

Dear Legislators,

My name is Lindsey Yankey, I am a graduate of a rural south central school district, Bluestem USD 205 in Leon, Kansas. I currently live in Lawrence where our 2nd grader attends public school. I am a regular volunteer at the school over the past 3 years and have gotten to know many of the school families and staff members.

While my 2nd grader doesn't currently have an IEP, I am well aware of how critical they are in the success of SPED students and all students. When the funding is there to adequately provide services for our Special Education students all students will benefit. As you may well know, Lawrence closed two elementary schools last year due to budget constraints. My child's school received many of the students from the closed school which had the highest SPED numbers in the district. My child's school did not receive any additional staffing or resources when welcoming in these students. Needless to say, it's been a very rough year for all involved. I know with more support staff the needs of all the students would be better met.

It is a rough time to be a teacher, we are facing a teacher crisis across the country with positions going unfilled, and students being taught year after year by rotating long term substitutes. Kansas teachers need your support so they can stay committed to teaching. They need you to make the right choice and fully fund SPED so our districts aren't spread so thin the effects are felt by all students and staff. Lawrence will use \$8.4 million dollars from our general fund to make up the gap the state has left by not adequately funding SPED. With your support our Kansas students would receive the education they deserve by hiring more staff to work within classrooms and training.

I hope you take the time to reach out and speak with school families and educators in your home district to listen to their stories. All students across Kansas are depending on you to do the right thing and fully fund Special Education.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Lindsey Yankey
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