

Rolla USD 217
Board of Education Annual Needs Assessment
School Year: 2026-2027

Purpose

The Rolla USD 217 Board of Education is committed to providing every student with the opportunity to achieve academic success while developing socially, emotionally, and personally in a safe and supportive learning environment. This annual needs assessment identifies student learning needs, district strengths, barriers to student success, and priorities for allocating district resources.

District Profile

Rolla USD 217 is a small rural district located in Southwest Kansas serving students in grades PreK-12. The district prides itself on individualized instruction, small class sizes, highly qualified staff, and strong community partnerships.

District strengths include:

- Small student-to-teacher ratios
- Individualized instruction
- Strong relationships among students, staff, and families
- Safe school environment
- Dedicated certified and classified staff
- Community support

Student Achievement Data Reviewed

The Board reviewed multiple measures of student achievement including:

- Kansas State Assessment Results
- iReady diagnostic assessments 3 x's per year along with the screener data
- Follow Kansas Dyslexia Protocol
- ACT Results
- Graduation Rate
- Postsecondary Success
- Attendance Data
- Chronic Absenteeism
- Behavior/Discipline Reports
- Special Education Performance
- English Learner Progress
- Preschool Readiness Data
- Local Classroom Assessments

Areas of Student Need

Academic Achievement

Needs identified include:

- Continued improvement in reading proficiency for elementary students.
- Increased mathematics achievement across all grade levels.
- Additional interventions for students performing below grade level.
- Expanded enrichment opportunities for high-achieving students.

Student Social and Emotional Needs

Students continue to benefit from:

- Social-emotional learning opportunities
- Mental health support
- School counseling services
- Positive behavior supports
- Character education

Career and Postsecondary Readiness

Students need continued opportunities to:

- Explore career pathways
- Participate in Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Earn industry-recognized credentials
- Participate in work-based learning
- Receive college and career counseling

Attendance

The district will continue efforts to:

- Reduce chronic absenteeism
- Increase family engagement
- Improve student attendance through early intervention
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Technology

Needs include:

- Maintaining one-to-one student devices – while limiting screen time
- Updating instructional technology
- Expanding cybersecurity measures
- Continued professional development for effective technology integration

Facilities and Safety

Priority needs include:

- Maintaining safe school facilities
- Updating security systems
- Maintaining transportation equipment
- Continuing emergency preparedness planning

Barriers to Student Success

The Board identified several barriers affecting student achievement.

Student Factors

- Chronic absenteeism
- Mental health concerns
- Limited preschool readiness for some students
- Learning gaps resulting from previous disruptions

Family Factors

- Economic challenges
- Transportation barriers
- Limited access to childcare
- Limited internet access in some areas

Rural District Challenges

- Teacher recruitment and retention
- Limited local workforce
- Geographic isolation
- Limited availability of specialized services

Programs Currently Addressing Student Needs

The district currently provides:

- MTSS interventions
- Reading and math intervention services
- Special Education services
- Preschool programs
- Career and Technical Education
- At-Risk programs
- School counseling
- Social-emotional learning
- Gifted education
- Technology integration
- Professional learning for staff

Budget Priorities

The Board determined that district resources should continue to prioritize:

1. Classroom instruction
2. Recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff
3. Reading and mathematics interventions
4. Student mental health supports
5. School safety and security
6. Technology replacement and infrastructure
7. Career and Technical Education
8. Professional development
9. Transportation and facility maintenance

How the Budget Addresses Student Needs

The proposed budget supports student needs by:

- Maintaining low class sizes.
- Funding intervention teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Supporting instructional materials aligned to Kansas Standards.
- Continuing preschool and at-risk programs.
- Providing professional development for staff.
- Supporting technology replacement cycles.
- Maintaining safe facilities and transportation.
- Funding student support services.

Board Discussion Questions

In accordance with Kansas budget requirements, the Board considered:

1. Are district resources being directed toward improving student achievement? The BOE believes funding prioritizes academic, social/emotional, physical development/growth/continual improvement. The BOE believes the resources are being used to ensure students are being prepared to be successful in each subsequent phase of education and life.
2. What additional resources are needed to help students who are not meeting grade-level expectations? The BOE believes full funding of the state's obligation for special education would provide the necessary resources to ensure student needs are met. Fully funding special education would provide necessary resources to ensure educational opportunities are appropriate for all students who are served by USD 217. Enrollment stability is also necessary to ensure funding is adequate.
3. Which student groups require additional academic support? The BOE believes the needs of students are being met at their level of readiness. The BOE also believes continual improvement is a necessity and will always be priority one.
4. Are district staffing levels sufficient to meet student needs? Modifications to elementary staff responsibilities have made a significant impact on sufficiently meeting the needs of students. The priority is to continually evaluate and make modifications to ensure all needs are met. The BOE agrees that our current staff is at the bare minimum and any opportunity given to expand staff and learning opportunities will be pursued. The BOE agrees quality is always more important than quantity. The BOE is only interested in expanding staffing if we can expand with highly qualified and student centered educators.
5. How does the proposed budget improve educational outcomes? The district is focused on using resources to the maximum potential to ensure student needs are met despite insufficient state funding and declining enrollment.
6. Are district resources being used efficiently and effectively? Some technology resources are antiquated. Consider adding keyboarding in 4th grade. Transportation services are grossly underfunded and this takes resources away from other learning needs. Food service and special education are also subsidized with general and supplemental general funds.
7. What barriers prevent students from achieving academic success? Learning gaps due to previous learning disruptions. Attendance in general.

8. How will the Board measure whether these investments improve student outcomes? The board uses 13 data sources to evaluate the effectiveness of the investments being prioritized.

Goals for the Coming Year

The Board established the following priorities:

Academic

- Increase reading proficiency.
- Improve mathematics achievement.
- Expand intervention opportunities.

Student Success

- Improve attendance.
- Reduce chronic absenteeism.
- Strengthen student engagement.

Staff

- Recruit and retain highly qualified employees.
- Expand professional learning opportunities.

Safety

- Maintain safe learning environments.
- Continue facility improvements.
- Strengthen emergency preparedness.

Conclusion

The Rolla USD 217 Board of Education believes every student can learn at high levels when provided with appropriate support, high-quality instruction, and a safe learning environment. The district will continue allocating resources in a manner that prioritizes student achievement while remaining fiscally responsible and accountable to the community.