Community buy-in helps bonds pass in Liberal

In 2009, Liberal USD 480 officials asked voters to approve a $61.3 million bond issue and were rejected.

Fast forward to April 2014, and 76 percent of voters OK’d $127.8 million in bonds.

The difference between the two elections was community buy-in, said Liberal Superintendent Paul Larkin.

“This wasn’t a district plan. It was a community plan,” Larkin said.

The proposal was the product of numerous town hall meetings with community leaders making presentations.

At one point, it became apparent many in the community thought the initial proposal of $148 million was too much, so officials knocked it down by $20 million, primarily by removing some proposed athletic facilities.

Part of the funding source for the bonds is a half-cent sales tax put on the ballot by city commissioners and also approved by voters.

Now the dirt is flying. Five new schools will be built offering more than 150,000 square feet of additional educational space.

Larkin said the community is staying involved in the process through a financial advisory committee. “One of our goals was to increase community involvement, so that has been on the district’s radar,” he said.

Located in far southwest Kansas, Liberal is a beef industry hub with packing plants, ranches and feedlots.

Of the school district’s approximately 5,000 students, more than three-fourths are Hispanic and more than three-fourths are economically disadvantaged.

Last year, 72 unaccompanied children from Central America wound up with sponsors in Liberal and arrived at school.

“It’s quite a situation. They’re fleeing whatever, and we had kids we didn’t know how old they were,” Larkin said.

“Some look 12 and say they’re 16. We start from ground zero in English skills,” he said.

Some of the students attend school, then work a shift at a beef processing plant, go to sleep and wake up and head back to school.

But even with the challenges, there is a lot to brag about in Liberal. The high school was recently ranked as the second best in Kansas according to U.S. News & World Report.

Larkin said if there was one thing he would advise legislators in Topeka. “Treat us like professionals,” he said.

He said he was monitoring the recent State Finance Council meeting on Twitter and he thought some of the questions from the Governor and others on the council were insulting. “I just think those kind of jabs are unnecessary,” he said. ~Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

KASB summits tackle tough issues

bv KASB President Don Shimkus

We have a great opportunity to make a lasting impact on public education in Kansas, but it is going to take all of us – working together – to make sure the changes are positive and help all children succeed.

I’m sure you are familiar with “two heads are better than one?” Our state faces complex, difficult decisions in the areas of school improvement and school finance. We have to work together if we are to find solutions that give every child in Kansas the hope of future success.

Now is not the time to sit by and let others make the decisions about Kansas public education!

KASB will kick-off a two-week tour for the Fall Education Summits soon. These meetings are the perfect opportunity for board members, site councils, community members and staff to talk about what we want for our schools and how we should fund those schools.

I’ve been encouraging people to speak up this year – talk to everyone and anyone about Kansas schools and our state’s future. Please attend one of the Fall Education Summits the last week of September and first week of October. You’ll gain a better understanding of the issues and information to take back to your local community and get everyone talking about public education!

Thank you for all you do for our kids. Let’s get talking!
When the State Board received a report on new reading and math test scores this month, the results looked lower than what the public, teachers, parents and students are used to. And that is actually very good news.

Kansas has made its reading and math tests much tougher by raising expectations, which means that performance will look lower. The new tests measure more than just knowing the basic facts of reading, writing and arithmetic. Instead, the tests are designed to tell if a student is learning to think critically and solve more advanced problems - to handle the more complex demands of college, technical education and the workplace.

These tests are different from the types of tests students have taken in the past, and certainly different from what most parents (and grandparents) experienced. Instead of asking students to simply give answers based on acquired knowledge, the new tests ask students to apply that knowledge to new situations. These skills take time to acquire. The test format is different from what students have experienced in recent years. However, the most important thing to remember is the new tests are designed to be more challenging.

**Kansas: Rising Achievement, Rising Demands**

Kansas has long ranked among the top states in education performance, such as national reading and math tests, high school graduation rates and preparation for college, and each of these measures has improved over the past decade. However, Kansas school leaders have recognized we will have to do even better to help students succeed.

For example, Kansas high school graduation rates are at an all-time high, but economic changes mean most jobs will require education beyond high school. In the 1970s, only about one-third of jobs required more than a high school diploma. By 2020, it is projected that over two-thirds of the jobs in the United States will require some type of postsecondary education: technical training or a two-year, four-year or advanced academic degree. In Kansas it will be even higher: over 70 percent - fifth highest in the nation.

