



A New School Finance Formula Guiding Principles & Key Elements November 2016

Governor Brownback and Kansas Legislators,

The Kansas Parent Teacher Association (PTA) respectfully submits the following Guiding Principles and Key Elements for consideration in the development of a new school finance formula for the public education of Kansas youth, pre-kindergarten through high school completion. This framework is derived from the Kansas PTA legislative platform and priorities, ratified annually by members at the State Convention.

All Kansas PTA members – parents, teachers and patrons – are encouraged to share personal experiences, expectations and ideas over the coming months and year regarding a new formula to fund the public education of all Kansas youth. The 2017 Kansas legislators, 40 state senators and 125 state representatives, are charged with accomplishing this very task by Spring 2017.

Contact the Governor at StudentsFirst@ks.gov and your newly elected state legislators at <http://openstates.org/ks>, discuss at local PTA meetings, and share the importance of public education via social media. High quality public schools requires the support, involvement and cooperation of parents, caregivers and the community.

Denise Sultz
Kansas PTA President

Guiding Principles

A new school finance formula should:

- ... provide the opportunity for every school-aged child in Kansas to receive a quality education, designed to promote each student’s continuous improvement.

Quality Public Education for All

- ... recognize that students enter school at different levels of readiness and some will need to overcome more learning obstacles than others to achieve the same rigorous state education standards.

Some Students have Greater Learning Needs

Kansas PTA School Finance Guiding Principles

Quality public education for all.
Some students have greater learning needs.
Suitable funding is a legislative constitutional obligation.
Strong schools are rooted in partnership.
No unfunded mandates.
Comprehensive early childhood education for all.
Health and safety for all.
Invest in educators’ professional development.
Facilitate quality leadership and professional communities.
No vouchers.
Driven by state education standards.
Budget predictability.

- ... uphold the state’s constitutional obligation to make suitable provision for the finance of Kansas public education, achieving both equitable and adequate funding, as informed by the real-world costs of achieving the state education standards.
Suitable Funding is a Legislative Constitutional Obligation
- ... recognize no education system can be of the highest quality without the support, involvement and cooperation of parents, caregivers, legislators and the community.
Strong Schools are Rooted in Partnership
- ... provide for the costs of local and state mandates, particularly special education services.
No Unfunded Mandates
- ... support high-quality early childhood education and full-day kindergarten programs that are affordable and accessible, and incorporate strong family engagement components.
Comprehensive Early Childhood Education for All
- ... recognize the need to safeguard the health and safety of children and youth.
Health and Safety for All
- ... recognize that state policy investments in teacher preparation, certification and professional development are related to improvements in student performance.
Invest in Educators’ Professional Development
- ... facilitate quality leadership and professional learning communities for school personnel, in order to benefit the education of Kansas students.
Facilitate Quality Leadership and Professional Learning Communities
- ... oppose the use of vouchers, scholarships or tax credits toward the tuition of non-public schools which may discriminate in admissions, provide sectarian religious instruction, and operate without the same accountability as public schools.
No Vouchers
- ... align with the state education standards, Rose capacities and Kansas CAN, as determined through the process defined by our elected state Board of Education members.
Driven by State Education Standards
- ... support efforts to restore an equitable and balanced tax policy to maintain a reliable revenue stream for public education.
Budget Predictability

Note. Kansas PTA leaders have affirmed these recommendations in a statewide survey, where generally 100 to 93 percent either strongly agreed or agreed with the guiding principle statements. About 89 percent either strongly agreed or agreed with state investments in professional development for boosting student achievement, with 10 percent remaining neutral. In relation to educational use of public tax dollars, 84 percent either strongly agreed or agreed with the no vouchers statement and 6 percent remained neutral.

Key Elements

Kansas CAN defines a successful Kansas high school completer as having the academic preparation, cognitive preparation, technical skills, employability skills, and civic engagement to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation. As the Kansas legislature establishes a new school finance formula that will provide all students the opportunity to achieve this success, consider the following courses, programs and services:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Well-rounded education - English, reading or language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, physical education, and any other subject, as determined by the State or local educational agency, with the purpose of providing all students access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience (reauthorization of ESEA, 2015)■ Mental and physical health providers■ Special education services■ Instructional support■ Health and physical education■ Technology-infused learning facilities for students and educators■ Safety■ Continuum of courses and programs from advanced to remedial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Breakfast and lunch programs for youth living in poverty■ Leadership and custodial staff for school district facilities and grounds■ Administrative leadership and support for instructional and program development at building and district level■ Communication■ Full-day kindergarten and PreK early childhood education■ Professional learning communities and support for continuous improvement■ Transportation■ Assessment of student success based on growth over time■ Athletic programs, clubs and intramurals■ Lunch rooms with capacity for in-house meal prep■ Assessment of student success in relation to achievement of the state education standards
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Note. National Kansas PTA leadership survey results indicated that 100 to 96 percent either strongly agreed or agreed with the first 12 key elements listed above, 95 to 85 percent either strongly agreed or agreed (and up to 12 percent remained neutral) with the next seven elements, and 74 percent either strongly agreed or agreed (and 21 percent remained neutral) with the final key element.

The stakes are high and the path forward will not be easy. According to survey results of Kansas PTA leaders (October 2016), repeated state budget shortfalls have negatively impacted our children’s education, with 73% reporting increased class sizes and 59% paying increased school fees, along with a vast majority reporting a decrease or elimination in special needs paraprofessionals (65%) as well as librarians and media funds (72%). A third of Kansas PTA leadership reported the reduction or elimination of early childhood education programs (39%) and in the length or number of school days (30%). Stay informed and be a part of the solution.

Purpose of Public Education?

PDK 48th Annual Poll ([2016](#))
Nat’l Association of School Boards ([2014](#))
John Rury, University of Kansas ([2013](#))
Diane Ravitch ([2012](#))
Washington Post ([2011](#))
Horace Mann ([1796-1859](#))

References and Resources

Kansas PTA Advocacy resources – [website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Kansas PTA Legislative Platform and Priorities ([2016-2017](#))

KASB School Finance Guiding Principles ([August 29, 2016](#))

Kansas School Districts Guiding Principles (working list: [Lawrence USD 497](#), [Manhattan-Ogden USD 383](#), [Salina USD 305](#), [Shawnee County Public School Districts](#), [SMSD USD 512](#), [USA|KS](#),

Kansas PTA requests the Governor’s Office create a publically accessible repository of guidelines and key elements submitted by all school districts.)

KASB Key Facts ([2016](#))

KASB Funding the Future ([2016](#))

Rose Capacities in Kansas Law ([KASB](#))

Origins of the Rose Capacities ([KASB](#))

Kansas CAN (State Board of Education and Kansas Department of Education, [2016](#))

Reauthorization Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA, [2015, p. 377](#);
<http://www.ed.gov/essa>)

Kansas Constitution, [Article 6](#)

Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (referred to as Every Student Succeeds Act, [2015](#))