**Sample Letter to the Editor**

To: *Junction City Daily Union*

Dear Editor,

          There is a robbery in progress! The students of USD 475 are being robbed! The

suspects include the State Budget Cuts, but all evidence points to the Board of Education and the administrators in this district. The money that should be used to benefit the students is in the greedy hands of the administration instead.

          Clearly, Unified School District #475 is going to be affected by the Kansas State

Budget cuts, along with the rest of the districts in the state. I'm not sure about the other districts, but USD 475 may have a simple solution: Reallocation of the budget and a new set of administrators and school board members who value children's education rather than nepotism and administrative salaries.

          Junction City's school district isn't known for its bright decisions regarding

funds. A few recent endeavors include the purchase of a brand-new Ford Expedition a

year or two ago, the move to a different Administrative Building that happens to be in a

much more lavish location, and the decision to build an enclosed walkway for students

between the high school and the former Administrative Building, which is to be used for more classrooms. These decisions, however foolish, are still not the main cause for a budget problem. The administrative costs are to blame. When compared to districts of similar size, USD 475 uses dramatically more money simply for administration. Even

disregarding the percentages, although USD 475 has a smaller budget than 305 (Salina) and 383 (Manhattan), it allocates more money for administration (Salina spends

$3,843,180 of their $68,267,944 budget; Manhattan $3,043,885 of their $47,298,811

budget, and Junction City $4,142,284 of their $45,743,233 budget). During the 2000-

2001 school year, USD 475 used 9 of the total budget for administrative costs, while

Manhattan and Salina seemed to be able to get by with only 6 of their budget being

used for that reason. They were able to use 50-51 of the total budget for actual

instruction, while USD 475 was only able to allot 46. This is an outrageous allocation of

the budget, but the issue doesn't end there. Both Salina and Manhattan school districts are comparable in size to Junction City's, but it is very difficult to understand why Manhattan can get along with 3 central administrators, Salina has 1.2, and Junction City claims to require 7.5. It's no wonder the administrative monetary "needs" are so high, I won't even touch on the issue of a single family dominating the entire district.

          It may appear that the 3 differences in money allotted for administration isn't all

that significant. However, when it is put into monetary terms, if the administrative costs

were cut by 1/3, which puts the percentage of the budget for administration at 6 like

Salina and Manhattan, there is an additional $1.4 million dollars that could be better

allocated. That is a large sum of money that would be better spent on children's

education, not on the inflated salaries of a large number of administrators.

          As stated earlier, the school district's budget problems, on the surface, seem to be the result of budget cuts and lack of money. The true problem, however, is the

misallocation of money and the absurd number of administrators in this particular

district. By simply eliminating the unessential administrators (and in my opinion

replacing the chief administrators with people that have true devotion to the students

and the community) and reallocation of the budget, the deficiency of money won't be

such a tough issue. Who knows, with the right people writing the budget, we might even be able to allot at least 50 of the money for instruction, like everyone else does. Some   people may argue that it isn't the misallocation of the money that proves to be the problem, that it is the lack of money altogether. I still believe that with the appropriate cutbacks in specific areas, particularly administrative costs, the students will be better off. The School District is supposed to be teaching the children; let's put some money towards that for a change. All of the information that has been presented can be found on the internet on the Kansas State Department of Education webpage. Don't take my word for it; look at the statistics and budget information for yourself. I'm sure it will shock and disturb you as much as it did me.

Sincerely,

Sally Smith