The good news is Kansas education levels have been rising. From 2000 to 2013 (the most recent year statistics are available), the percentage of Kansans 25 and older with a two-year, four-year or advanced degree has grown from from 32 percent to 39 percent, the percent of Kansans with “some college” has held steady at 25 percent, and the number of students completing technical programs has increased, according to state higher education officials.

The educational level of Kansas adults should continue to rise because educational performance by Kansas students has also improved, including high school graduation rates, the National Assessment of Educational Progress fourth and eighth grade reading and math tests, and college preparation tests, such as the percentage of students meeting all four “college ready “benchmarks” on the ACT test. In fact, across 14 national indicators, Kansas ranks 5th in the nation.

It is worth noting that Kansas’ spending rank is 25th in the nation after adjusting for state cost of living differences, and Kansas spends less than any other state in the top 15 for student achievement.

**Challenges Facing Kansas Schools and Students**

However, being better than most states still leaves some big challenges.

First, too many students fail to prepare for college academic requirements and require remedial courses or simply drop-out of college without completing a credential. About 74 percent of Kansas graduating seniors take the ACT test and 93 percent of those students says they plan to enroll in college. However, about 20 percent of those tested self-report they did not take at least four years of English and three or more years each of math, social studies and natural science. Even students who do complete that “core” may not have passed the specific “college prep” courses required for qualified admission to state universities.

“College prep” courses are much more challenging than those required only for...continued on page 6
KASB Staff Spotlight: Daryl Makowski keeps building, printing going

Daryl Makowski

Each year, KASB sends out numerous publications for our members and hosts many events at its building on Arrowhead Road in Topeka. One of the many people who work to keep the association running like a well-oiled machine is Daryl Makowski, KASB’s printing/building manager.

Born and raised in Chicago, Daryl was first introduced to printing through his high school’s printing department in Crystal Lake, IL, a suburb of Chicago. From there he traversed the country, living and working in many different states and industries before finally landing in Kansas, where he’s lived for 23 years.

Beginning his time with KASB in 1994, Daryl was recently recognized for 20 years of service with the organization at the Employee Recognition Dinner this past June.

Daryl oversees all of the needs of the KASB office building. His duties include testing the alarm systems and inspecting the boiler and other vital parts of the building to ensure they keep working. He also works closely with Andrea Hartzell on association publications.

Daryl plays a multi-faceted role in the everyday operations at KASB, such as setting up the building for the various seminars and meetings throughout the year.

One of the things that Daryl enjoys about working at KASB is how the association is making a difference: “you can really see it.” As a parent with children in public schools, this is important to him. He attributes this to the “talented, dedicated staff” at KASB: “they are good at what they do.”

And being appreciated for doing good work is one of the many positive experiences Daryl has had while working at KASB. “The positivity of people” keeps him going and makes him proud to serve Kansas schools. ~Shaneice McNabney, smcnabney@kasb.org

KASB Legislative Committee releases draft recommendations for member review, input

The KASB Legislative Committee’s tentative recommendations on KASB policy positions have been released. The committee will be seeking feedback on these recommendations until Nov. 7, when it will approve a final report to the KASB Delegate Assembly.

The tentative recommendations were developed at a committee meeting Aug. 29. School leaders are encouraged to review these recommendations with their local boards. A presentation and discussion will also be held at the KASB-United School Administrators Fall Summits.

The major recommendations include:

• Support development of a new school finance system based on the principles of adequacy, equity and flexibility developed by the 2010 KASB Committee on Funding Public Education and reaffirmed during the Summer Advocacy Tour.

• Adopt a statement on developing a new accreditation system based on input from school leaders at last summer’s KASB Advocacy Tour.

Find the Legislative Committee Report draft online at: www.kasb.org/assets/Advocacy/15/LegComRptSept15.pdf.

Questions or recommendations about the tentative committee report can be directed to committee members or the KASB advocacy staff.~Scott Rothschild, srothschild@kasb.org

Why public education in the state of Kansas

Donna Whiteman, KASB Assistant Executive Director of Legal Services/Attorney

School board members and educators across Kansas know that childhood poverty in Kansas is growing at an alarming rate. According to census figures, one in five Kansas children live in poverty. Commissioner of Education, Randy Watson, spoke to the Kansas Association of School Boards Board of Directors recently and emphasized one of the major challenges facing Kansas public schools is the rapid increase in the number of children who are eligible for free and reduced lunch. In 2000, 32.2 percent of Kansas school students were eligible for free and reduced lunches and in 2014, the number had risen to 50.3 percent. Researchers have shown that children growing up in poverty deal with a range of social and economic stresses that can cause damage to a child’s cognitive skills that can last a lifetime.

