



Measuring Success One Student at a Time!

Tuesday, October 13, 2009

Superintendent's Update

Making the Grade & AYP – Last year we set a goal of making 90% proficiency on all state assessment tests. Though we did not hit that target in every area, as a district we accomplished 90% proficiency and above on three out of the four tested areas and met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements. Below are proficiency rates for the district as a whole:

<u>Math</u>	<u>Science</u>	<u>Writing</u>	<u>Reading</u>
91.7%	90.4%	90.0%	86.7%

High School to Receive Challenge Awards Certificate of Merit for Outstanding Math Scores

The Confidence in Kansas Public Education Task Force announced today that Atchison County Community High School has been awarded a Certificate of Merit as part of the 6th Annual Challenge Awards. The award recognizes schools for outstanding achievement and uncommon accomplishment based on the Kansas Assessment results from the 2009 tests. ACCHS is one of 123 recipients from across Kansas representing 59 school districts. We received the top score in our region for our performance on the 11th Grade Math assessment. The students along with Mr. Nathan Smith, Mrs. Angie Kimmi, Mrs. Susan Kramer and Mr. Mike McGuire deserve special recognition along with the support of a number of para-professionals, teachers and staff who worked diligently with students. This group of students moved from just over 50% proficient in 2008 to over 93% proficient in 2009. The award will be presented on November 12 in Salina in a ceremony that will include members of the Kansas State Board of Education, Commissioner of Education Alexa Posny and Deputy Commissioner Dale Dennis.

Health News - The Intermediate School has been hit hard with student illness over the past week. Absenteeism rates at the Intermediate School due to illness have gradually increased over the past few days from around 15% to a high on Tuesday of 35% of the student

body. The Primary School and Junior/Senior High are experiencing a little over 10% absenteeism.

Will school be closed? On Tuesday I met with the Intermediate School staff and Principal Wetig to get feedback on how school is going with so many students being absent from school – approximately 83 due to illness. Some classes have been affected more than others. Teachers are concerned about getting ahead and having to back track when students start coming back to school. They have been advised to use their own judgment and not be afraid to slow down their teaching pace to allow more individualized learning and not get too far ahead in classes where there is significant number of absences.

At this time we have no plans to close school, but we are monitoring the situation closely and working in cooperation with county and state health departments.

Frequently Asked Questions

How many of the absences are H1N1 to blame? **We don't know.** The CDC reports that almost all of the influenza viruses identified so far are 2009 H1N1 influenza A viruses.

How does 2009 H1N1 flu spread?

Both 2009 H1N1 flu and seasonal influenza are thought to spread mostly from person to person through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with influenza. People also may get sick by touching something with flu viruses on it, and then touching their mouth or nose.

How long can a sick person spread 2009 H1N1 flu to others?

People infected with 2009 H1N1 flu virus may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to about 7 days after getting sick. This can be longer in some people, especially children and people with weakened immune systems.

How concerned should you be if your child has the flu? The 2009 H1N1 flu illness has ranged from mild to severe. Most healthy people who have been sick with 2009 H1N1 have recovered without needing medical treatment, however, hospitalizations and deaths from 2009 H1N1 have occurred. Most people who have been hospitalized with 2009 H1N1 have had a medical condition that places them at higher risk of serious flu-related complications. However,

some people who have become very ill have been previously healthy.

Emergency Warning Signs In Children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

How long should I stay home if I'm sick?

Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends staying home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (A fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick. Staying at home means that students should not leave your home except to seek medical care. This means avoiding normal activities, including work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings. If an infected person must leave the house (for example to see your doctor), wear a facemask. It is also acceptable to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and wash hands often to keep from spreading flu to others.

In accordance with the Center for Disease Control guidelines students who show signs of the flu are being isolated from the general population until a parent/guardian can pick the student up from school. Staff members who show signs of the flu are being sent home as well.

The CDC recommends that students and staff should stay at home until at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine).

