

Independence USD 446
Board of Education Office
Chuck Schmidt, Superintendent

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Senate Education Committee:

I have many concerns about the Excellence in Education Act as proposed. However, I would like to express particular concern about the section which eliminates state aid for bond and interest payments on school construction. Independence USD 446 is a district that has greatly benefited from this state aid and we understand that we will continue to receive state aid even if the Enhancing Education Act is passed into law.

However, we are concerned about other districts that have not had the advantage of building or renovating before the passage of this act. In 2009, our city commission and school board collaborated on a local sales tax to pay a large portion of our \$45 million project. However, if we had not had the assurance that the state would contribute 32% of the funding there is no way we could have gotten voters to approve this bond issue.

Since completing the construction project we are witnessing a definite economic boost and have gained almost 100 students in the past year. Employers in our area are also finding it much easier to recruit employees because of the improved school facilities.

Don't take my word for it. Please review the attached letters from Bill White Real Estate Company in Independence and from the CEO of Mercy Hospital of Independence. This investment by the state is already paying dividends for economic development.

Chuck Schmidt
Superintendent
Independence USD 446