

## Your Voice Needed on Education Issues



This month marks the start of a new legislative session, one that will be particularly important for education in our state. During this session, legislators will be debating a number of education issues, chief among them a proposed new school funding formula.

How we choose to fund our schools will have a profound impact on the quality of education we're able to provide for our children, and I am sure legislators will have a long and serious debate around this issue.

But school funding won't be the only education issue facing policymakers this session. Last month, educators, policymakers and education stakeholders participated in the Governor's Literacy Summit, focused on how best to meet the Governor's literacy objectives. Those objectives include having 95 percent of fourth grade students achieving or exceeding "Meets Standards" on the state reading assessment by 2013, ranking among the top five states in the nation for average fourth grade reading scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exam by 2014 and being first in the nation in average fourth grade reading scores on the NAEP exam by 2018. Information from the summit will be used to develop an action plan for achieving the state's literacy objectives, and I would expect that elements of that plan will be discussed in the upcoming legislative session.

Another area that will be under discussion is Career and Technical Education. This is an increasingly important part of the education process as we work to ensure that all Kansas students graduate from high school prepared for both college and career. Already work is underway to organize a summit to address Career and Technical Education in Kansas, and I look forward to the opportunity to gather insights and ideas from individuals around the state.

As your representatives discuss these issues that are so important to the education of our children and the future of our state, I hope you will take the time to share your thoughts, concerns and ideas. We ask our legislators and other policymakers to make important decisions regarding the welfare of our state, and they cannot do it without help and input from those they represent. This legislative session, please make your voice heard.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane".

Dr. Diane DeBacker  
Kansas Commissioner of Education