

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF KAN-ED
Dennis R. Stones, Superintendent
PRAIRIE HILLS USD 113
February 14, 2012

I have been asked to testify on behalf of the K-12 membership to provide you with some insight on the implications, and needs that K-12 has for the services, support, and resources provided to school districts through Kan-ed.

I would like to begin by describing our district. Prairie Hills is made up of seven communities in Northeast Kansas. We are primarily farming communities that have several manufacturing companies located within our district. Our student's parents are in all parts of the world selling the products of these businesses. Our students truly do receive a global education. We cover 543 square miles and have a student head count of 1298. We have three buildings in Sabetha and one K-12 building in Wetmore, a Pre/K-12 building in Bern, a 6-12 building in Axtell, and a P/K-5 building in Summerfield. All of our buildings have met AYP for the last several years.

Two districts made the decision to consolidate in order to become more efficient and spend our dollars wisely. We are working to provide the best education for our students for the least amount of dollars, and the telecommunications services, network access and bandwidth provided through Kan-ed contribute in a significant way to our ability to accomplish this goal. When we combined the districts of USD 441 and 488 we created a greater need for distance learning as we reduced teaching positions.

Through Kan-ed we are able to provide courses to all buildings via distance learning technology. As a district in our 2nd year of consolidation, we are very concerned about the possible reductions in Kan-ed funding. We have an Interactive Distance Learning studio in each of our four high schools which allows us to teach the class from one building, while delivering it to the other three high schools. The courses that we are currently teaching over distance learning are as follows: American History, Home Economics, Government, Spanish I & II, World History, and Physics (an example of this would be the Spanish teacher is in Sabetha High school and teaches Spanish to the other three high schools in the district). This allows us to maintain

quality instruction and save on the number of teachers required. Without the Kan-ed system it will greatly hamper our ability to offer the course work students need and deserve in our K-12 facilities. Our IDL classrooms are used for teaching students every period of the day. By utilizing this method of teaching we have been able to cut back on the need for a teacher in each building teaching the same subject, hence, saving money, while maintaining our course offerings to ensure Prairie Hills students all have access to quality instruction.

With our district being so large (543sq. miles) I normally have my administrator meetings early in the morning and utilize the distance learning rooms. This allows our principals to remain in their buildings and cut transportation costs. This is helpful because the buildings are from 15 to 40 miles one way from the district office.

The Kan-ed network is much more than a website – it provides the infrastructure and connectivity for us to connect, and through the statewide contract negotiate circuit costs that would very likely be significantly higher – not just for our district, but for all of the K-12 members who currently secure telecommunications circuits through Kan-ed. The majority of the time, school districts have already compared connection prices, and have chosen to connect through Kan-ed because of the financial benefit.

Undeniably, the services provided to K-12 by Kan-ed cannot be replicated at the local level at the same price. The implication for us is simple – it is mission critical to leverage the statewide network to offer Interactive Distance Learning courses for students, and *to secure affordable telecommunications costs on behalf of all the Kan-ed members.* Our students and their parents are relying on us to do that.

Thank you for your time.

Dennis Stones, Superintendent of USD 113

Kan-ed provides the following valuable applications and resources for preK-12 Kansas Schools: a. network connectivity for Interactive Distance Learning Classes, b. access to the internet, c. educational databases and subscription resources such as encyclopedias, ‘student friendly’ search tools, formative assessment tools for teachers/students, d. Homework help through Tutor.com, and e. a ‘desktop’ portal called the “Empowered Desktop”.

Kan-ed provides 149 physical, network connections to schools/districts across the state to support internet access, distance learning courses, etc. These 149 telecommunications circuits include:

<u>Circuit size</u>	<u>Number of sites</u>	<u>Cost per circuit per mo</u>	<u>Total Cost per Month</u>	
T1	80	\$690	\$55,200	
3 meg	39	\$1,030	\$40,170	
4.5 meg	6	\$1,500	\$9,000	
6 meg	10	\$1,900	\$19,000	
7.5 meg	1	\$2,300	\$2,300	
9 meg	8	\$2,600	\$20,800	
12 meg	3	\$3,400	\$10,200	
20 meg	1	\$3,100	\$3,100	
45 meg	1	\$4,700	\$4,700	
	149		\$164,470	TOTAL COST PER MONTH

You should be aware that Kan-ed submits an E-rate application to receive a 70% discount on the total cost of the circuits outlined above—and the E-rate application process is lengthy, cumbersome, and is subject to annual approval through the SLD. The discounted amount is received thru a reimbursement process. Funding denials/appeals can (and have) impacted Kan-ed’s capacity to receive funding discounts/reimbursements in a timely manner.

One of the primary/compelling reasons for connection to Kan-ed is the cost effectiveness of the connection--the connections that Kan-ed provide are most often the most cost effective way for the schools to connect (whether it be for distance learning, internet access, etc.). In my experience those schools/districts that find more cost effective connection options thru other means do so. It is likely; schools/districts that have a physical telecommunications circuit through Kan-ed would end up paying more to secure network connections individually through local means, than through the state contract secured through Kan-ed. The majority of the time,

school districts have already compared connection prices, and have chosen to connect through Kan-ed for the financial benefit.

