



Superintendent
Dr. Justin B. Henry
Assistant Superintendent Academic Affairs
Dr. Julie D. Cannizzo
Interim Director of Human Resources & Student Services
Dave Hickerson
Chief Financial Officer
Doug Maxwell

Director of Community Relations, Goddard Education Foundation
Executive Director
Dane Baxa
Executive Director of Safety & Support Services
Ronny Lieurance
Executive Director of Student Support Services
Jess Herbig

Coordinator of Early Childhood & Human Resources
Scott May
Director of Maintenance
J.R. Miller
Director of Nutrition Services
Christine Maxwell
Director of Technology
Jason Soupene
Director of Transportation
Tammy Craytor

Board of Education
Nicole Hawkins
Gail Jamison
Sara McDonald
Mark Richards
Ginger Rose
Jenny Simmons
Ruth Wood

Written Testimony before the
Special Education Task Force
01/05/2023

In Support of Fully Funding Special Education

Task Force Members:

My name is Jess Herbig and I have the privilege to serve as the Executive Director of Student Support Services for Goddard Public Schools for the past six years. Our current district enrollment is approximately 6,300 students, and we serve approximately 3,000 students in the Clearwater, Cheney, and Conway Springs school districts as the host of our Special Education Cooperative. Our Cooperative boundaries also include six private and parochial schools. **I am writing today in support of fully funding special education for the following reasons:**

- Kansas is obligated under K.S.A 72-3422 to provide 92% of the state level excess cost for special education services. State funding in 2023-2024 is set to be at 69% of state level excess cost. Goddard Public School USD 265 spent **\$13.4** million dollars on special education services in the 2022-2023 school year. Goddard Public Schools USD 265 received **\$7.3** million dollars from the state to support special education services in 2022-2023. Goddard Public Schools USD 265 had to transfer **\$6.1** million dollars from our general funds to cover the difference between funding received and funding needed to support special education services.
- Kansas estimates a surplus of **\$2.8** billion dollars by July 2024, which is in addition to the **\$1.7** billion dollars that the state has put into the state's general stabilization fund.
- A 2023 Kansas Legislature Post Audit found that special education is underfunded.

Here are a couple of ways that our legislators could help with special education funding and it would not cost the state any additional funding.

- The state could send school districts their special education funds at the same time that the general fund payments are sent in July. Currently, special education funds are not dispersed to school districts until October.
- The state could set the Categorical Aid dollar amount at the end of the fiscal year for the next school year. This would help districts budget better, as some times districts are waiting until early June to finish their budget.

I am appreciative of this task force working to put our most vulnerable students first.

Sincerely,

Jess Herbig