



TRI-VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT 49-6

"Home of the Mustangs"

46450 252nd Street

Colton, SD 57018-5712

Phone: 446-3538 or 543-5500

Fax: 446-3520

Also the Committee requests that you provide written answers to the following questions from Committee members by September 28, 2017:

1. Was the objective, of the Tri-Valley letter to parents of homeschool students, to have a one-day higher enrollment for the day the state education funding formula determines student enrollment?

During the 2013-2014 school year, Tri-Valley began using Edgenuity to provide students with an online curriculum for credit recovery. As we continued to use the program, we found that Edgenuity provides a vast content platform that offers full credit-bearing courses based on state standards. Additionally, Edgenuity delivers electives that provide students with the opportunity to explore careers and plan for their future as well as test prep courses. Currently, students work at their own pace with progress closely monitored by Tri-Valley's guidance counselor and high school principal. The cost of each license is \$600.

Based on our success with Edgenuity, we believe the software is a valuable tool and provides a significant learning opportunity for our school exempt patrons. The objective of the letter was an attempt to gauge the interest of our homeschool families in receiving valuable learning tools while remaining respectful of their choice and right to homeschool. Under our plan, Tri-Valley would have provided homeschool students with a laptop computer and an individual Edgenuity license to use as they taught their children in their homes.

We felt that it would be a win-win situation for both the district and interested homeschool families if we could demonstrate Edgenuity's capabilities and how it can support their homeschool curriculum. However, the board did not want the Tri-Valley District to pay for the Edgenuity licenses and laptops if we were not able to receive funding for them, thus the reference to having homeschool students visit Tri-Valley on September 29, 2017. We also intended to provide a speaker on that date to present information about online danger and how to mitigate the threat for their students.

In hindsight, we should have more openly explained the Edgenuity curriculum opportunity while clearly communicating our respect of the rights and choices made by public school exempt families. We also regret the September 29th date. In hindsight, it would have been more palatable if we had communicated earlier so homeschool families had more time to make a decision. At the time, we thought providing valuable learning tools to our homeschool students while also increasing school revenue was a good idea. We understand the concerns that have been raised.

2. Are there other situations where school districts attempt to include students in their headcount that likely do not reflect their full-time student enrollment for the year?



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Not that we are aware of. In many cases, schools end with higher enrollments at the conclusion of the school year than what is reflected on "count day."

3. Are you aware of other school districts engaging in similar offers or behavior? If you are aware of similar types of offers, how long has this been going on?

We are aware of schools offering online courses that may or may not increase student enrollment figures on "count day." We can't tell you how many or for how long it's been going on. We are not aware of any other districts inviting homeschool students into the building on the last Friday in September.

4. Would you support the Department of Legislative Audit examining 5-10 school districts that may have the highest disparity between the student enrollment figure for purposes of the funding formula and the number of high school graduates the previous spring (or some other objective measure)?

Yes.

5. What recommendations do you have for adjusting the school funding formula to avoid attempts to game student headcounts for purposes of garnering more state funds?

My recommendations for legislation pertaining to student enrollment/headcounts:

- Clarify SDCL 13-28-43 as it pertains to an open-enrolled student wishing to return to his or her resident district.
- Clarify state law in regards to a student moving into another school district during a school year; requiring enrollment in the new district or open-enrollment in the previous district. This is especially crucial when the student has an IEP.

a. Consider an alternative unannounced date for counting student enrollment? – I personally don't believe that is warranted.

b. Make headcounts subject to a periodic audit? – I personally don't believe that is warranted.

c. Have student headcounts periodically reviewed by the Legislature's Government Operations and Audit Committee. – I personally don't believe that is warranted.



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d. Should there be a fine for any of this behavior which is uncovered? -- *I personally don't believe that is warranted.*

Please submit your answers to Tim Flannery, Department of Legislative Audit, 427 South Chapelle, Pierre, SD, 57501 by September 28, 2017 so that the information can be sent to all Committee members in advance of the actual meeting date. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 1:00 p.m. on October 5, 2017 and reconvene on October 6, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. This is the fifth item on the agenda. If you have any questions, please contact Tim Flannery with the Department of Legislative Audit.