

**Budget cuts: Continued from page one**

"We're generally advising to budget very conservatively but it's a matter in which the school districts deal with these reductions. It is their choice how to respond and they're responding in different ways."

Last year Missouri faced mid-year state withholdings of approximately \$89 million.

"Last school year was tough because withholdings came late within the year and most districts had to spend reserves because it was too late for staff reductions," Morris said.

"Now the withholdings are more severe but at least they are at the beginning of year and school districts know what to plan for."

Mid-year cuts are not anticipated in the near future according to state budget officials, said Morris, as long as the economy doesn't get any worse and or another drastic event on the national level.

**IOWA**

The state aid amount to Iowa school districts increased by approximately \$27 million, Stilwill said.

"The change in state aid is a result of increasing the per pupil funding amount by two percent while decreasing funding in some categorical areas and increasing in others," he said.

However, overall categorical funding for professional development and technology has decreased or eliminated over the last two years, he said. Iowa is advising districts to look at multi-year planning for school programs and budgets.

"Revenue growth and appropriations continue to lag behind increases in costs and it is reasonable to assume that this could be the case for another two to three years," Stilwill said.

"Given that sustained financial circumstance, it is important to establish clear long-term priorities and to consider how cumulative shortfalls

might affect programs. While this may be a more conservative approach, we find that districts make qualitatively different decisions under a multi-year scenario rather than 'getting by' on a year-to-year basis."

increase their budget and local property tax levy equal to the amount lost in state aid."

**No Child Left Behind**

While facing the current budget situations, state education department representatives said the NCLB regulations are becoming more difficult to meet.

"It is extremely difficult to meet all the requirements with no additional funding," Dennis said. "The feds provided some funding but not efficient funding to meet the standards for all students."

Dennis said for Kansas to meet all the requirements, the state needs additional funding and additional time for some students.

Morris said in the short term, he doesn't foresee there to be much negative impact on Missouri meeting the NCLB regulations.

"The money is already coming for the test development and for Title I and for the other major components of the law," he said. "But if the national budget situation doesn't improve it's going to be difficult for Congress to sustain the commitment to the

ambitious goals that are in NCLB."

Christensen said in view of Nebraska's education budget situation, for the state to meet the NCLB requirements will be entirely dependent on the federal government to pay for the cost.

"If the government doesn't fund [the NCLB requirements], then it isn't going to happen because there is no state money to make it happen," he said.

Stilwill said in the past that deficits in Iowa's budget have had a greater adverse effect on domestic policy spending than other areas.

"This could be a long term con-

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Ted Stilwill

Iowa's director and executive officer of education

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Doug Christensen  
commissioner of Nebraska's  
department of education

**NEBRASKA**

The state aid amount will decrease by approximately \$80 million this school year from what was projected, said Doug Christensen, commissioner of education.

The state department of education is keeping school districts advised with what is going on and wherever federal discretionary funds are available.

"We make sure to max federal funds to keep funds flowing through the schools," Christensen said. "We also gave schools the authority to



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The Midwest Equity Assistance Center is federally funded from the U.S. Department of Education under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. However, the Horizons newsletter does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the federal government.



