



# Unified School District 470

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## USD 470 responds to state budget cuts

Gov. Bill Graves announced state budget cuts in public education yesterday. The amount was expected to be between 1 and 3 percent, but the general fund budget actually will be reduced by 3/4ths of 1 percent for the 2002-2003 school year.

The base per pupil state aid will be reduced by approximately \$27 per pupil, from \$3,890 to \$3,863. This totals \$91,935 in budget cuts for USD 470 Arkansas City.

"The board of education and the administration in USD 470 have taken steps to diminish the negative impacts of these cuts directly on the educational program," Superintendent of School Perry Perkins said. "The board recently approved a budget that attempted to anticipate some cuts in state funding."

To help offset expected budget cuts, USD 470 added additional revenues to the local option budget before the governor's announcement was made. The budget was approved at Monday night's BOE meeting.

Additional steps were taken to address budget concerns: The district implemented cost-cutting program adjustments. Textbook fees were reinstated to subsidize textbook purchases, decreasing the amount of money from the LOB spent on textbooks.

The district also applied for and received federal grants to help offset spending. The district moved 4.5 full-time equivalency certified staff members from the general fund to federal grant monies. The district also increased federal grant aid available to cover bilingual education, cutting about \$30,000 out of the LOB.

The district placed a greater emphasis on staff professional development in language arts areas in elementary schools, saving the district budget \$80,000 in duplicate resource costs, according to Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Jan Voss.

"Even with these preparations and planning, the district must consider cuts and has initiated a process of reviewing programs, including personnel positions, for possible further cuts if the need arises," Perkins said. "We must be prepared to make budget adjustments, including decreasing travel, staff development, technology funding and other areas as needed."

According to the Kansas Association of School Boards, the state's budget division projects that revenues will continue to fall, requiring more cuts during the fiscal year.

"Essentially, the governor seems to be leaving the problem to his successor," Mark Tallman, KASB assistant executive director/advocacy, said in an e-mail.

Perkins said that although he understands the need for budget cuts at this time, he does not accept the reason for them.

"The funding of public education in Kansas is a state responsibility," he said. "The

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legislature did not meet its responsibility and now the educational services provided to students have been cut, placing their education at risk. It is time for the legislature to meet its obligation to the children of Kansas.”

Assistant Superintendent and Business Manager Ron Ballard agrees.

“It is the responsibility of the state of Kansas to provide free and adequate education to all students, and the state’s not doing that,” he said.

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