School board members and educators know that child poverty impacts every Kansan be it in lower graduation rates, reduced opportunities for personal growth and employment, higher crime rates, K-12 spending, special education costs and the economic and social impact to the Kansas economy that results when students are not prepared to enter the workforce.

School board members and educators across Kansas know that every dollar invested in education to provide opportunities to help children in poverty achieve academic success and develop job skills pays incredibly high dividends for the future of all Kansans and makes a difference in the quality of life for each and every child.

Kansas historically has had a national reputation for being a great place to live and raise children in part because education has always...continued on page 7
As we look ahead and see the challenges before us, including a new funding formula, an ever-changing student population, and potential challenges related to the Legislature and their approach to education policy, KASB has been studying other states to see what we can learn. To do this, we looked at four groups:

- **Peer States**: Those states that are similar to Kansas in terms of student demographics and overall population characteristics.
- **Adjacent States**: Those states that border Kansas.
- **Aspiration States**: Those states that have better student outcomes than Kansas.
- **Higher Impact States**: Those states that exceed expectations to a greater degree than Kansas.

Each comparison potentially yields lessons for Kansas to learn, and also helps us get a better picture of where we stand compared to the rest of the nation.

**Peer States**
We identified seven states that are similar to Kansas in terms of student demographics and overall population characteristics: Oregon, Washington, Illinois, Michigan, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Here is what we learned about them:

- Kansas outperforms all of our neighbor states.
- Only one neighbor state spends more per pupil than Kansas.
- 3 out of 4 neighbor states have larger schools than Kansas.
- Only one of the states adjacent to us has similar student and adult populations.
- Kansas pays teachers approximately the same amount as our neighbor states.

**Conclusions**
What kinds of conclusions can we draw from this information?

- The first is that each state is unique, so caution must be taken when comparing them.
- Second, this data reinforces the correlation between higher spending and better student outcomes.
- Finally, this data suggests that Kansas does well given the resources and population we have.

For more information on this analysis, visit kasbresearch.blogspot.com or email tcarter@kasb.org.

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**Aspiration States**
We identified five states that outperform Kansas on student outcomes: New Hampshire, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Minnesota. Here is what we learned about them:

- All of the states performing better than Kansas spend more per pupil.
- None of the states that perform better than Kansas have similar student or adult populations, and none are adjacent to us.
- Kansas pays teachers less than the aspiration states.

**Higher Impact States**
Kansas has better student outcomes than predicted based on student demographics and overall population characteristics. Only four states exceeded predicted outcomes to a greater degree than Kansas. They are: Texas, Kentucky, Arkansas, and Maryland. Here is what we learned about these states:

- None of these states outperform Kansas in terms of actual values.
- 3 of these states spend less than Kansas.
- All of these states have larger schools and districts, and most have more students per staff member.

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Map shows Kansas along with Peer, Adjacent, Aspiration and Higher Impact states.
School districts have been squeezed like no other time in history: Understanding total cost of ownership

provided by P1 Group, a KASB Prestigious Partner
Part one of three

Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), is rarely discussed in K-12. In this three part series we will identify the benefits and challenges associated with becoming a school district focused on the TCO associated with operating and managing school facilities.

Implementing a proactive approach to the TCO of your school facilities equates to savings. TCO analysis can be utilized when making specific decisions regarding building new schools, renovating existing buildings, and replacing equipment, parts or making minor repairs. Evaluating TCO with regard to facility decisions will help guide a district with understanding what the total cost of the expenditure will be over its useful life.

To understand this better we must explore how school facilities are being managed today. In many cases, funding or the lack thereof dictates the direction in which decisions are made in public education. Superintendents and BOE members are in a challenging position and let’s face it; school districts have been squeezed like no other time in history.

When something breaks or is past its useful life in a school facility, often times a “like for like” replacement or the least expensive first cost approach is utilized. It is understandable why this approach has been popular for so long in our Kansas schools. This is the people’s money and the burden on our district leaders to be prudent, dictates the decision. Without evaluating the TCO with regard to the decision, the cost could be considerably greater to a school district over its useful life.

