we are short-changing the importance and emphasis needed to supply the Kansas work force with highly trained individuals. We want students to have a college degree or a technical certificate. Additional designated funding is necessary to provide quality tech programs. Simply taking it from the base foundation state aid will not be enough to support the vital programs, thus making the KSBOE goal unattainable.

Again, I thank you for your dedication and service. Creating a new formula is daunting, but I believe we can all work together and meet the goals of the court, KSBOE, and most importantly, our students. In financial planning, we are told that where we spend money symbolizes our values. Kansans do value public education; they are proud of their schools and are willing to support them. Your work in successfully creating a formula that is adequate and equitable will serve all Kansans.

Sincerely,



Suzan Patton
Superintendent