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**Senate Education Committee
Testimony on Innovation and Excellence in Kansas' schools**

**Stafford Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Center
(SEED Center)**

**Mary Jo Taylor, Superintendent
Stafford USD 349**

Tuesday, January 24, 2012

In April of 2005, the State Board of Education approved USD 349's application to begin a charter school. The purpose of the application was to start a school that would meet the needs of particular students in USD 349. In order to understand the prevailing culture, a short background of the community is in order.

Background: At that time, our rural district consisted of 306 students. We are located in Central Kansas, and our economic anchor is agriculture. Like many small communities, our students graduate from high school, enter the next phase of their life, whether it be post secondary education, military, or work. Very few students returned to the community after completing their post secondary phase. Many students' education or job skills prepare them for life in a larger community. However, with the advent of technology, reasonably priced housing, and a rural lifestyle that many families value, Stafford or any small community could be a destination for families. What is the main barrier to return to rural Kansas? In a survey with students, they confirmed what we already know. Jobs. It is generally accepted knowledge that if business is going to survive in a rural environment, it will be an entrepreneurship. The next logical question becomes: How does one learn to become an entrepreneur?

It was with that philosophy that the Stafford USD 349 Board of Education granted permission to this project. The primary thing that sets the SEED Center apart from an entrepreneur class is that the student actually *develops, plans, and implements* their own business. It is not a simulation.

One of the barriers to beginning this adventure was financial. Even though the State BOE granted permission for our SEED Center, there was no money available that year. We decided to proceed, anyway. A specific component of the SEED plan was that it be located as a storefront, downtown, like any other business. A local patron donated this building to our cause. Small grants were applied for and donations accepted. The second year, the district applied for, and received Reserve Funding from the State of \$150,000. This was a tremendous help in acquiring sorely needed resources. The only other grant money we have received was a dissemination grant from the state for \$13,976.

The school dropped its Charter Status in 2009, is now an approved Career Pathway, and receives .5 state funding. The first year the center started with 4 students and a part time teacher. Today, SEED students number 25 (out of 74 high school students).

SEED "Nuts and Bolts"

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Stafford High School Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors may take elective classes at the SEED Center. Stafford SEED Center is located in an historic building on Main Street. The downtown location includes a desk/office area for the teacher, a desk/work station for each student, a conference room area, and a workroom area.

Stafford's SEED Center has been fully approved as a Career and Technical Education Marketing Management Program. The Marketing Management Pathway has the following course sequence: Business Essentials, Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Accounting, Business Management, and Marketing Management.

The Stafford Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (SEED) Program is an innovative approach for meeting the educational and school-to-work preparation needs of high school students. Students will learn entrepreneurship and marketing principles while participating in individual and group projects. The student will operate an entrepreneurship project and utilize marketing strategies to promote his/her business project. Students are allowed to keep 70% of their net profits.

Upon completion, the student will understand the concepts of entrepreneurship, local business opportunities, feasibility and business planning, types of business ownership and the legal environment of business. The student will identify and develop an individual entrepreneurship project and will finalize a business plan. The student will participate in a group economic development project. The student will understand and demonstrate employment, communication, and technology skills.

How can the SEED Program cultivate students' success?

- Work independently and in teams
- Learn what it takes to start your own business
- Students will benefit from learning 21st century skills in a practical, real-world, downtown office/business setting
- Gain confidence through "real life" work experience
- The facility includes a desk/work station for each student, a conference room area, and a workroom area

Each student may choose to operate a sole proprietorship or a partnership. The student, instructor, administration and parent or guardian must approve the business idea. Students learn to operate the equipment needed for the business they choose to create.

Students greet customers and/or visitors as they enter the SEED Center. The students take turns answering the telephone and relay messages to other students or the instructor.

