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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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Governor's Column: Progress made in effort for first-class schools

The following is a column by Governor Kathleen Sebelius:

The most important job parents have is to prepare our children to lead happy, healthy and successful lives. To reach their full potential, our kids need to have the opportunity to attend first-class schools.

It's the state's duty to support those schools, and to ensure they are able to provide the education our children need to get good jobs and lead prosperous lives.

For too long, Kansas did not provide enough support, and our children suffered as a result. Last year, we took an historic step forward in our efforts to strengthen Kansas schools. Last week, another positive step was taken.

A coalition of legislators in the House of Representatives, Republicans and Democrats, came together, worked with me and my staff, and narrowly passed a multi-year plan to uphold our responsibility to the students of Kansas.

This is an important step forward, and it's the first school plan that has the elements I believe must be included, such as all-day kindergarten, help for students in need, and the freedom for communities to provide additional local support and control.

Strengthening our schools is the most significant step we can take towards ensuring the prosperity of Kansas for years to come. The passage of this school plan represents real progress, and it's an example of what can happen when we all work together for the benefit of Kansas children.

Now the challenge will be to mobilize senators to join in this agreement, and to ensure our future is not jeopardized by passing a plan that doesn't have the money to pay for the investment we make.

I ask you to contact your senator, and to call on him or her to join with us in our quest for the multi-year plan and the revenue, and my preference would be expanded gaming, to ensure our schools stay strong well into the future. You can leave a message for your senator by calling 1-800-432-3924.

I'm going to continue to work together with legislators from both parties, and I'm confident we'll be successful in providing every Kansas child with a first-class school no matter where he or she lives.

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