Flu symptoms can include: *fever - cough - sore throat - runny or stuffy nose - body aches - headache - chills - fatigue - sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

***It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.**

Board Highlights from Monday, October 12, 2009

Action Items

Gifts & Grants Approved

- To Soundmasters - \$100 from Kansas Teacher of the Year Region II
- To Soundmasters - \$100 from ACCHS Alumni Association
- To Junior Class - \$25 from Watona Furjanic, \$30.00 from Charlie Hartley, \$20 from Crystal Sanders, \$20 from Lisa & Kevin Myers, \$10 from Anita Heineken.
- To ACCHS from Target \$45.59.

Lancaster and Cummings Building - Approved

- Superintendent to obtain commercial appraisal of both properties.
- Superintendent to obtain a commitment for title insurance in preparation for a subsequent transaction.
- Consider possible restrictions of the properties use. Superintendent to contact attorney for counsel on how to best handle said restrictions.

Developed a philosophy or criteria of how to handle competing offers/proposals. i.e.

1. Recapturing investment of school district in the property for the benefit of
2. district tax payers (Price)
3. Does the community benefit by the new owner in some way other than money.
4. Are jobs created by the new owner.
5. Will the property become part of the tax base.
6. Will the new owner blend in well with the community at large and not create an adverse influence on adjoining property owners.
7. Add decision making timeline to repurposing plan. (Other elements may be added as needed.)

USD 377 Property Located across from Lancaster Elementary, Adjacent to City Building Parking Lot

Instructed Superintendent to make proposal to the City of Lancaster to Quit Deed The South Ten feet **(S10')** of Lot Twenty-one (21) and all of Lots Twenty (20) and Nineteen (19) in Block Eighteen (18), City of Lancaster, Atchison County, Kansas to the City of Lancaster if they are so interested.

Action Items Continued

- Approved Mike Postma as KASB delegate and Cindy Ladd as alternate.
- Approved the Intermediate School and Junior/Senior High to administer the Communities That Care Survey. The survey is taken voluntarily by students in sixth, eighth, 10th and 12th grades.
- Approved the retirement resignation of Mr. Ambrose, high school science teacher, effective at the end of the current school year.
- Approved stipend to building principals for the purchase of a smart phone.

CENTRAL OFFICE NEWS AND NOTICES

Teacher Openings for 2010-2011

- High School English
- High School Science – Physics/Chemistry

Keystone Superintendents’ Council
Notes

On Tuesday, October 13, superintendents from the seven member districts met with Linda Aldridge, Keystone Director, and other Keystone staff in preparation for the Keystone Board of Directors monthly meeting. The seven member schools are: Atchison County Community Schools, JCN, Valley Falls, McLouth, Jeff West, Oskaloosa and Perry-Lecompton. One school board member from each district serves on the Keystone Board.

A good deal of time was spent discussing the future of John Dewey Learning Academy. There are many issues regarding JDLA that have been on the table for the past few years, in particular the fact that the facility is located in Lecompton. The consensus amongst the superintendents is for a more centrally located facility, one that requires less maintenance and is cheaper to run. We also discussed the possibility of two separate self contained programs. Each program would be located at one of the member schools.

There are a myriad of issues involved with any type of relocation, but perhaps the most serious is trying to reduce costs. With the current budget crisis all of us are facing, we are looking to save money anywhere we can as long as we continue to provide quality services to our students.

Other items discussed:

- Para hours and non-student contact time
- Professional development
- A new and different way of doing business and obtaining services needed – Oakley model.
- Student Achievement data of SPED students

Budget Shortfalls Raise Consolidation Discussion (source: KASB)

The school finance and state budget situation is likely to get much worse next month when updated estimates are released. But one proposal to address the situation - a significant new round of school district consolidations - would not save much money, according to both former Kansas Education Commissioner Andy Tompkins and the current Deputy Commissioner Dale Dennis.

The House Appropriations Committee and a subcommittee on education met Monday to review the impact of the latest shortfall in state revenues,

- Approved the proposal by Clark Creal & Seifert to develop drawings of a concession stand, restroom and storage facility at the sports complex. The cost will not exceed \$5400 used from sports complex funds approved by Atchison County Commissioners.
- Approved the proposal by Junior/Senior high students to purchase Tiger Chairs with the understanding that the district will upfront the costs and the students will fundraise to pay back ½ of the total cost back to the district.
- Approved to cancel \$8779 check to Betts Construction and to reissue check in the amount of \$7627 as part of the settlement agreement for the concrete slab basketball court at the Intermediate School.
- Approved FFA Out-of-State Trip to Attend National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana

Reports

- Mr. Wiseman reported that the auction grossed a little over \$13,000. Auctioneer fees and advertising costs still have to be taken out before we will know the net revenues.
- Mr. Hinrichs gave a District AYP report.

