Lee’s Summit R-7 School District March 11, 2016
Citizens’ Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Legislative Breakfast
with Business Roundtable and Board of Education

FUTURE MEETINGS/EVENTS:
- May 2016 -- Possible bus tour of projects funded through April 2015 no-tax-increase bond issue.

Members attending
CAC members attending included Chairperson Kent Kirby, Assistant Chairperson Elaine Bluml, Greg Arens, Matt Baird, Dr. Brent Blevins, Don Clements, Susan Coffman, Jerry Evans, Dr. Roger Fender, Mia Fulsom, Jacque Gragg, Hillary Graves, Tom Jackson, Charlie Johnson, Mike Johnson, Valerie Jones, Lora Ledbetter, Manne Magady, David McCaughey, Dr. David McGehee, Judy Noland, Janice Phelan, Michael Shaw, Paul Voris, Dorothy Walk and Ying Zurbuchen. Business Roundtable members attending included Mike Allen, Bill Baird, Bob Glaser, Matt Knehans, Laura Maxwell, Jon Plaas, Diane Seif, Steve Tominia and Rick Viar. Board of Education members attending were Bill Baird, Adam Rutherford, Chris Storms and Bob White. The meeting opened at 8 a.m. and adjourned around 9:30 a.m. Paul Shrout of Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City was a guest.

Legislative discussions

Topics discussed included:
- The possibility of adding pre-kindergarten to the foundation formula without adding any money to the formula if it reaches full funding. Rep. Roeber, who serves on the Education Committee, said it has not been in her committee yet and she is not aware of a pending bill. Dr. McGehee shared concerns about pre-kindergarten students -- around 1,300 more students in Lee’s Summit R-7 -- who would be included in the formula (under this scenario of the existing formula). Adding the pre-K students statewide would dramatically reduce the per-pupil amounts.
- A question was asked about bills requiring later start dates due to Missouri State Fair. Reb. Roeber said the Education Committee was not going to vote on these bills this session.
- A question was asked about the ongoing negative impact of dramatic tax cuts in Kansas and the possibility that the same may happen in Missouri via legislation. Rep. Cierpiot discussed House Bill 509 from a few years ago that included some tax cuts, and he believes we should let this play out. There is a bill that would eliminate these cuts but it hasn’t received much traction, he added.
- Rep. Solon discussed her House Bill 1678 which addresses the way colleges handle sexual violence at campuses. She added that 70 percent of colleges have no protocols in place regarding how they work with law enforcement related to sexual assault. Her bill addresses procedures and training.
- Rep. Cierpiot discussed the transfer bills (passed during the last two years and vetoed each time by the governor), and added the General Assembly members have decided not to go through this work again this
year, planning to wait until we have a new governor. He believes a Republican governor would sign the transfer bill.

- The group discussed education funding in general. Rep. Cross said 34 percent of the state budget goes to elementary and secondary education and around 10 percent goes to higher education. He added that the state did not fully fund the formula, and it has not been fully funded for many years. Many elected officials use the formula as a yardstick to measure education funding, he added, but we did provide an increase to the formula this year. A CAC member added that education is critical to the success of our community, and asked why the formula isn’t fully funded. Rep. Cierpiot said the current formula is around seven or eight years old, and the reason the formula is not funded is due to Medicaid, which has “gone through the roof” (up 34 percent in the last few years). Rep. Cierpiot added that until Medicaid is under control, we won’t be able to fund elementary and secondary education. Cierpiot said more money in education does not mean we will have better schools and pointed to the amount spent in Kansas City Public Schools and St. Louis Public Schools. Rep. Solon added that the state should be examining tax credits which come right off the top as well as the fact that farmland does not pay its fair share of property taxes.

- Rep. Solon discussed a Medicaid verification bill that has been passed and makes sure that recipients are still in the state and still qualify for benefits.

- A question was asked about the Hancock Amendment, which requires taxes in Missouri to go before a vote of the public. This limits what the General Assembly can do in terms of revenue increases.

- A question was asked about the current formula -- does it have an expiration date and what would it take to modernize the formula? Rep. Cierpiot said it would be a “food fight” to change the formula, especially in the era of term limits since the formula is so complicated. He added that it would be a multi-year effort. Dr. McGehee added that the last formula re-write was a result of a lawsuit filed by multiple school districts, and it may take this type of situation again before it is re-written.

- A question was asked about creating a task force of talented individuals to write a formula, and Rep. Cierpiot said that would be the method but there would be some disagreement among all parties.

- A question was asked about increasing state revenue through economic growth. The elected officials discussed various revenue topics and ideas to improve the economic climate.

- A question was asked about the voucher system, asking for comments about the concept of taking money from public schools and sending it to private schools. Rep. Roeber said that a pending Senate bill would offer state funding for children with disabilities to attend private schools. Rep. Roeber discussed his support for state funding for private schools although this legislation has not yet passed.

Handout

Information from a handout distributed at the meeting follows.

R-7 Legislative Platform includes items such as:

- **SCHOOL FUNDING:** Support full funding for the elementary and secondary education foundation formula.
  - Lee’s Summit R-7 endorses a solid and significant increase in the foundation formula funding from general revenue, that does not include assumed revenues from historically unreliable sources. ($61 million needed to ensure there is not a decrease in the State Adequacy Target)
R-7 opposes changes to the formula aimed at reducing the state’s obligation to its schools.

Currently, the formula is underfunded by approximately $500 million, negatively impacting all Missouri schools and students. The cap would reduce underfunding to $150 million.

Examples of bills impacting this area include House Bill 1943 and already-passed Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 586 and Senate Bill 651. Included among these bills is reinstatement of a 5-percent cap on the student adequacy target retroactive to 2004-05. This cap would result in R-7 receiving approximately $7 million less in a fully-funded formula.

- **VOUCHER TYPE LEGISLATION:** Oppose diverting funds from public education.
  - Lee’s Summit R-7 opposes legislation that would provide state funding to unregulated private schools by reducing funding for public education.
  - An example of this type of legislation is Senate Bill 609, a tax-credit voucher bill which funds private schools at the expense of Missouri’s public school students.

- **TAX CUTS:** Oppose efforts to further cut already-low state taxes and reduce funding for public schools.
  - Lee’s Summit R-7 opposes legislation that reduces available funding to public education as well as other state services.
  - The economic devastation currently taking place within Kansas as a result of deep tax cuts is a stark reminder of the pitfalls of this type of unsuccessful and harmful economic strategy.
  - An example of this type of legislation is Senate Bill 574 (backed by Rex Sinquefield’s organization) that would provide a tax cut going mainly to the top 10 percent income earners while drastically cutting state funding by an estimated $1 billion annually.

- **LOCAL AUTHORITY:** Support local authority of elected school boards.
  - Lee’s Summit R-7 opposes legislation that removes local control from our elected school boards.
  - Examples of this include House Bills 1416 and 1683 which further restrict the first day of school with initial testimony from bill supporters focusing on the Missouri State Fair as the reason for a later start date.

Thank you for being a part of the Citizens' Advisory Committee!!

Please visit the CAC website at: [http://www.lsr7.org/district/community/citizens-advisory-committee/](http://www.lsr7.org/district/community/citizens-advisory-committee/)

**Advocacy:** Visit the R-7 legislative website at [http://www.lsr7.org/district/2012-legislative-platform/](http://www.lsr7.org/district/2012-legislative-platform/). You will find our "Toolkit for Advocacy" and can sign up for "R-7 Advocacy" newsletter.