

December 28, 2023

Special Education Task Force Committee Members,

I am grateful you have come together to discuss this very important topic. I have been an educator for 31 years and the needs of our students, in both general education as well as special education, continue to increase. Your attention to this funding is paramount to our being able to appropriately meet the needs of our students.

Explaining this on a more personal level, USD 327 spent \$1,167,268 on special education services in 2022-2023. Out of those dollars spent, we received \$673,666 from the state in funding. This money received was not adequate to make payment for our special education assessment to our cooperative in education and as a result we subsidized this using the general fund in our school district. This resulted in us transferring \$494,602 to cover the difference between funding received and funding needed. USD 327 should be responsible for making payment on 8% per state law which states Kansas will fund Special Education at 92%. This would allow us to use these funds expended on other needs within our district. This could include addressing classified and certified staffing issues; further investing in our student's social and emotional needs through curriculum and support staffing, purchasing much needed academic curriculum updates, offering additional classes in our Career and Technical Education programming, adding additional staff for intervention to help build the skills of our students or increasing teacher/staff pay which would support recruitment and retention of much needed staff in a small Kansas rural community.

As you discuss the funding special education is given and deliberate over potential solutions, I ask that you consider all students and the amount of money which is currently being taken away from them in order to make payment on our special education assessments as a result of it not being funded at 92%.

This is an opportunity to invest in all students, and I appreciate your taking time to have this very important discussion.

Let's Grow.



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Superintendent



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