2009 State Standard of Excellence Awards

Cummings Elem	Reading	4
Cummings Elem	Math	4
Cummings Elem	Math	Bldg.-wide
Cummings Elem	Science	Bldg.-wide
Effingham Elem	Reading	3
Effingham Elem	Reading	4
Effingham Elem	Math	4
Middle School	Reading	5
Middle School	Reading	7
Middle School	Reading	8
Middle School	Reading	Bldg.-wide
Middle School	Math	6
Middle School	Math	7
Middle School	Math	8
Middle School	Math	Bldg.-wide
Middle School	Science	Bldg.-wide
Middle School	Writing	5
Middle School	Writing	8
Middle School	Writing	Bldg.-wide

which are now \$67.2 million below the official estimate for the current fiscal year. A new revenue estimate for the State General Fund will be released on Nov. 5, by a group of university economists and state fiscal experts, and most observers expect it will be lowered significantly.

Current Year Funding Issues

Even under the current projection, the Governor or Legislature will have to make \$129.7 million in "adjustments" for the current year by either cutting spending, finding additional revenue, changing transfers in and out of other funds or delaying expenditures. Governor Mark Parkinson has proposed several steps to reduce the deficit, including using \$30 million from the state highway fund to shore up the general fund, a step that would require legislative approval.

But the \$129.7 million shortfall does not include any supplemental funding for state agencies, including the Kansas State Department of Education. Preliminary reports from school districts indicate funding appropriated by the Legislature for the current year will not fund a base budget per pupil of \$4,218, which is what school districts used to adopt budgets for the current year.

Due to the economic difficulties facing many Kansas families, the number of students eligible for free lunch is expected to increase by at least 10 percent, which would increase the cost of the at-risk weighting factor by \$64 million. Regular enrollments are also expected to increase between 1,500 and 2,000 students, which would require another \$8 million. School officials speculate this is due to unemployed workers moving families back to Kansas to live with relatives and transfers from private schools. In addition, lower statewide property valuations are expected to reduce revenues from the statewide 20 mill school district general fund levy by around \$17 million. These preliminary estimates will be revised by the Department of Education, Kansas Legislative Research Department and Kansas Department of Administration Budget Division staff in early November.

Normally, the Legislature would add funding to these shortfalls in the formula through a supplemental appropriation. (In some years, state

funding is actually reduced if enrollment is lower or property valuation higher than expected.) If the Legislature fails to fund these estimated additional costs of \$53.6 million, the base budget per pupil could be reduced by \$84, to \$4,134; not counting any additional cuts due to the \$129.7 million projected State General Fund deficit.

Projections for Next Year

In addition to a revised revenue estimate for the current year, the Nov. 5 report will include the first official projection for next year, Fiscal Year 2011. Since last spring, the Legislative Research Department has been assuming a 1 percent growth in revenues next year. In the most recent scenario, that would result in a \$479.1 million deficit for next year, based primarily on two factors: a reduction of \$100 million in federal stimulus funding and \$250 million in new spending to meet obligations such as human services caseloads and contributions to the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System.

Deputy Commissioner Dennis told the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education that the Kansas State Board of Education is requesting over \$350 million in enhanced funding for FY 2011 simply to fund current law for school finance. Most of the request would restore the base budget per pupil to \$4,492, as adopted by the Legislature in 2008. It would also increase local option budget state aid by \$33.9 million to cover a base budget per pupil of \$4,492; fund special education aid at 92 percent of excess cost (\$34.9 million), restore capital outlay state aid (\$27 million), and fully fund professional development at \$8.5 million.

School District Consolidation and Efficiencies

Former Commissioner Tompkins told the full Appropriations Committee that school district consolidation alone would save little money because most school district costs are in school building operations and staff, not at the central office. Significant savings only occur when buildings are closed, teaching staff is reduced and class size increases. Rather than reducing costs, district consolidations occur when patrons believe their schools are too small to offer an appropriate level of education quality.