

Over the past two years, Kansas has operated schools financially under the Block Grant funding plan. This plan has kept school funding at the same amount for two consecutive years. The state tried this plan to see if they could help balance the budget indicating they would only use this plan until they could come up with a better formula to fund schools in 2017-18. The original school funding formula was a good plan. What we are hearing from Topeka over the past few weeks is that many of the concepts from the original plan are being worked into a new funding proposal. For example—Base State Aid Per Pupil (now known as Foundational Aid) will most likely be a part of the new school finance system. A current figure that is being discussed is \$4,170 per student. The Block Grant helped school districts with declining enrollment. For USD 244, it hurt us as we have had a slight enrollment increase over the past 5 years.

I have been asked what we would do with additional funds from the state. Here are some ideas:

- Funding all-day kindergarten and expanding early childhood programs to help students begin school ready to learn. Right now, Kansas only gives us credit for 50% funding for kindergarten students.
- Funding to cover increased costs of current programs due to inflation, competitive salaries and enrollment growth.
- One staffing need that we have is at BMS. A core area teacher would help our students and staff. This position was one that was cut by attrition in the past. However, our enrollment and staffing needs now indicate that we need this position back.

As Kansans, we believe our state is the best. I realize that there are many concerns we have (health care, KPERs, roads, etc.). It is my hope that the legislature can create a long term plan to fix the problems that exist. Some legislators on the education finance committee believe the state will try to provide an increase in funding over a 4-5 year span. This makes sense as the problems in Kansas will take time to be fixed.

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