Curriculum Objectives:

Research and Develop an Entrepreneurial Opportunity Based on Students' Interests. All of these components are taken into consideration when the student, parent, and teacher agree on the student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

- Create a Business Concept that Lists the Products and Corresponding Tangible and Intangible Benefits of a Product and/or Service
- Study the Competition and Complete a Competitive Grid
- Develop a Logo and Slogan for Student's Business
- Identify the Tangible and Intangible Benefits of the Products and/or Services of the Student Business

A completed business plan with marketing components is required for each sole proprietorship and/or partnership.

The business plan includes the following components. The students market their products and/or services.

Complete a Business Plan for a Student Business

- a. Develop a Management Team Plan
- b. Describe the Student Business in the Company Description
- c. Develop a Product and Service Plan
- d. Prepare Vision and Mission Statements for the Student Business
- e. Prepare an Industry Overview
- f. Research City, County and State Regulations in Regards to Zoning and Small Business Regulations
- g. Research Student Business Industry Category at the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics Website
- h. Determine the Trends and the Long-Term Outlook for Student Business

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- i. Prepare the Market Analysis
- j. Prepare the Competitive Analysis
- k. Prepare the Marketing Plan
- l. Prepare the Operational Plan
- m. Prepare the Organizational Plan
 - i. Review the Four Types of Taxes Business Owners are Responsible For
 - ii. Review and Calculate Sales Tax
 - iii. Study and Discuss the Types of Business Ownership
 - iv. Review Labor Posters Required by State and Federal Law
- n. Prepare the Financial Plan
- o. Prepare the Growth Plan
- p. Prepare the Contingency Plan
- q. Prepare the Supporting Documents
- r. Prepare the Executive Summary
- s. Package the Business Plan: Prepare the Cover Page, Title Page and Table of Contents

Study and Discuss the Demographics of Stafford

Review and Discuss the Main Street Market Analysis

Study Market Segmentation

- Geographics
- Demographics
- Psychographics

List City and County Statistics for Student Market Segmentation

Identify the Target Market for the Student Business

Students meet with customers and complete an agreement for professional services. Students get to keep seventy percent of the net profit after meeting all expenses.

Customer Service

Prepare Agreement for Professional Product/Services

- List Service/Product
- Timeline
- Pricing
- Terms of Payment

Recordkeeping

- Create Order Form and Price Sheet for Student Business
 - Create Invoices
 - Accounts Receivable
 - Establish Accounts for Ordering Supplies
 - Order Supplies
- Prepare Financial Spreadsheets

Participation Objectives and Assessment Rubric:

Students earn weekly participation grades. A rubric measures the students in the following areas with the optimum performance stated:

Attendance/Promptness: Student always arrives on time and regularly attends class.

Level of Engagement in Class: Student frequently proactively contributes to class by offering ideas and asking questions.

Cooperative Attitude Assessment: Help in Areas Where Needed, Positive Attitude.

Level of Engagement in Achieving Weekly Goals: Student proactively works to accomplish weekly goals. Student takes initiative in running their business.

Performance skills assessed include: Quality, Timeline, Business Etiquette, Effective Verbal & Written Communication.

Listening Skills: Student listens when others talk. Student incorporates or builds off the ideas of others. Student positively accepts criticism.

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Behavior: Student never displays disruptive behavior during class.

Preparation: Student is always prepared for class assignments and required class materials.

Students have organized and planned the following types of businesses:

Laser Engraving:

Students design and create laser engraved wooden and acrylic award plaques, exterior and interior signage, wooden pen box sets, necklaces and bracelets, picture frames, key chains, license plates, self-inking personalized address stamps, and anodized aluminum id and pet tags.

Specialized laser engraved items students produce includes gift soaps, personalized leather belts, coasters, and dog collars. Students also etch on glassware, mirrors, and marble.

Garment Printing:

Students print custom designs on t-shirts, sweatshirts, and tote bags. Individualized custom items students produce include infant apparel, dog t-shirts, spirit towels, personalized tea towels, and printed aprons.

Custom Team Apparel:

Students provide the application of names, mascots, and numbers to team apparel on many different garment types and colors.