1) Schools that have asked Kan-ed to apply for E-rate (federal discount program for internet access) on their behalf have now missed the window for individual school district applications. There are 80 K-12 sites that have T-1 E-rate applications with Kan-ed and 39 K-12 sites that have 3.0mb E-rate applications with Kan-ed...all are filed with the E-rate program and the window has closed. Another 155 K-12 sites file their own E-rate and reference Kan-ed or another entity as their provider...their applications could also potentially be in jeopardy if they referenced E-rating their "connection to the Kan-ed network". There are another 39 K-12 sites that connect through a Kan-ed Authorized Provider. Circuits to the Kan-ed Authorized provider would go away, thereby stranding these school districts with no access to video conferencing resources on the Kan-ed network.

2) The Kan-ed Empowered Desktop hosts multiple applications that K-12 uses heavily. Access to these would go away with termination of the Kan-ed Act, since Kan-ed is the majority "funder" of these statewide aggregated licenses.

- 71,000 active Electronic Backpack users (allows students to store documents online).
- 1.1 million K-12 Gale Database sessions in FY10 and FY11 to date.
- 1.5 million World Book Online sessions in FY10 and FY11 to date.
- Access to the LS Test builder (Customize-able Formative Assessment Tool)

- 420,000 users would not have access to the Kan-ed Empowered Desktop, which also contains safe-search engines, e-mail addresses (epals), other research and education databases, and other services.

3) In FY10 and FY11 (to date), K-12 entities have received over \$1.2 million in grants for video conferencing technologies.

4) Access to 1-800 E-Rate Help Desk Support and four state-wide annual E-Rate training workshops would stop.

5) Access to the Kan-ed Live Tutor would be gone (over 67,000 one-on-one tutoring sessions for K-12 subjects in FY10 and FY11 to date).

6) Access to video conference/distance learning technology/software scheduler – Over 72,000 sessions in FY10 and projected through FY11. A high percentage of these are K-12 based sessions where one teacher is teaching at her home site and two or three "away" sites using video.

The following are some more "generic" points about the Kan-ed program:

1) Kan-ed connects over 440 members (K-12 schools, Libraries, Hospitals and Higher Education) with daily internet access and access to a private network (leased from AT&T) for distance learning and telemedicine. This is essentially a "commercially" run network. A public-private partnership. Kan-ed partners with over 20 private telecom companies to provide high-speed internet to our members. The private industry also provides our network operations

center (KanREN in Lawrence). A conservative estimate is that at least 20 high-tech jobs would be impacted by elimination of Kan-ed. Kan-ed administrative overhead is about 7.5%. ALL of Kan-ed services are purchased or leased from private companies.

2) Kan-ed has provided over \$21 million directly to Kan-ed member institutions in the form of technology grants. This has been critical to keep our members up with changing technology...including distance learning and telemedicine. Close to another \$500,000 has been provided to KANSAS phone companies for the direct purpose of enhancing their networks to support access to Kan-ed. Kan-ed has provided the Regents universities with over \$1,000,000 in grants to support the new high-speed KanREN network that university researchers at KU and K-State use most heavily. The rural telephone companies have just announced a partnership with AT&T to implement the same technology Kan-ed uses. This will INCREASE the amount of private companies that can connect with Kan-ed.

3) Kan-ed has RETURNED federal dollars that were not right for the State of Kansas and had too many strings attached. Kan-ed has not requested any budget increase from the State since inception in CY2003. Kan-ed has been prudent with budgeted funds and has made decisions based on our mission and our ability to live off our base funding...not on grant parameters from the federal government. We also work closely with the FCC and KCC, who both recognize Kan-ed as an official eligible telecom entity.

4) Kansas Universal Service Fund (KUSF) which currently funds Kan-ed at \$10,000,000 per year is assessed through an "average" \$.25 per phone line per month assessment on a monthly phone bill. If Kan-ed were eliminated, then the rate collected would be reduced by the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC). There would be no transfer of KUSF funds to the SGF. Therefore, the bill killing Kan-ed would result in ZERO savings to the State of Kansas General Fund (SGF) and TREMENDOUS pain to the Kan-ed membership.

5) Kan-ed also collects and surveys our members for aggregated demand and then provides critical access to those services with statewide licenses for educational and research databases...for example, we provide the "ProQuest Nursing Journal" which meets a required resource criteria for public and private higher education institutions that have accredited nursing programs. Our members also have access to Worldbook Online and several critical Gale database titles.

6) Kan-ed provides a website portal where Kan-ed members can go for information and enhanced services. Over 420,000 members have user accounts on the Kan-ed Empowered Desktop portal. Schools and district administrators have access to formative tests, quizzes, and district-wide results (optional fee service), and have access to a safe search engine as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act. Kan-ed also provides CIPA filtering at the network level to further reduce K-12 and Library filtering costs. Kan-ed also

provides students, staff and faculty with an online "backpack" to store documents and files so they can access them anywhere they are! Not all students (especially those in rural areas) have access to a PC at home.