

Home of

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT 336

THE EDUCATIONAL,
HISTORICAL AND
INDUSTRIAL CORNER
OF KANSAS



the Wildcats

515 Pennsylvania
P.O. Box 352
Holton, Kansas 66436

Jim Karleskint, Ph.D.
Superintendent
785-364-3650
FAX 364-3975

Parents and Patrons of USD 336:

I know all of you are aware of the financial crisis the country, state, and the local area is dealing with. The financial situation is having a significant impact on the school district. Last spring the district was forced to reduce the budget by more than \$500,000. There are 15 fewer people working in the district today as compared to this time last year, and numerous other positions had hours reduced and over 12 coaching positions were eliminated. This has had an impact on student learning and student activities.

We are now being told additional cuts will be made due to additional students in public schools in Kansas, more free lunch students in Kansas, and lower property valuations across the state. To make matters worse the financial experts that predict tax receipts for the state tell us that there will not be as much tax revenue coming to the state as was expected last spring. We do not have final numbers on exactly how much will be cut from our budgets. We have been given a broad range of cuts that might be made. The range is from \$258,000 to over \$500,000 additional cuts for the current school year.

The potential cuts are the reason for this letter. At the School Board meeting on Monday, November 9, 2009 the board approved recommended changes that will help deal with this shortfall of funds. School budgets will be frozen and adjustments will be made in some of the schools. The High School will do away with a mid morning break, this will allow the district to count more minutes for student contact time as required for accreditation. The board also adopted a revised school year calendar. The calendar change will impact the number of days students will be attending school.

The changes in the calendar are as follows: December 21st, December 22nd, January 4th, March 12th, April 5th, and April 19th - No School for students. The days of January 18th, February 22nd, and February 23rd were already scheduled to be No School for students, these will remain as No School for students. The teachers and administrators in the district will be the only employees working in the school buildings on the above mentioned days. Other staff (custodians, secretaries, cooks, bus drivers and other support staff) will not be working these days and will not be paid. Other days over Christmas Break and Spring Break when some of these employees normally work will be non working days for them. It is unfortunate that these employees have to bear the brunt of these cuts. Teachers and administrators are under contract; this is the reason they will be on duty these days. The time will be spent on staff development, adult learning, and work in classrooms. Teachers and administrators are being asked to return a portion of their pay to the district to help alleviate the budget shortfall. It is projected that these measures could save the district up to \$200,000 in savings.

I have been in education for over 35 years. This current financial situation is by far the worst I have ever seen. I want to thank the district staff for their cooperation and understanding of the difficult choices that are being made to get through these current challenges. The Board of Education and district leadership will be scheduling a public forum to discuss the current school year situation and the impact for the future. Please be watching for the announcement of this meeting. In closing I would suggest that you contact our legislators to express your support of the schools in Holton and ask that they do what they can to support our school children. If you have questions please contact me by phone at 364-3650 or email at j.karleskint@holtonks.net.

Regards,

Jim Karleskint, PhD
Superintendent of Schools
USD 336