Printing:

Students design and print laminated posters, vinyl banners with grommets, printed wedding invitations and response envelopes, business cards, sport schedules, address labels, scanned photo cards, booklets, newsletters, fliers, picture collages, programs, postcards, calendars, vehicle magnets, bookmarks, and printed and bound school planners. Students design custom logos.

Photo Editing and Photography:

Digital and traditional backdrops may be used. Photo editing and printing of photos on various media is available.

Digital Conversion and Movie Creation:

Students provide a service to the community by converting VHS tapes, 8mm tapes, kodachrome slides, and scanned or digital pictures to DVD's utilizing a digital converter and iMovie. Students may add transitions, titles, voice and music to the projects.

Secondhand Store:

Three students enrolled in the SEED Center, operate Closet Comebacks, a second hand store located in the SEED Center on the second level. The second hand store has a wide variety of items including clothing for all seasons, shoes, household items, toys, seasonal decorations and antiques. New items arrive weekly. Donations are accepted during class time or you may call to schedule a pick-up in the City of Stafford.

Airbrushing, Rhinestone and Appliqués:

Students add bling to garments with custom airbrush and rhinestone appliqué.

Candles and Lotions:

Students create hand poured candles with many different scents and colors. Students prepare whipped lotions with custom scents.

Accent and Accessory Items:

Students offer many different colors of sequin and crochet headbands, flower clips, and custom spirit bracelets.

Economic Development and Community Service:

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Students are expected to participate in community organizations and economic development efforts in Stafford and Stafford County.

Community Service and Participation:

Chamber of Commerce Coffee Host
Chamber of Commerce Coffee Weekly Participant
Chamber of Commerce Board, Student Member
Stafford County Fair Float Participant, Chamber of Commerce
Stafford Oktoberfest Float Participant, Main Street
Stafford Oktoberfest Booth, Participants
Pelican Pete Main Street Fundraiser, Student Volunteers
Stafford Main Street Committee, Student Member
Main Street Historical Tour iMovie, Student Creator
Stafford Oktoberfest Alumni PowerPoint, Student Creator and Presenter
Stafford Oktoberfest Musical Entertainment, Student Participation
Stafford Senior Center Meetings, Student Presentations
Stafford Lions Club Meetings, Student and Instructor Presentations
Stafford Christian Church, Student Presentation
Parent Teacher Conference Business Expo, Student Presentations
PRIDE Health Fest at Rock Springs, Student Participation
PRIDE Recycling, Student Participation
PRIDE Bike and Hike, Student Volunteers
Stafford Elementary Bike Inspections, Student Volunteers
Stafford Main Street Marketing Two-Day Workshop, Student Participation
SEED Center Tours to Local Organizations, Leadership Groups, South Central Tourism Organization, ESSDACK Staff, Many Kansas High Schools, Charter Schools and Business Groups
Stafford Main Street Four Night Business Plan Workshop, Student Presenters
Stafford Main Street Planter Decorating Contest Participant
Stafford Chamber of Commerce Soup Supper Volunteers
Stafford Main Street Customer Appreciation Project, Volunteers
Pratt Area Student Job-A-Thon, Presenters
KASB Regional Meeting Presentation
Community Chocolate Festival, Student Volunteer
Breast Cancer Golf Tournament, Donated Awards
Stafford After Prom, Donated Prizes
SEED Center Equipment Maintenance and Cleaning, Students and Instructor
First Baptist Church, PowerPoint Creation
Hudson UMB Bank Relay for Life Craft Fair

Stafford High USD 349 SEED Center Student Businesses 2005-2012:

Accounting
Trojan Times School Newspaper
Video Transfer Service
Remote Control Airplane Production and Sales
Custom Made Spa Products
Clothing Line
Vehicle Detailing and Maintenance Inspection
Personal Trainer
Julio's Prints: Custom Logo Creation and Print Advertising
Bravo's Printing Service: Posters, Banners, Brochures, Flyers, Business Cards
Colt's Small Engine Repair
SCAD Custom Garment Printing
[Snapshot]*uniquely you (Photo Editing, Note Cards & Calendars)
VHS to DVD Easy As 1-2-3
Emily's Engravable Graphics
Ashley's Engraving