If your budget for operations and maintenance is 6 to 10 percent of the total budget, then your facilities are a significant expense to your district. The amount of resources spent, including human and capital resources with managing facilities, provides an opportunity to save money within your district. These savings could be spent on what matters most; our kids and their education.

The average age of a Kansas school building is 51 years, and there are 1,307 active public school buildings in Kansas. The opportunities for savings are enormous.

In our next series, we will discuss the importance of a Facilities Master Plan (FMP) focused on reducing the TCO for your school facilities and the real cost of deferred maintenance within a school district.

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Contact Jay.Muehlbach@k12itc.com to see how albert fits into your district and prepares your students to boldly take on the world.
graduation. If students do not take courses to prepare for postsecondary education, they are much less likely to be successful in college. The new tests are designed to give parents, students and educators a better and earlier measure of student progress.

Second, as in all states, low-income, disabled, African American, and Hispanic students in Kansas lag behind in graduation rates and test scores, especially in preparation for college. Again, Kansas does better than most states with all groups of students, but it will be much harder to fill the educational needs of the state economy if these students do not make more progress.

This is particularly true when the numbers of low income, non-white students are growing rapidly. For example, Hispanic students were just 9 percent of ACT test-takers in 2011, but 13 percent in 2015. Only 15 percent of Hispanic students meet all four “college ready” benchmarks, compared to 37 percent of white students.

Improving educational levels is critical to individual economic well-being, as well as the state’s economy. Each higher level of educational attainment results in higher income, less unemployment, and less need for public assistance.

Third, academic preparation measured by state tests is not the only thing students need to be successful. Results of new Commissioner of Education Randy Watson’s “listening tour” of Kansas last spring indicates Kansans place a high value on non-academic skills and characteristics. In addition, about one-third of Kansas jobs will NOT require postsecondary education. Many students are unlikely to want or even be capable of more rigorous academic courses. Kansas high school schools must provide programs to meet their needs, as well.

What It Will Take to Succeed
How do the new Kansas assessments address these issues? Because these tests are given grades three through eight and in once in high school, educators, parents and students will have a better idea how well they are preparing for college and careers long before their junior or senior year in high school, and have more time to adjust plans, choose the right courses and seek additional academic help and career counseling if needed.

It is important to note the higher standards reflected in these tests does not mean Kansas education performance has declined or more Kansas students or schools are somehow “failing.” It does, however, mean more will be expected. Preparing for success after high school will require more challenging courses than many students - and parents - are used to. Many of these students will be the first in their family to attend college. It will require more from teachers and support staff, such as academic and career counselors. It will require more individualized instruction.

Finally, meeting these higher standards will require the right resources. The Kansas Legislature is setting out to develop a new school finance system while the Kansas Supreme Court considers legal challenges to both the previous system and the “block grants” that froze state operating funds for the current and next school year.

This gives Kansas the opportunity to fund schools based on what it takes to educate a successful student, which is exactly the standard adopted by the Kansas Supreme Court through the so-called “Rose Capacities.” While those capacities, ranging from basic skills to civics, economic, health, the arts and preparing for postsecondary education, have not been completely defined, one thing is clear: the only states that outperform Kansas across all national measures of educational outcomes spend more money per pupil and target additional resources to low income and other special needs students. These are the states Kansas will be competing against for high-paying, high-skill jobs.
been a high priority for Kansas citizens. Kansans have always set the education of its children as a high priority and expectation of its state and local government.

In the Mock v. State of Kansas school finance case, Judge Bullock summarized the early history of education in Kansas:

“The history of education in Kansas predates statehood. Pioneer schools existed prior to the time the territory was organized. Schools existed even prior to the time the territory was organized. In fact, schools were often organized and built well before taxes were collected for their operation. (Heritage of Kansas, Emporia, Kansas, State Teachers College, 1963) Provisions of the Organic Act and the Act for the Admission of Kansas into the Union included provisions related to public school. The Organic Act, Section 34, provided that certain sections of the land should be reserved for educational purposes.

The Act for Admission of Kansas into the Union, in paragraph three, repeated this reservation of land for educational purposes. During territorial days, the territorial legislature created the office of Territorial Superintendent of common Schools. This officer subsequently was authorized to certify teachers and to organize local school districts. Education has always been a high priority for Kansans. In fact, shortly after statehood there existed over nine thousand schools and over twenty-seven thousand school board members. Every child had a school within walking distance of his or her home”

This history clearly demonstrates that public education has played a critical and important role in the development of Kansas and “demonstrates the treatment of public education as a paramount duty of the Legislature which has been continuous from the beginning of statehood and before.”

