



Board Continues to Weigh Budget Cut Options for Next School Year

The Board of Education held a special meeting on Wednesday, March 31, in order to discuss ways to close an anticipated budget deficit of \$14 million. The Board began by reviewing its Budgetary Goals for FY 2011:

- Student achievement is our primary focus. Everything else is in service to this outcome.
- All students will exit high school, college and career ready.
- All students will have highly effective teachers, supported by highly effective principals (district leaders).
- Every student will have access to a Guaranteed and Viable Standards-Based Curriculum.
- Adequate and equitable school funding is a priority.
- Local taxes will be held to the lowest level possible to ensure high quality education in all schools.

The Board then listened to a report on the state budget (information that was provided in last week's issue of *Staff Notebook*.) They learned that the House and Senate both adjourned their sessions early Wednesday morning, the first time in memory that the legislature adjourned **without** having passed a budget. Both houses will return for the wrap-up session on April 28. The state is anticipating a budget deficit of at least \$400 million, a figure which may grow if revenue estimates for the remainder of

the fiscal year come in below projections.

Dr. Cynthia Lane, assistant superintendent for instruction and business, emphasized to the Board that the district was being asked to absorb reductions in funding that were unprecedented, and that there are really very few options left that would not cause pain to the district. The Board was then asked to review a list of potential areas for cuts, and to prioritize those items, deciding which areas should be cut first, and which should be cut only as a last resort. The Board reiterated its desire to make cuts in a way that had the least impact on students.

Among the items mentioned was one that is being considered by districts across the country: a one-day furlough of all district staff. This would involve reducing the number of days for students by one, and closing all buildings for that day. The Board also discussed different alternatives for potential reductions to district staff salaries (these reductions would not apply to teachers, instructional aides and paraprofessionals).

The Board will wait for the state legislature and the governor to make final decisions on the state budget, before continuing work on the 2010-2011 district budget.

In other action, the Board voted to revoke the charter for Holman Academy. The school will continue to operate for the rest of this year, and the Board will look at alternatives for returning the building to its function as a neighborhood school.

Little Givers Produce Big Results

Preschoolers in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools are learning valuable lessons about serving their community.

Students at the KCK Early Childhood Center, and Morse and Lowell preschools have been conducting joint food drives for the district's Office of the Homeless Liaison. Coordinated by principals **Bev Manlove** of the KCK Early Childhood Center, and **Debi Apple** of Morse and Lowell, each nine weeks, notes are sent home to parents detailing the needs of the homeless department. Immediately afterward, donations begin to pour in.

Some preschoolers bring items with them to school, and parents also stop by with sacks of non-

perishable food. Manlove said that, on occasion, parents have given her cash and asked her to buy some needed items for the food pantry.

Along with collections for the district's homeless food pantry, the preschoolers also have participated in the district's annual Thanksgiving Collection, and recently they gave non-perishable food items for the Go for the Green food collection benefitting Harvesters.

"I think it's so significant that it starts with our babies," said Manlove. "If our preschoolers can be generous and give, then they will carry that habit with them as they grow up."

Donations Needed for Homeless Food Pantry

Thank you to all staff who continue to contribute items to the food pantry at the Office of the Homeless Liaison. The need for food items continues to be great.

Most often the meals our homeless students receive at school are their only meals of the day. On weekends, resources are even more limited.

The following are some essential food items that help
(Continued on back)

Reading with the Reptiles

Douglass Students Do the Crocodile Walk

It's sometimes tough to motivate students on Monday mornings after a weekend off, but that doesn't seem to be the case at Douglass Elementary School. Most students enter the building bright eyed and excited. Why? They can't wait to follow the footprints of Croc-the-Crocodile.

Croc is a three-foot-high reading mascot that travels from classroom to classroom each week motivating students to read. He "arrives" with a basket of library books, a recommended reading book list and a folder full of reading activities, such as flashcards, vocabulary words, crossword puzzles and creative writing exercises.

"We've told the students that he is on a 'walk-about' looking for good readers," said **Beth Wheeler**, music teacher, who created Croc. "Every Friday after the kids

go home I move him to another classroom where he will spend the week."

Croc's original home is Wheeler's classroom where he used to rest at Croc's Blooming Vocabulary Center. Wheeler's room is organized into centers based on the book, *Freddie the Frog and the Thump in the Night* which teaches students about musical concepts, while integrating other curriculum.

Earlier this year, School Librarian **Sharon Arndt** collaborated with Wheeler to create a plan to use Croc to get students excited about reading, and to prepare them for their visits to the library. Thus, the Crocodile Walk-About was born.

"Crocodiles have always



Reading is more fun with Croc-the-Crocodile, as demonstrated here by Douglass first grader Angelica Coco.

been fascinating to kids," Arndt said. "And this is a fun way to interest them in new books and to make reading fun."

Since early February, Croc has been making his rounds. Some teachers dress him up, others have students read to him, and all are excited to host

him in their classrooms.

"I tell the students to talk to Croc about the new vocabulary words they are learning so that when he comes back to the music room he can share them with me," Wheeler said. "They have a fun time telling me where they see him each week."

Continuing Contract Law Change

Under a change in the state's continuing contract law, those certified employees under contract as of May 21, 2010 and who were NOT notified of non-renewal are guaranteed positions for the 2010-2011 school year.

Teachers who are not planning to return to the district for the 2010-2011 school year must notify the Human Resources Department by June 4, 2010. Failure to notify Human Resources by June 4 extends your contract for the 2010-2011 school year.

Homeless Food Pantry

(Continued from front)
sustain our children:

- canned fruit (pop top lids on all cans, if possible)
- canned vegetables
- pasta sauce
- pork and beans
- evaporated milk
- cereal
- granola bars
- grits
- cream of wheat
- oatmeal
- macaroni and cheese
- ramen noodles
- rice
- canned meat (tuna,

chicken, salmon,
corned beef, spam)

- canned juices
- crackers

Items can be dropped off at food barrels/bins at the Central Office or the Education Center. Or you may take them directly to the Office of the Homeless Liaison between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. They are located at:

Office of the Homeless Liaison
3101 Minnesota Avenue,
Connelly Hall Unit 5
Kansas City, Kansas 66101
322-8170



STAFF NOTEBOOK

is a weekly publication for employees of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools.

Submissions are welcome and are due by noon on Monday for the following edition. Direct them to:

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