



# EDUCATION FOUNDATION

LINCOLN COUNTY R-III

October 10, 2016

Dear friends,

Historically, public education has played a key role in growing the middle class and ensuring that all children, regardless of their backgrounds (including the zip code in which they live), have an opportunity to achieve at high levels. Unfortunately, the nation's current school finance system — primarily based on local property taxes — exacerbates rather than improves resource disparities between communities with wildly varying factors such as average household income, prevailing tax rates, locally assessed property valuation, and local business industry that supports a school's tax base.

In conversations throughout our community, my colleagues and I often hear "I pay my taxes, that should be enough." But frankly, for a stark reality of many public school systems, it isn't. Take, for example, our school district – Lincoln County R-III. Encompassing 238 square miles, three municipalities, and serving 6,461 students, when we compare R-III to other districts our size (plus or minus 1,000 students), the facts are disconcerting. There are 10 school districts in Missouri that have 1,000+/- students as compared to R-III. Those range from Pattonville with 5,699 students to Hickman Mills with 6,731.

- Lincoln County R-III ranks 8<sup>th</sup> largest (out of 10) with 6,461 students.
- Lincoln County R-III ranks 4<sup>th</sup> lowest (out of 10) in terms of assessed property valuation at ~\$455,000,000.
- Lincoln County R-III ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest (out of 10) in terms of dollars per pupil spent annually. In fact, at \$8,744.75 dollars per student, we are well below the Missouri state average of \$10,313.72 dollars spent per student.

To simplify, R-III is one of the largest districts with one of the lowest assessed property valuations and is nearly dead last in dollars spent per student compared to other districts our size.†

And that's just the numbers.

In 1635, our nation's first public school was founded in Boston with philanthropic support of businesses and citizens that desired a more educated population and work-force as our young nation took shape. For the next 250 years, these schools focused on educating youth in reading, writing, arithmetic, history, science and geography. During that period, society looked to our families and churches to raise our children. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, things began change; we began to look to our schools to fulfill the burden of more and more non-academic responsibilities of "raising our kids."

I encourage you to review the enclosed brochure ***"The Ever Increasing Burden on America's Public Schools."*** It articulates a worrying story. The number of matters our public school systems have become responsible for in the last 120 years is staggering. And throughout that increase in responsibility, dollars and time have become stretched – almost to a breaking point.

According to a recent National Bureau of Economic Research study, a “20 percent increase in per-pupil spending each year for all 12 years of public school is associated with nearly a full additional year of completed education, 25 percent higher earnings for those students, and a 20 percentage-point reduction in the annual incidence of poverty in adulthood.” Shouldn’t we all want these kind of results for our kids?

So no, our taxes *aren’t* enough. Our kids deserve more. Our community deserves more. We believe, as an organization, that it is all connected. Successful public schools drive student achievement which reduces crime, incarcerations, and overall welfare costs in our community. Quality public schools motivate community growth by attracting and maintaining quality, well-paying employers and talented people we need to run our businesses, schools, and other organizations. With these increased resources, our residents have more choices for goods, services, entertainment, and recreation. Our local economy improves. Our property values increase. Our community flourishes. Locally and nationwide, it is time for a recommitment to philanthropic support for our public schools.

The Lincoln County R-III Education Foundation has the power to unite our community in support of building an extraordinary, world-class public education system right here at home. The Lincoln County R-III School District is often recognized for its commitment to excellence, but tax dollars alone are not enough to keep our district on the leading edge of educational opportunities for the thousands of students in our region.

With the continued support of the community through your Education Foundation, our students can be fully prepared to become leaders locally and nationally in ways that can change the world.

I hope you’ll stand with us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robb".

Robb Krieg  
President

† Comparable school district data source: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

# The Ever Increasing Burden on America's Public Schools

BY JAMIE ROBERT VOLLMER

America's public schools can be traced back to the year 1640. The Massachusetts Puritans established schools to: 1) Teach basic reading, some writing and arithmetic skills, and 2) Cultivate values that serve a democratic society (some history and civics implied).

The founders of these schools assumed that families and churches bore the major responsibility for raising a child. Gradually, science and geography were added, but the curriculum was limited and remained focused for 260 years.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, politicians, academics, members of the clergy, and business leaders saw public schools as a logical site for the assimilation of immigrants and the social engineering of the citizens—and workers—of the new industrial age. They began to expand the curriculum and assign additional duties. That trend has accelerated ever since.

