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By RACHEL COLEMAN

- Leader & Times

The USD 480 school board meeting at 6:30 this evening will be jam-packed with numbers: reports from administration and staff, and figures from various government entities. In many ways, the numbers may paint a vivid picture of the district as the 2013-14 school year continues to gain steam.



Among tonight's facts and figures:

- Number of new teachers who came to the district from Kansas: 28, by far the greatest amount in comparison to the number of teachers moving to Liberal from 20 other states, and two other countries, according to director of Human Resources Jason McAfee.
- Number by which district enrollment has increased for the current school year: 57 more students thus far, in comparison to last year's numbers, according to McAfee.
- Number of new staff currently in the process of getting licensure to teach in the state of

Kansas: 45, according to director of curriculum and staff development Lana Evans. All have passed their background checks and are waiting for KSDE to approve applications.

- Number of students enrolled in the district's eight after-school programs — Project ROCK, Project SOAR and Project BEST — operating for elementary and intermediate schools: 529, according to director of federal programs Sheri King. The programs, funded by special grants, charge parents according to income level, for enhancement programs offered from 3:30 to 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

- Number of district students living below the poverty line: at least 20 percent, according to census bureau statistics presented by King. Because USD 480 contains so many children ages 5 to 17 from families below the poverty line, the district was granted an additional \$50,537 for specific educational purposes.

- Improvement in ACT (college entrance) test scores over a five-year period at Liberal High School: nearly one point total, with average composite scores rising from 19.3 in 2009 to 19.9 in 2013. These scores, based on English, math, reading and science subtests, increased while the state of Kansas average dropped very slightly, by one-tenth of a point, to 21.8. The highest possible ACT score is 36, and the national average hovers around 20. Assistant superintendent Renae Hickert provided board members with a complete report, at their request.

Along with the full roster of figure-packed reports, the board will receive hefty donations from local organizations. McDermott Booster Club has donated \$19,500 for the purchase of the turf field at McDermott Elementary. MacArthur Booster Club has donated a total of \$23,755 for a sign at MacArthur. \$16,848.50 was paid directly to the vendor Luminous Neon and the other \$6,906.50 will be paid to USD 480. Finally, the local Black History Committee donated \$300 for autism educational programs.

Tonight's board meeting will also include a discussion item about the district's future facility needs and financing. The school board is scheduled to appear at the Liberal City Commission meeting Tuesday night, to present a proposal about the issue.

In accordance with Kansas state law, the school board meeting is open to the public. It begins at 6:30 p.m. at the Education Service Center, 624 N. Grant. The agenda is posted for public

viewing on the district's website, www.usd480.net.

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