

## BVLEAG summary from 1/28/2016 meeting

BVLEAG (BLue Valley Legislative Education Advisory Group) met for the first time this legislative session last week. Among issues discussed were:

1. As we know, the state budget is in shortfall and K12 education is about half of the state budget so that is a concern.
2. Some terms you may hear discussed:

- a. "Local Control":

Voters have local control of their school district by electing boards of education who hire Supt and make policy. Their constituents are the taxpayers and they can represent local voters' wishes.

Some movements by the legislature would remove or decrease local control. For example, the issue of consolidating school districts - forcing this on local areas represents overtaking local control. Another example is proposal that bond issues would be approved through a state committee before being allowed to be voted on by local voters, and some legislators would take issue with what type of facility the district might want to build (i.e. new athletic complex) - if voters wish to vote to pay for that, that is their decision.

- b. The term "efficiencies"

Just because something is more efficient on paper doesn't mean it is always the best choice. It could be more efficient on paper but may be very unrealistic or unpalatable.

Example: Bus routes. There are bus routes in BVSU area with 40 minute one way rides but have 10-15 empty seats. Would it be more efficient on paper to fill the bus? Yes, and kids would ride over an hour each way to school. BVSD has decided that is not realistic.

Example: Health insurance. This is a big morale issue for employees. Brownback has proposed a state run plan with high deductible to "save money". Save whose money? It will cost employees more out of pocket, and in the long run not save, just the employee bears the cost rather than district. Currently, BVSD spends about \$18 million on health insurance and there are cheaper plans out there but employee satisfaction is important to BVSD. Also, if the insurance is not as good, it costs employees more out of pocket, not saving overall, just saving the district. Employees still pay the costs. Cheaper health insurance is not an efficiency. Insurance and other benefits are part of how the district attracts quality employees.

BVSD is in favor of "efficiencies" as long as they do not sacrifice quality.

## Stand Up Blue Valley

A new parent advocacy group that has formed in the district. Not part of BVPAGE and not part of the school district. SUBV wants to give voters a place to get information about issues and candidates, and help voters know how legislation and their votes impact our schools. Facebook page, website, and twitter.