# HORIZONS

Midwest Equity Assistance Center

Volume 13, Issue 3

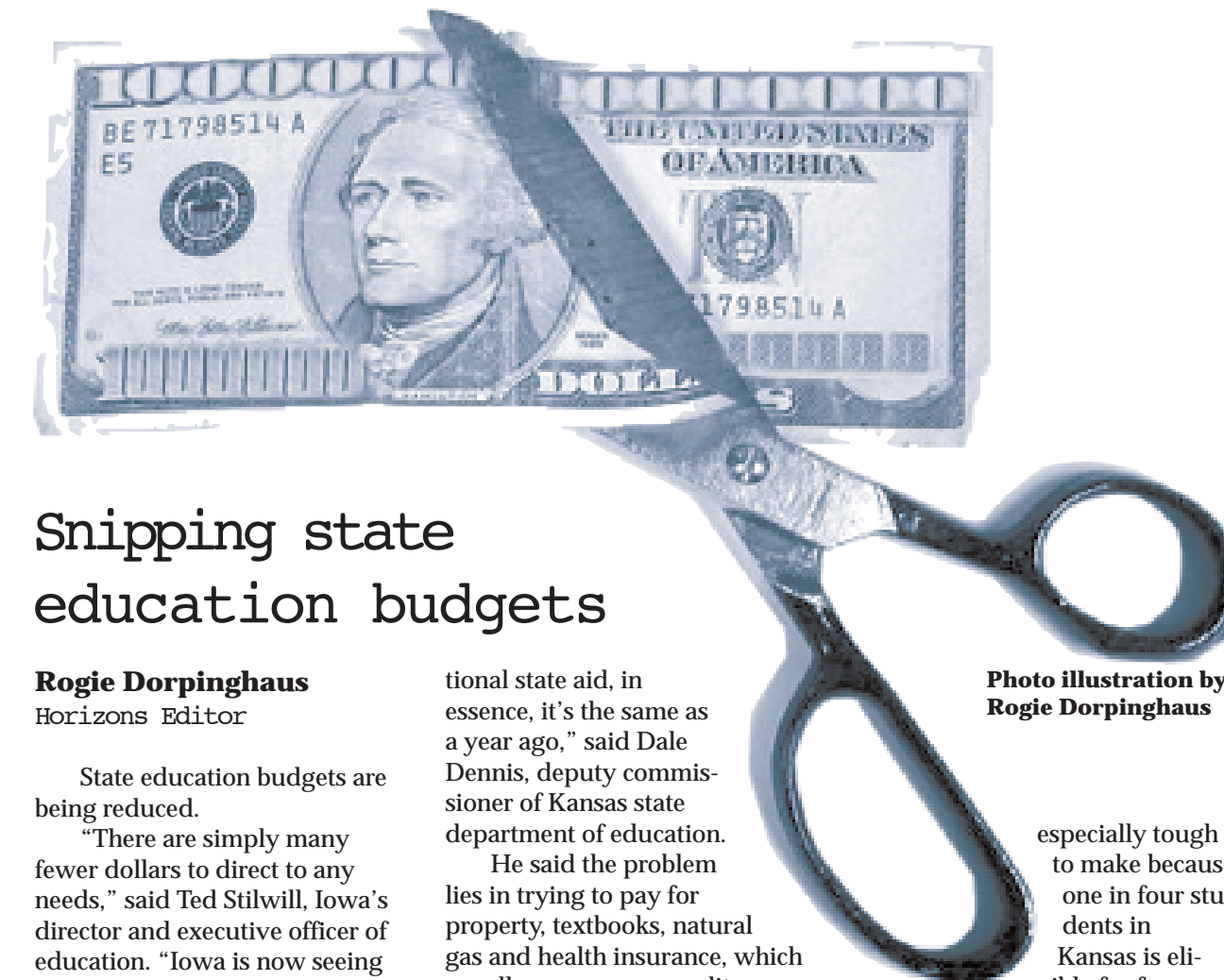


Photo illustration by Rogie Dorpinghaus

## Snipping state education budgets

**Rogie Dorpinghaus**  
Horizons Editor

State education budgets are being reduced.

"There are simply many fewer dollars to direct to any needs," said Ted Stilwill, Iowa's director and executive officer of education. "Iowa is now seeing the lowest levels of tax revenue at any time in the last 30 years. All of the state government in Iowa is operating with at least \$200 million fewer dollars than two years ago."

While Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska's state education departments are all receiving less in their budgets than normal, each state department is advising their state to deal with the current situation uniquely.

**KANSAS**

Kansas is working with a flat revenue this year, which causes problems because expenditures rise.

"This year there is no addi-

tional state aid, in essence, it's the same as a year ago," said Dale Dennis, deputy commissioner of Kansas state department of education.

He said the problem lies in trying to pay for property, textbooks, natural gas and health insurance, which are all necessary expenditures that annually increase in cost.

"There are things we have no choice to buy so when expenditures rise with a flat revenue there is no choice but to cut programs," Dennis said.

While dealing with the budget situation, the state is encouraging districts and boards and administrators to concentrate on students.

"It makes it real tough to make decisions that are best for children when concerned programs are the ones that are not required and are targeted for at risk children," he said.

He said these decisions are

especially tough to make because one in four students in Kansas is eligible for free

lunch.

However, Dennis believes teachers, administrators and board members are concerned and giving 100 percent to try to meet the needs of children with very limited resources.

**MISSOURI**

Missouri is facing a reduction of \$197 million from the amount approved by the legislature for the '03-'04 school year, said Jim Morris, director of public information for Missouri's department for elementary and secondary education.

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"A teacher affects eternity. No one can tell where her/his influence stops."  
- Henry Adams

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# Desegregation case ends after 26 years, \$2 billion in Kansas City

**Rogie Dorpinghaus**  
Horizons Editor

A federal judge ended the desegregation case for Kansas City School District on Aug. 13.

The court mandating desegregation ended in Kansas City when U.S. District Judge Dean Whipple found the school district to have made adequate progress in narrowing the achievement gap between black and white students.

Kansas City was the only district in the country with a specific goal for raising test scores as a condition for release from federal mandating.

U.S. District Judge Russell G. Clark had placed four goals. While not all were met, Whipple said the district had complied in good faith with the court's orders for a reasonable period of time.

The four goals included first to rebuild the dilapidated district; sec-

ondly, to end racial separation through integration; thirdly, to eliminate inferior education for black students; and lastly, to correct the district's inadequate funding situation.

