

## There is more to the story....

### Response to KPI Blog post January 2, 2015

#### “School districts budget large spending increases this year.”

Dave Trabert mixes apples and oranges when he compares school district actual spending to published budgeted spending. Best practice, followed by most school districts and businesses is to budget higher than expected expenditures. Mr. Trabert misleads with the insinuation that school districts are going to needlessly spend more hard earned tax dollars. I think his agenda is showing....

Points to consider:

- Most school districts budget higher than their expected enrollment to protect against the requirement of having to republish their budgets if enrollment comes in higher than expected. The districts do not get additional spending authority unless the enrollment actually comes in higher. If enrollment comes in higher, the budget authority then exists to hire the new teachers and paras to teach the higher load.
- Mr. Trabert tells you the average increase to instruction is 10%. What he does not tell you is that the average increase to administration is less, at 8%. He misleads by suggesting that many districts are planning double digit increases in spending on administration. Again this is apples to oranges, comparing budgets to actual spending. He also ignores the fact that when the cuts began in 2009 most school districts kept cuts as far from the classroom as they could and cut administration first. By the way, the cuts were promised to be “short term” until the economy rebounded. The state then reneged on the promise to replenish the cuts once better times arrived. When the state balances bounced back, the Governor and his supporters, including Trabert, pushed through the largest tax cut in state history rather than replenishing the schools as promised. This hurt our kids then and appears poised to hurt our kids for generations to come.
- Mr. Trabert calls out districts like Wichita for budgeting an 11% increase in administration for FY15., This ignores the fact that Wichita saw an actual 9% cut in administration the previous year. Over the two year period even the budgeted number only increased 2%. Why the intentional distortion?
- Mr. Trabert calls out Dodge City. Dodge is a rapidly growing district. It budgeted an increase to Administration & Support of 19%, but Administration & Support as a percentage of the overall budget stayed the same. This in no way shows that Dodge City is lavishly wasting taxpayer dollars.
- Another likely reason for the higher spending in both instruction and administration is the legislatively increased school district KPERs contribution. This cost legislatively went up 12% for schools this year. Where is that in Mr. Trabert’s analysis?
- Mr. Trabert also fails to account for the fact that the cuts to the classroom and administration that began in 2009 may have been unsustainable in the long run. Everybody can make short term adjustments to get by. School districts certainly did their part. That does not mean that these adjustments are sustainable over the long haul. In many school settings, they were not in our kids best interests. As resources were modestly increased this year, schools began to gradually rebuild our kids’ education system. One would expect no less.
- Budgets fluctuate based on available funding and individual needs of the districts. Cherry picking percentage increases without looking at prior years or the overall budget distorts the facts. The overall percentage of the budget spent on Instruction and Administration & Support has remained about the same:

Selected Districts	Wichita	Hutchinson	Dodge City	Kansas City
Actual Instruction 2012-13	48%	54%	52%	53%
Actual Instruction 2013-14	50%	56%	53%	52%
Budgeted Instruction 2014-15	50%	55%	52%	54%
Actual Administration 2012-13	11%	9%	10%	8%
Actual Administration 2013-14	10%	8%	10%	9%
Budgeted Administration 2014-15	10%	8%	10%	9%

Distortion politics has no place in educating our kids.