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Fully-funded, all-day kindergarten in five years?

By RACHEL COLEMAN

• Leader & Times

Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback's announcement Dec. 16, 2013, that he plans to promote — and fund — all-day kindergarten statewide was met with relief and excitement by educators. If Brownback's plan becomes reality, Kansas would become the 12th state nationwide to provide full-day kindergarten at no charge. That's a refreshing change for educators and students, who have seen state funding for education shrink dramatically over the past five years. Between 2008 and now, Kansas cut its education spending by 16.5 percent, a decrease greater than all but three other states.

“At a time when states and the nation are trying to produce workers with the skills to master new technologies and adapt to the complexities of a global economy, this decline in state educational investment is cause for concern,” noted a report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington-based think tank.



PLANNING PROGRESS

As the next USD 480 board of education meeting approaches, a telephone survey continues to gather community input about what the district needs. After more than 30 meetings with 1,000 participants, the board, USD 480 and architectural firm, DLR, felt it best to take a final survey of public opinion.

The board will meet Monday, a Vision Team meeting is set for Jan. 13, "we will mull things over, and then on Jan. 20, we hope to be able to call a vote," outlining final details of a bond issue proposal, said superintendent of schools Paul Larkin.

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