

USD 113 issues response to land transfer petition

(KMZA)--Prairie Hills USD 113 has issued a statement regarding the Nemaha Central USD 115 Board of Education's approval of a resolution authorizing the filing of a petition with the Kansas State Board of Education for the transfer of certain land from Prairie Hills USD 113 to USD 115.

Following the school board's approval February 12, USD 113, on Thursday, released its response, saying that the district has been made aware of the petition, meaning the district will "continue to assess the implications of such a proposal on [USD 113's] educational community," adding that "the board of education is working to ensure a thorough understanding of the potential impact on students and the current and future educational environment."

USD 113 Superintendent Todd Evans, in the release, stated that the school district is "committed to maintaining the integrity and continuity of education for our students," with Evans adding that the school district "continues to work collaboratively to address this matter in the best interest of our students and their families."

The school board for USD 115 approved the resolution following an executive session during the February 12 meeting, with the decision coming after mediation efforts between the two sides failed.

Editors note:Below is the full response from USD 113.

Prairie Hills, Unified School District 113, has been made aware that Nemaha Central, Unified School District 115, has officially filed a petition with the Kansas State Board of Education seeking approval for the acquisition of land within the USD 113 school district.

This development has prompted Prairie Hills USD 113 to continue to assess the implications of such a proposal on our educational community. The board of education is working to ensure a thorough understanding of the potential impact on students and the current and future educational environment.

Superintendent Todd Evans stated, "We are committed to maintaining the integrity and continuity of education for our students. Prairie Hills, USD 113, continues to work collaboratively to address this matter in the best interest of our students and their families."

In addition to other supporting information, the USD 113 Board of Education, holds the following positions and beliefs that are relevant to this situation:

- **USD 113 has attempted to reasonably trade district property as a resolution to this dispute. USD 115 has been unwilling to offer any trade, even pennies on the dollar, for the land that is petitioned.**
- **Because of the intricacies of the Kansas State Aid Equalization Formula, a transfer of land to USD 115 would reduce USD 115 local property taxes for the Local Option Budget (LOB). This would come at the expense of Kansas taxpayers statewide because it would result in USD 113 qualifying for additional LOB state aid.**
- **In the 2022-23 school year, KSDE reported that Nemaha Central had 123 out of district students enrolled. In the 2022-23 school year, KSDE reports that Prairie Hills had 123 out of district students enrolled. Not only do both districts support the same number of out of district students, but open enrollment, if districts have capacity, will be a legal requirement starting with the 2024-25 school year.**
- **Concerns exist about the capacity of USD 115 to educate all of the children in the requested area based on past denials of out of district students.**

Prairie Hills, USD 113, will be closely monitoring the situation and providing updates as necessary. Further information and updates will be made available on the school district's official website and through other communication channels.

Many Signals Communications