

March 22, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

With rising costs and limited financial resources, the economic climate continues to present serious challenges for the Hugoton Public Schools in the development of the school district's budget for the 2011-2012 school year. As of this writing, we are anticipating reductions of approximately \$500,000 from state and federal funding sources. We have tried to use the priorities set in our Board goals and our Success Plan to guide our analysis and ultimately the hard decisions we will be forced to make. Those priorities are:

1. High Student Achievement.
2. Highly Effective Staff.
3. Maximized Resources.
4. Improved district facilities.

Teacher and Staff Input – Suitable Funding Forums: We need a process for staff input into these important and difficult decisions. We have a plan and the first step of this plan involves teachers and staff in April. We need your ideas and we need a collective vision of what is important and what is not at USD 210. Please plan on attending a volunteer staff forum on **Tuesday, April 5th at 6:30pm in the new HMS**

Library. Carol Swinney will be present to help us facilitate a process to get your input on three important questions. These questions and your answers are imperative as our legislature in Topeka is trying to re-write our constitution and reduce their obligation to fund public education. The three questions are:

1. What do Kansas public schools currently offer that promotes intellectual, educational, vocational and scientific improvement?
2. What are Kansas public schools not doing that should be added to provide such improvement?
3. What should Kansas public schools stop doing because it does not advance such improvement?

Community Input – Thursday, April 7th: Two days after the teachers and staff meet to answer these three questions, Carol Swinney will come back and assist me in the same process with our community members. Our BOE members will be present and we hope to recruit 20 community members to have these important conversations with our stakeholders.

The next few months could be unlike any time in our district's history. While we have seen budget reductions before, the scope of these upcoming state and federal reductions are unprecedented. For the past two years running, we have avoided deeper budget cuts and workforce reductions using federal bailout dollars under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) as well as our fund balance/reserve. With the ARRA dollars ending this year and more reductions in state funding, the impact on our ability to pay for ongoing fixed costs has been eroded significantly. Ultimately, we will have to make decisions based on the funding that is available and in the best interests of our students and our district's long-term sustainability.

Thank you for all you do to meet this challenge. Your work helps hundreds of children and families that we are here to serve every day. As mentioned above, there are many unknowns, but one thing we do know is that over 1,100 students will arrive at our schools tomorrow and the next day and the next. We must find a way to be prepared for them tomorrow, every day, and every year that follows. Working together, we are confident that we will find that way.

Sincerely,

Mark K. Crawford

Rigorous LEARNING, Relevant TEACHING, & Relationship BUILDING WITH ALL STUDENTS.....USD 210

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