The current educational Article in the Kansas Constitution was ratified by Kansas voters in 1966 and Kansas voters again reaffirmed the “public education priority” by approving Section 1 and Section 6 of the education article which requires:

Section 1. Schools and related institutions and activities. “The legislature shall provide for intellectual, educational, vocational and scientific improvement by establishing and maintaining public schools…which may be changed in such manner as may be provided by law.”

Section 6. Finance. (b) “The legislature shall make suitable provision for finance of the educational interests of the state. No tuition shall be charged for attendance at any public school to pupils required by law to attend such school, except such fees or supplemental charges as may be authorized by law.” Both the Montoy and Gannon school finance cases recognized and recited the critical role of that providing a quality education provides for all Kansas students and particularly for those students who are at risk due to poverty and other economic factors.

History has taught us time and time again that an investment in a quality public school system provides not only individual opportunities to children in poverty but becomes the “ladder” students need to climb out of poverty and become productive and contributing citizens to their communities and state.

Providing a quality public education for all Kansas students is also the “economic incubator” that supports economic growth and viability and creates innovation for Kansas’ businesses and communities. A quality public education also prepares and equips the next generation of Kansas students to become informed and contributing citizens to participate in our democratic “government by the people.”

We have all benefited from a quality public education because those who went before us were willing to “pay forward” when it came to providing educational opportunities for the next generation of Kansans. The task before us today as educational leaders is to advocate for educational opportunities for the 435,000 children in Kansas public schools and particularly for those students growing up in poverty and to explain to parents, patrons, and policy makers the value of a quality public education, why it is as important as our founding fathers first thought it was, and why it is still critically important for our children’s success and the future economic growth and prosperity of our great state.

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### September/October At-A-Glance

#### SEPTEMBER
22. Becoming an Effective Supervisor Workshop, Hays  
24. Becoming an Effective Supervisor Workshop, Topeka  
25. Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Hutchinson & Wichita  
28. Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Ellis  
29. Fall Summit & Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Sublette  
30. Fall Summit & Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Oakley  

#### OCTOBER
1. Fall Summit & Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Salina  
6. Fall Summit & Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Olathe  
7. Fall Summit & Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Greenbush  
8. Fall Summit & Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Clearwater  
12. KASB Attorney-On-Call, 5 p.m.  
13-14. KS State Board of Education Meeting  
14. KASB Section 504 Workshop, Topeka  

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### Six Dates - Six Locations

**Sept. 29, 2015**  
Sublette Service Center, 810 Lark Ave, Sublette  

**Sept. 30, 2015**  
Oakley Service Center, 703 W 2nd St, Oakley  

**Oct. 1, 2015**  
Webster Conference Center, 2601 N Ohio, Salina  

**Oct. 6, 2015**  
Olathe USD 233 Ed Center, 14160 Black Bob Rd  

**Oct. 7, 2015**  
Greenbush Ed Serv. Ctr., 947 W 47 Highway, Girard  

**Oct. 8, 2015**  
Clearwater SCKESC, 13939 Diagonal Ave., Clearwater  

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### Fall Education Summits 2015

**September/October At-A-Glance**

- **Sept. 22, 2015**: Becoming an Effective Supervisor Workshop, Hays  
- **Sept. 24, 2015**: Becoming an Effective Supervisor Workshop, Topeka  
- **Sept. 25, 2015**: Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Hutchinson & Wichita  
- **Sept. 28, 2015**: Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Ellis  
- **Sept. 29, 2015**: Fall Summit & Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Sublette  
- **Sept. 30, 2015**: Fall Summit & Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Oakley  
- **Oct. 1, 2015**: Fall Summit & Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Salina  
- **Oct. 6, 2015**: Fall Summit & Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Olathe  
- **Oct. 7, 2015**: Fall Summit & Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Greenbush  
- **Oct. 8, 2015**: Fall Summit & Kansas Children, Kansas Future w/Dr. Watson, Clearwater  
- **Oct. 12, 2015**: KASB Attorney-On-Call, 5 p.m.  
- **Oct. 13-14, 2015**: KS State Board of Education Meeting  
- **Oct. 14, 2015**: KASB Section 504 Workshop, Topeka  

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