

2020-2021 State Assessments Review for 2022-2023 Budget Considerations

District:	250 Pittsburg	Bldg #	Grades Served:
School:	Elementaries	All	K-5

(A) Identify the barriers that must be overcome for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on assessments.

A priority goal for USD 250 elementary schools is to address our students' mental health and trauma needs. Until these basic needs are met, we will continue to struggle to achieve academic success. Students come to us already behind and we can trace that back to early childhood needs and services not being addressed. Therefore, mandatory preschool would be helpful. Also, special education students need more support and special education teachers need better training on meeting various student needs. It isn't fair to give students with IEP's the same assessment you administer to the general population. If they require a different curriculum to meet their learning needs, we need to be able to assess them differently also. Our elementary schools also have a growing population of ESOL students that would benefit from a newcomers program to help acclimate them to our school system. Our data indicates a need for a new core math resource for grades K-5. Math resources will be reviewed, piloted, and selected during the 2022-23 school year. We will continue implementation of our newly adopted Success For All reading program. This research based reading program allows for students to be instructed at their individualized reading levels. Additional instructional materials will need to be purchased to meet these needs. Teacher retention and teacher recruitment also continues to be a barrier. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find and retain qualified teachers for all needed positions.

(B) Identify the budget actions that should be taken to address and remove those barriers.

There needs to be prevention, early detection, and intervention with trauma and mental health issues. We can add resources to help students, but until the root issues of student trauma and mental health needs are addressed, the school can only try to help students recover. The state must add funding to outside agencies to help solve this issue. The district adding a counselor would also be a step in the right direction.

Allocating funds to make reading, math, and ESOL class sizes small would be impactful. It would also greatly benefit us if the state made preschool mandatory and appropriately funded. We need to invest in professional development to keep our teachers up to date and ensure they have the skills to provide high-impact interventions when required.

Funds also need to be allocated to help with teacher retention and teacher recruitment. Teachers are leaving the profession due to high stress levels, amount of workload that has been put on them, mental health of all parties, and salaries. College students are not going into the profession due to negative perceptions of education, high demands of workload, and salaries. In the next few years, the teacher shortage will be even more of an issue and this barrier will never be broken if we do not address this now.

(C) Identify the amount of time the board estimates it will take for each student to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessments if the budget actions would be implemented.

There is no way to accurately predict how children will respond to our interventions because we can't fix the daily challenges they face. Many factors impact students' academic achievement, such as socioeconomic status, IQ, household trauma, and early childhood programming. If the state makes preschool mandatory and funds it appropriately, we believe we would see significant gains in the next 10-15 years. We also believe that fully funding special education plays a critical role in the success of our most at-risk children. The goal of all students achieving grade level proficiency is unattainable within the parameters currently set by the Kansas State Department of Education. Until these parameters are reviewed and looked at through the clear lens of ALL students, Kansas schools will be unable to attain this goal. All student learning needs are not equal and cannot be met in any specific time frame, nor can they be measured using a state assessment that assesses all students in the same manner. Until special education needs are fully funded and state assessment guidelines are modified to meet our individual student needs, Kansas schools will not meet this goal.