

Insight on Education

By Superintendent Nick Carter, Ed.D

"Public education is an investment in our future.."–*Matt Blunt*

Properly funding public education in the commonwealth of Kentucky continues to be sharply debated among elected leaders and citizens. While many agree and disagree over this issue, we all agree that education matters for our children. Over the years, the Breckinridge County School District has been able to provide terrific educational opportunities for our children due to the community's value and investment placed on education. Over the past decade, our school district and the others in Kentucky have faced some of the largest funding cuts in the nation. Kentucky has cut public education funding by 13.1% since 2008, which is only behind Alabama and Oklahoma for the largest cuts during that time period. Major areas of state funding cuts have come in the areas of student transportation (funded around 58% in Breckinridge County), state required professional development for teachers (0% funded), and textbooks for students (0% funded). Kindergarten is only half day funded by the state of Kentucky, which requires our school district to fund the other half.

Federal funding for public education has been decreasing for the past five years. Programs like after school tutoring and Head Start services for our youngest learners have taken major cuts over that time period. Head Start isn't currently funded enough on the federal level to pay for itself in our school district. Services like school bus transportation, kindergarten for all children in Breckinridge County, and Head Start services for our young children who qualify are vitally important to our community. Revenue for school districts in Kentucky comes from the local (33.1%), state (54.9%), and federal levels (12%). Cuts to state and federal funding for public education over the last decade with issues like increasing utility costs, transportation costs, and pension costs have proved to be very challenging and problematic for local school districts like Breckinridge County.

Moving forward, we must engage our elected leaders in serious conversations about tax reform and adequately funding public education. Our children are preparing for their eventual admittance into the complex, challenging, and demanding 21st century global workforce. Ensuring that our children receive the very best educational opportunities in excellent facilities is

a duty that all of us take seriously. Our focus on children is apparent in Breckinridge County and is evidenced by the fact that all of us agree that there is no better place to live and raise our children. We are blessed in the school district to serve some of the most talented children in the commonwealth. Together, we can ensure the very best learning opportunities for our Breckinridge County children.