Whipple said the district is unlikely to discriminate against African-American children in the future. And that the district's future depended on whether current and future school board members will put education before politics and whether the leadership of the district will have the courage to resist pressure from those with personal agendas.

Superintendent Bernard Taylor Jr. said the school board is capable of moving the district forward and that is exactly what is going to happen.

A notice of appeal was filed with the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis. The lawyer who filed the notice hopes to get an answer by the end of the year.

Charles McClain has monitored the school district's progress and believes the appeal will fail. He believes this in part because in 1995 the U.S. Supreme Court expressed its exasperation that the case had lasted so long.

The Kansas City Star reported the change in enrollment from 26 years ago. In 1977, 47,000 were enrolled, which 67 percent of which were minority, and there were 30 all-black elementary schools. In 2003, enrollment reduced to 27,150, of which 84 percent is minority, and there are zero all-black elementary schools in the district. However, about a third of the district's elementary schools have fewer than 10 white students.

The case lasted 26 years had court-ordered tax increases and has ultimately cost taxpayers more than \$2 billion.

Sources: The Kansas City Star, The Wichita Eagle



**To Do List**

- ✓ Order cap & gown
- ✓ Apply to colleges

**Attend 2003 Think Tank**  
Kansas City, Mo.  
Oct. 1-4, 2003  
(850) 644-7913  
See Bill Cosby, too  
www.brothersoftheacademy.org/  
Think-Tank

Attention minority high school students: Deconstruct to Reconstruct 2003 Think Tank Conference is for you. It will prepare you with survival skills for a successful college experience. The ultimate purpose is to direct their collective genius in a manner that has a longitudinal effect on the African American community.



## Charter School Conference

Photo by Rogie Dorpinghaus

**Rogie Dorpinghaus**  
Horizons Editor

"People who start charter schools are like missionaries," Steve McClure with University of Missouri Kansas City said.

Charter schools are independent public schools. These schools are sponsored by organizations that monitor quality and effectiveness but allow the school to operate outside the traditional system of public schools.

"They provide choices to individuals," said Charles Rankin, director of Midwest Equity Assistance Center. "Charter and magnet schools are under an umbrella of choice."

Secretary of Education Rod Paige said in a press release about how charter schools are beneficial to parents and children.

"There is no force in the universe more powerful, as far as school change is concerned, than an informed parent with options. Charter schools provide important choices for parents—especially parents whose children are in a school labeled, "in need of improve-

ment"—and help local districts alleviate capacity challenges they face." The Midwest Equity Assistance Center held a charter schools conference in the middle of August at the Kansas City Marriott.

Jed Schwendiman, training consultant for the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, wanted attendees of the conference to walk away with at least two key pieces of information.

"Number one, for the attendants to

working with other people at the conference.

Lee A. Tolbert Community Academy in Kansas City is an example of a charter school that uses different methods outside the traditional public school system.

The academy awards the teachers with a small stipend to visit every home of each student in their class.

Vivian Roper said she started this process at a charter school in New Mexico and said it caught on like wild fire.

"The teachers learn more about the students and what motivates them," Roper said. "Which can be used at times as a vehicle to get the students more involved in school activities."

She said after the first year, the parents expect the teachers to come and some even have dinner ready for the teachers.

"What we've seen as result is parents and teachers becoming friends," Roper said.

"The parents and teachers get unified and when a kid comes home with a twist to a story, the parent will feel

**"There is no force in the universe more powerful, as far as school change is concerned, than an informed parent with options."**

Rod Paige  
Secretary of Education

realize they have access to a lot of resources such as Web sites and other gateways of information. Secondly, for them to develop contacts with each other."

Rod Rathabun is in the process of starting a charter school in Hutchinson and said he benefited greatly from net-

more comfortable to talk to the teacher to see how she saw the situation," she said.

Roper said to maintain parent involvement in the school, each parent signs a contract agreeing to volunteer 20 hours throughout the school year.

According to an Aug. 26 press release from [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov), Iowa will receive a \$1.1 million charter school grant and Kansas will receive a \$2.5 million charter school grant. Both grants are intended to help create more successful examples of independent, innovative public schools and share information on how charter schools work.

"The president knows—and I know—the value of choice and innovation in creating great schools," Paige said. "The demand for high-quality education is everywhere and charter schools can meet that demand in unprecedented ways. These grants will help create even more examples of these innovative, accountable public schools and help us share information on what works."

There are more than 3,000 charter schools serving about 750,000 students this fall nation-wide. Nearly two-thirds of these schools have waiting lists, according to the Web site.

Three years ago, charter schools received \$14 million of federal government funding. For the 2004 fiscal year, President Bush proposed \$320 million for charter schools.

In 2004, there will be 40 states with charter schools.



Photos by Rogie Dorpinghaus