



2019 Legislative Positions

We Believe

- All children can learn.
- All children have the right to a high quality public education, which includes a focus on personal growth, social and emotional well-being, and academic achievement.
- A society of highly competent workers and responsible citizens needs a strong public education system. Innovation spurred by school districts is a primary way to ensure a strong, action-oriented public education system.
- An educated population is a cornerstone of a strong democracy.
- Strong public schools are the building block for local and state economic development.
- That academic curriculum decisions are a local school board responsibility, with curriculum decisions being made to meet the highest standards of academic rigor in order to provide students the opportunity to compete on a global scale.

We Know

- The Blue Valley School District was rated as 99.38 percent efficient in dollars spent on student achievement. (Standard and Poor's Efficiency Study)
- The Blue Valley School District recoups about 63 percent of its special education excess costs when state law prescribes a 92 percent rate. (Derived information from the Kansas Department of Education [KSDE])
- The Blue Valley School District's education related costs are, on average, 18.5 percent higher than other areas in Kansas. (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] Comparable Wage Index Study)
- The Blue Valley School District ranks in the bottom 15 percent of all school districts in the state of Kansas in regard to per pupil funding. (Derived information from KSDE)

Therefore, We Endorse....

- Measures and appropriate funding levels that encourage all school districts to pursue exemplary, and not just merely proficient, educational and well-being outcomes for their students.
- School finance policies that allow greater opportunities for local control.
- School finance policies that allow greater opportunities for increased funding levels in higher cost areas, as evidenced by the NCES wage study.



Priority Positions

A School Finance System That Allows for Excellence

The following policy components should be a part of a school finance system that allows all Kansas students to reach excellence: 1) be based on an empirically-driven outcome, or adequacy, target with an associated cost-of-living multiplier in out years, with adequacy defined to mean that level of expenditure needed to allow all school districts to pursue exemplary, and not merely proficient, student educational and well-being outcomes; 2) allow for greater local control authority in financing school district operations; 3) be appropriately equalized and require some level of minimum effort on the part of the receiving school district to access equalized funding sources; 4) employ an employment wage cost differential that recognizes differing employment wage costs in different areas of Kansas; 5) allow for a local funding mechanism to address the additional costs that stem from opening a new school facility; 6) fund excess cost of special education to at least 92 percent; 7) include the costs of early childhood education into the formula; 8) broaden the definition of at-risk to include not only poverty factors, but other indicators such as ELL, student academic performance data, attendance data and homelessness; 9) allow for the development of a funding mechanism to incent school districts to continue to innovate teaching and learning practices.

Further, all funding that is meant to meet the Supreme Court's adequacy requirement should be put on the BASE amount for education.

Local Control of Education Systems

The Blue Valley School District supports changes in state statutes that will allow greater decision making ability on the part of local Boards of Education to efficiently and effectively operate their education systems. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: opposing limits placed on a local school board in determining local bonding capacity and authority; and opposing legislative efforts to force school district employees into a state healthcare plan.

Academic Rigor and Local Curriculum Decisions

The Blue Valley School District supports rigorous state standards, even those above the Rose Standards, of student achievement. In addition, a local school board should retain the responsibility to select the curriculum to meet the state standards of student achievement.

Ability for Judicial Review of State School Finance Provision

The Blue Valley School District opposes any constitutional amendment that limits or eliminates a local school board's right to bring about a judicial review of state school finance provision.

Behavioral and Mental Health

The Blue Valley School District urges expanded support for community-based behavioral and mental health initiatives.



Standing Positions

State Tax Policy for Education Funding

Supports a balanced and equitable tax policy to fund public education.

KPERS Funding

Urges the state of Kansas meet its responsibility to fund the unfunded liability of the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS) without placing additional financial burden on local school districts.

BOTA Appeal Process

Supports the continuation of the ability to appeal for the extraordinary costs of opening a new school, including the expanded declining revenue provision.

National Board Certification

Supports state appropriations to advance individual teacher candidates to receive national board certification.

Alternative Certification

Supports the ongoing efforts of KSDE in developing alternative teacher certification processes and any legislative actions to achieve an alternative certification system.

Early Education

Supports legislation that would increase state programming and support of early education programs, such as Parents as Teachers, without adversely impacting K-12 funding, as well as supports the ongoing investments of early childhood programs through the full use of the Children's Initiative Fund.

Construction Procurement Methods

Supports alternative project delivery and construction procurement methods allowing public schools to select construction managers, general contractors or facility design-build teams on a qualifications and best value approach.

Sales Tax Exemption

Supports educational foundations being exempt from sales tax, as well as opposes any effort to expand the sales tax on school-related professional services.

State Mandates

Opposes any mandate which is not fully funded.

Tax Credits, Vouchers and Charter Schools

Opposes public funding of private or charter schools, including offering public tax credits that decrease state revenue, that do not comply with the same standards and requirements of public school districts, including governance by the elected local school board.



TABOR

Opposes legislative efforts (i.e. TABOR) that dictate expenditures only be allowed to increase at the rate of population and inflation, thus impairing the school district's ability to continue to provide education of exceptional quality.

Autonomy in Managing Resources

Opposes state mandates that weaken a local board's opportunity to choose the proper educational standards for its community or mandates that impede the ability of locally elected school boards to manage and allocate resources (i.e. 65 percent proposal).

Classroom Resources

Supports the inclusion of ancillary services (including, but not limited to, library services, counseling services, paraprofessional support, nursing services, occupational therapy, physical therapy and education support teams) into calculations of resources that are dedicated to student learning and achievement.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Supports the continued review of options to enhance certified staff recruitment and retention, including the use of KPERs incentives to retain current employees.

Non-Partisan School Board Elections

Supports school board elections remaining non-partisan, and returning school board elections to an even-year spring timeframe.

Grade Retention

Supports the local school district being the sole determiner of the grade retention of students in its own district.

Virtual Education

Supports the right of the local school district to control its virtual education course offerings and make its own decisions on virtual education curriculum development and/or selection.

Student Data Privacy Act

Supports changes in the Student Data Privacy Act so that no undue burden is placed upon school districts to comply with the requirements. Further, the law should be amended to exempt vision and hearing screening from the prohibition of collected data, as well as allow passive parental consent for surveys that are anonymous, voluntary and comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA).

Reserve Funds

Opposes legislative recapturing or sweeping of a school district's reserve funds.