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Easy Printing (Towels, Aprons & T-Shirts)
 Bull's Eye Posters
 Melissa's Designs: Custom Printing and Designs
 Michaela's Magic Custom Engraving
 D's Country Carvings (Laser Engraved Personalized Barn Wood Signs, Mirror & Marble Etching)
 Stueve-D VHS TO DVD
 Wickedly Smooth (Spa Products and Candles)
 Waters' This and That (Design and Printing)
 Custom Team Apparel
 Closet Comebacks – The Secondhand Treasures!
 Smart Prints
 Bridget's Post-It Posters
 Davis Transfer Digital Conversion
 Crush Creations (Personalized, Engraved Soaps)
 Jess and Kate's Shot's
 Jessica Oden Photography
 B & Bling Airbrushing
 Bo's Xtreme Customs (Laser Engraving Specializing in Awards & Leather Engraving)
 Ben's Laser Engraving
 Tay-Ro T-Shirts
 Echo Love (Customized Infant Apparel)
 Matt's Street Customs - Aftermarket Parts & Service
 HOPE (Canvas Shoes)
 T & B Apparel
 Regan's T-Shirts!
 Crazie Lotions
 Burning Desires Candles and More
 Kymmiez Kandlez
 Blingin' It (Rhinestones and Appliqués)
 Royalty Prints
 R & R Reckless Rhinestones: Laser Engraved Leather Works, Personalized Belts & Coasters
 T & N Custom Engraving
 Crazy Accents (Headbands and Accessories)
 B. C. Custom Bracelets
 Precision Prints
 Attractions Custom Magnets
 L and K: Machine Embroidery and Handmade Scarves
 Jewell's Home Accessories: Custom Tea and Hand Towels

The community of Stafford experiences an improvement of economic status due to students' efforts and initiatives. For example, the students have participated in Chamber of Commerce, Main Street and PRIDE activities. The students have also completed projects/orders for Main Street which have included: banners, posters, tote bags, Main Street t-shirts, historical tour brochures, a historical tour iMovie, Main Street bookmarks, pen box sets, business cards, address labels, acrylic awards, acrylic plaques, engraved clock award and stationary.

The students have completed projects for Stafford's Oktoberfest committee that plans a community celebration, which incorporates an alumni gathering for USD 349. The projects students have completed for Oktoberfest have included: t-shirts, car show awards, tickets, stage backdrops, reunion materials, and posters.

The students have completed projects for USD 349 which have included: student handbooks/planners, interior and exterior acrylic signage, crisis tote bags, baccalaureate pen box sets, banners, acrylic and wooden plaques, visitor passes, sports placards, educational foundation fun run t-shirts, booster club t-shirts/sweatshirts, and t-shirts for student organizations.

The SEED program provides an educational opportunity that is mutually beneficial for the students, the school, and the community. There is a short story to emphasize the community support enjoyed by the school. Four years ago, the district was undergoing extensive budget cutting. The SEED Center was on the chopping block because it is not a core

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subject. Community members became concerned. Not only do they believe it is an excellent opportunity for students to learn through authentic engagement, they have come to rely on the products they can purchase at the SEED Center. This action would not only end a school program, but downtown merchants! Consequently, an anonymous donor stepped up with the necessary donation to fund the program.

We are focused on the future of the program. Ideas to enhance the SEED experience include possible integration of a culinary arts program, using iPads for point-of-sale transactions, internet sales, and further integration of social media marketing such as Facebook, You Tube, and blogging.

In conclusion, I feel the three most important components/issues with implementing learning by doing at the high school level:

1. To provide students with a comprehensive education that will increase their academic achievement, commitment to school, preparation for post secondary education, and their ability to function successfully in the 21st century global society.
2. To prepare students with higher-level thinking and problem solving skills that can be effectively utilized across the broad spectrum of their life activities.
3. To infuse students with a joy of learning, faith in their ability to learn, and confidence in their ability to be life-long learners.

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