

## Your voice matters in decisions impacting Kansas education



February finds us in the midst of a new legislative session. Our legislators will face a number of weighty issues this session and many of them will impact education either directly or indirectly.

While our elected officials work hard to make good decisions that will benefit our state and its citizens, they cannot do it without input and guidance from those they serve. This legislative session, I urge you to take an active part in the decisions that are most important to you.

I frequently hear from parents and grandparents about the importance of specific programs and services offered through our public schools. Often, they are concerned about the future of those programs as their school district is forced to make difficult decisions to manage limited budgets. These individuals need to communicate not only with their local boards of education about what is important to them in K-12 education, but also with their legislators about what their expectations are for their public schools.

If it is important to you that your school be able to offer opportunities above and beyond the normal curriculum - such as an International Baccalaureate program, advanced placement programs or dual credit options - your elected representatives need to know that. If you believe schools must be able to provide intensive learning interventions for struggling students, they need to know that, as well. There are no more effective lobbyists for our schools than concerned parents.

For some, weighing in on legislative issues and priorities can seem like a daunting process. I hope it helps to know that your legislators want to hear from you. Making contact is easy. Use the state's website, [www.ks.gov](http://www.ks.gov), to access the legislative branch of government. Once there, links to the House of Representatives and to the Senate will allow you to locate your representative or senator. The same pages include a directory of representatives or senators that will link you to your representatives contact information.

Each day, thousands of Kansas parents entrust our public schools with their most valuable treasures - their children. It is important that all of our elected officials understand what those parents want and expect for their children. I hope that this session, you will take time to make your expectations known.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Diane DeBacker  
Kansas Commissioner of Education