

July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Representative Dr. Ron Bryce  
Senator Virgil Peck  
Representative Doug Blex

I am writing to you as Superintendent of USD 445 Coffeyville to express my grave concern regarding discussions within the legislative committee on school funding formula revisions, specifically the potential elimination or significant reduction of at-risk funding. This funding is not merely a line item in our budget—it is a lifeline for our students and a critical investment in our community's economic future.

### **The Financial Reality for Coffeyville**

The proposed elimination of at-risk funding would cost USD 445 Coffeyville \$3.8 million annually. To put this in perspective, our entire instructional budget—covering salaries, curriculum materials, technology, and direct student support—totals approximately \$20 million. Losing at-risk funding would represent a devastating 19% reduction in our core educational resources.

This is not theoretical mathematics; this represents real positions, real programs, and real opportunities for our students. With 85% of our overall budget dedicated to personnel costs, any significant funding reduction would force us to make impossible choices between maintaining class sizes, retaining quality teachers, and providing essential support services our students desperately need.

### **The Economic Multiplier Effect**

As one of the largest employers in Coffeyville, USD 445 serves as an anchor institution for our community's economic stability. Our teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, and administrators don't just work in Coffeyville—they live here, shop at our local businesses, purchase homes, and contribute to our tax base. When we invest in school personnel through adequate funding, we're simultaneously investing in local businesses, local housing markets, and community economic stability.

These are not funds that disappear from the local economy; they circulate through our community, supporting everything from grocery stores to restaurants, from banks to service providers. As the community's largest employer, any significant reduction in our workforce or compensation would have a disproportionate impact on Coffeyville's economic health. Cutting school funding doesn't just harm education—it creates a ripple effect that weakens our entire local economy.

### **Compounding Federal Funding Challenges**

The threat to at-risk funding comes at a particularly challenging time for Kansas schools. The U.S. Department of Education is currently withholding over \$6.2 billion in federal education funding nationwide, with Kansas standing to lose \$45 million. For USD 445 Coffeyville, this translates to a potential loss of \$172,000 in essential educational resources, plus an additional \$137,000 in 21st Century funds that support our Boys & Girls Club partnership, which provides critical afterschool and summer academic programming for Coffeyville youth.

When combined with the proposed \$3.8 million reduction in at-risk funding, we face a potential total loss of over \$4.1 million—more than 20% of our instructional budget. This represents a perfect storm of funding reductions that would cripple our ability to serve students and maintain our role as the community's largest employer.

### **The Educational Imperative**

At-risk funding specifically addresses the additional support needed by students facing poverty, trauma, language barriers, and other challenges that create barriers to learning. In Coffeyville, like many Kansas communities, these students represent a significant portion of our enrollment. Without dedicated at-risk funding, we cannot provide:

- Smaller class sizes for struggling learners
- Additional instructional support and intervention programs
- Social-emotional learning resources
- Extended learning opportunities
- Family support specialists
- Mental health and counseling services

These are not luxury services—they are essential components of ensuring every child, regardless of their circumstances, has the opportunity to succeed academically and become a productive citizen.

### **A Request for Leadership**

I respectfully urge you to advocate strongly for maintaining robust at-risk funding in any new school funding formula. The students who benefit from this funding are often those who face the greatest challenges in life. They deserve legislators who will fight for their educational opportunities, not balance budgets on their backs.

Rural communities like Coffeyville cannot absorb a \$3.8 million reduction without devastating consequences. We're asking for your leadership to ensure that Kansas continues to prioritize equity and excellence in education, recognizing that investing in our highest-need students strengthens our entire state.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter with you in greater detail and invite you to visit our schools to see firsthand how at-risk funding translates into student success and community strength. Please feel free to contact me at 620.252.6400 or [craig.correll@cvcilleschools.com](mailto:craig.correll@cvcilleschools.com) to arrange a time to meet.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to our community and state.

Sincerely,

Dr. Craig Correll  
Superintendent of Schools  
Coffeyville Public Schools