

Special Committee on Education
Attendance Center Closures and USD Disorganization
10/10/2023

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USD 112 Central Plains

I first want to thank the Committee for the invitation to provide information today. I accepted the position of Interim Superintendent June 16, 2022 after a late resignation. I began as Superintendent on July 1, 2022. The Board asked me to continue one more year in October 2022. I am completing my 24th year as Superintendent and my 45 year in education.

School attendance closure is a very difficult decision for a Board of Education. There is no clear guidance or predetermined factors to guide Boards of Education in this decision. This is the first time in my tenure to involved in a closure. I would like to share the history of USD 112, as it will help to give a perspective on how the District determined to make a closure of an attendance center.

Prior to July 1, 1966, there were four districts inside the current district's boundaries:

Holyrood School District – Grades K-12 (Cardinals)

Bushton School District – Grades K-12 (Trojans)

Lorraine School District – Grades K-12 (Huskies)

Wilson School District – Grades K-12 (Dragons)

July 1, 1966 - -USD 328 Lorraine was formed and the 4 districts were combined into one, but still had separate schools. This was because of the Unification Law that was passed in 1963. By 1965, there was state-wide consolidation of 2800 districts down to 284.

Lorraine - The last high school graduating class was May, 1966. By 1973 the Elementary closed as well, due to low enrollment, the majority of the students attended Bushton or Holyrood.

Holyrood and Bushton schools combined to form Quivira Heights in July 1976 - - with the Quivira Heights Elementary/Jr High Students housed in Holyrood – Grades PreK-8.

Quivira Heights High School was housed in Bushton – Grades 9-12. Holyrood High School was closed Bushton Elementary was closed.

Wilson Schools, grades Pk-12 remained the same with no change. Still one school District USD 328.

In 1995 a bond was passed and 3 new buildings were built in Bushton, Holyrood and Wilson. These were medium quality buildings. Not the typical brick and mortar.

USD 328 and USD 354 consolidated on July 1, 2010 and formed USD 112 Central Plains. The district office was located in the town of Lorraine and the USD 354 district office closed in Claflin. The schools in the newly formed district remained the same for one year 2010-2011, with Quivira Heights Elementary/7-8 at Holyrood, Quivira Heights High School at Bushton, Claflin Elementary and Claflin Jr-Sr High School was located at Claflin, and Wilson Schools remained the same for grades PreK-12th at Wilson.

Beginning July 1, 2011, Quivira Heights Elementary/Jr-Hi was changed to Central Plains Elementary for grades Pk-4th, Quivira Heights High School was changed to Central Plains Middle School, for grades 5-8, and Claflin Jr-Sr High School was changed to Central Plains High School, grades 9-12. Claflin Elementary School closed at the end of the school year, 2011. No changes were made at Wilson Schools at Wilson.

On June 30, 2019, Central Plains Middle School at Bushton was closed and the 5th and 6th grades were moved to Central Plains Elementary School in Holyrood, which now housed PreK-6th grade and the 7th and 8th grades were moved to Central Plains High School, which now housed 7-12th grade and became Central Plains Jr-Sr High School. No changes at Wilson. When the Central Plains Middle School at Bushton was closed they had the highest enrollment per grade in the District of 24 per grade.

March of 2022 a motion to combine sports programs between Central Plains and Wilson failed to pass the Board of Education vote.

April 2022 a motion to combine 7-12 Central Plains and Wilson at Central Plains was passed.

At the time of the motion the enrollments were 63 at Wilson 7-12, 75.5 at Wilson Elementary, 190.7 at Central Plains Elementary and 118 at Central Plains 7-12.

On June 30, 2023, Wilson 7-12 school closed, Wilson Elementary School remains open, grades PreK-6th.

The Board of Education gave the same financial reasons to close the 7-12 Wilson attendance center as was used to close the 5-8 attendance center at Bushton 4 years earlier.

1. The Financial condition of the District
2. The District's need to reduce expenses
3. The District's need to gain those efficiencies which can be gained from closing a building.

I have included USD 112 Cash Balances and the 2021-2022 ESSA Building Expenditure Report.

As I began, closing as attendance center is a very difficult decision for a Board of Education.

On August 1, 2023 there was a vote for disorganization of USD 112. The vote failed on 2-1 margin. The District had to pick up the cost of the election, which was just under \$6,000 and would have been 3 times higher if it would have not been held on a primary election vote.

Questions.

Thank you for the opportunity to present.