---

## From 1900 to 1910, we shifted to our public schools responsibilities related to

- Nutrition
- Immunization
- Health (Activities in the health arena multiply every year.)

---

## From 1910 to 1930, we added

- Physical education (including organized athletics)
- The Practical Arts/Domestic Science/Home economics (including sewing and cooking)
- Vocational education (including industrial and agricultural education)
- Mandated school transportation

---

## In the 1940s, we added

- Business education (including typing, shorthand, and bookkeeping)
- Art and music
- Speech and drama
- Half-day kindergarten
- School lunch programs (We take this for granted today, but it was a huge step to shift to the schools the job of feeding America's children one third of their daily meals.)

---

## In the 1950s, we added

- Expanded science and math education
- Safety education
- Driver's education
- Expanded music and art education
- Stronger foreign language requirements
- Sex education (Topics continue to escalate.)

---

## In the 1960s, we added

- Advanced Placement programs
- Head Start
- Title I
- Adult education
- Consumer education (purchasing resources, rights and responsibilities)
- Career education (occupational options, entry level skill requirements)
- Peace, leisure, and recreation education [Loved those sixties.]

---

## **In the 1970s, the breakup of the American family accelerated, and we added**

- Drug and alcohol abuse education
- Parenting education (techniques and tools for healthy parenting)
- Behavior adjustment classes (including classroom and communication skills)
- Character education
- Special education (mandated by federal government)
- Title IX programs (greatly expanded athletic programs for girls)
- Environmental education
- Women's studies
- African-American heritage education
- School breakfast programs (Now some schools feed America's children two-thirds of their daily meals throughout the school year and all summer. Sadly, these are the only decent meals some children receive.)

---

## **In the 1980s, the floodgates opened, and we added**

- Keyboarding and computer education
- Global education
- Multicultural/Ethnic education
- Nonsexist education
- English-as-a-second-language and bilingual education
- Teen pregnancy awareness
- Hispanic heritage education
- Early childhood education
- Jump Start, Early Start, Even Start, and Prime Start
- Full-day kindergarten
- Preschool programs for children at risk
- After-school programs for children of working parents
- Alternative education in all its forms
- Stranger/danger education
- Antismoking education
- Sexual abuse prevention education
- Expanded health and psychological services
- Child abuse monitoring (a legal requirement for all teachers)

---

## **In the 1990s, we added**

- Conflict resolution and peer mediation
- HIV/AIDS education
- CPR training
- Death education
- America 2000 initiatives (Republican)
- Inclusion
- Expanded computer and internet education
- Distance learning
- Tech Prep and School to Work programs
- Technical Adequacy
- Assessment
- Post-secondary enrollment options
- Concurrent enrollment options
- Goals 2000 initiatives (Democrat)
- Expanded Talented and Gifted opportunities
- At risk and dropout prevention
- Homeless education (including causes and effects on children)
- Gang education (urban centers)
- Service learning
- Bus safety, bicycle safety, gun safety, and water safety education

---

## **In the first decade of the twenty-first century, we have added**

- No Child Left Behind (Republican)
- Bully prevention
- Anti-harassment policies (gender, race, religion, or national origin)
- Expanded early childcare and wrap around programs
- Elevator and escalator safety instruction
- Body Mass Index evaluation (obesity monitoring)
- Organ donor education and awareness programs
- Personal financial literacy
- Entrepreneurial and innovation skills development
- Media literacy development
- Contextual learning skill development
- Health and wellness programs
- Race to the Top (Democrat)

---

This list does not include the addition of multiple, specialized topics within each of the traditional subjects. It also does not include the explosion of standardized testing and test prep activities, or any of the onerous reporting requirements imposed by the federal government, such as four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates, parental notification of optional supplemental services, comprehensive restructuring plans, and reports of Adequate Yearly Progress.

It's a ponderous list.

Each item has merit, and all have their ardent supporters, but the truth is that we have added these responsibilities without adding a single minute to the school calendar in six decades. No generation of teachers and administrators in the history of the world has been told to fulfill this mandate: not just teach children, but raise them!