

Wheatland USD 292

"Teamwork=Excellence; Excellence=Achievement"



Gary Kraus, Superintendent
gkraus@thunderhawks.org
Paula Chapin, Clerk of the Board

2920 K-23, PO Box 165
Grainfield, KS 67737
Tel. (785) 673-4213
FAX (785) 673-4234

June 29, 2016

To: Members of the Wheatland USD 292 Communities
From: Gary Kraus – Superintendent of Schools
Re: School Funding Update

In early June, I prepared and released a statement advising patrons there was a possibility that school funding would be suspended on July 1, 2016. That possible suspension of funding was related to a court case in which the Kansas Supreme Court found the funding formula in place at the time lacked equity for all school districts.

On Thursday, June 23, the Legislature began a special session to address the court ruling. Late Friday, June 24, both the House and Senate over-whelming voted in favor of a bi-partisan bill that is believed will satisfy the Supreme Court's order to adopt a formula that is equitable for all school districts. Shortly following the votes, the Legislature adjourned and Governor Brownback indicated he would sign the bill. There is much confidence the Supreme Court will find this bill satisfactory, especially in light of the fact that the Plaintiffs have stipulated the adopted plan meets constitutional requirements for equity.

So, how does this effect Wheatland Schools? Put simply, this has no real financial impact on this school district. Based on the formula, we are considered a wealthy district and do not receive state aid for the Local Option Budget or Capital Outlay. Financial resources will continue to be very limited as there will be no additional state aid for our district. It does however, directly affect our people and the local community. Our summer employees will continue to work and receive pay checks as normal. We will be able to continue doing business as usual, making the necessary preparations for school to begin on time in August.

Even though it appears the current litigation is basically settled, not all of the school funding issue has been addressed. Sometime this fall, the Supreme Court will be holding hearings related to the adequacy of state funding for schools. The Kansas Supreme Court has long held the position that the Kansas Constitution requires the Legislator to provide funding that is both adequate and equitable. At this point, it is impossible to predict how the Supreme Court will rule or how the Legislature will react in event the ruling goes against the State. No one knows exactly what the future holds, but when we consider the recent history of school finance in Kansas, it is not inconceivable that we could be in a very similar situation this time next year.