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**February 8, 2021**

**Written only Testimony to Senate Education Committee**

**Honorable Chair, Senator Molly Baumgardner**

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Room 445-S, State Capitol Building

**Proponent of the Kansas Department of Education Budget**

Hearing: Monday, February 8, 2021, 1:30 PM Room 144-S

Honorable Chair Senator Molly Baumgardner and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of the Kansas Department of Education (KSDE) budget.

The Kansas PTA respectfully urges committee members to support the KSDE and Governor's budget recommendations regarding K-12 public education. Parents and educators across the state are looking to the elected leaders of our state to stay on course with the Gannon school finance agreement (see Joint Statement in Support of Governor Kelly's K-12 Budget Proposal, Jan 15, 2021, <https://www.kasb.org/45132?articleID=69048>).

**Constitutional obligation.** Kansas legislators have a constitutional obligation to “provide for intellectual, educational, vocational and scientific improvement by establishing and maintaining public schools ... [and] ... to make suitable provision for finance of the educational interests of the state” (<https://kslib.info/832/Article-6-Education>).

**Still phasing-in restored funds.** The Kansas legislature is still two and a half years away from restoring K-12 public schools to constitutionally adequate levels of funding. And nearly a full year of the first three and half years of phased-in funding restoration has been during a global pandemic that significantly disrupted the learning process. Aside from 2.5 years under the Montoy school finance agreement, the legislature has not provided an adequate level of funding for Kansas students in nearly two decades. The 2018 study commissioned by legislative leadership, conducted by Dr. Lori Taylor of WestED, affirmed the significance of funding levels in relation to student outcomes. She also noted that Kansas public schools were highly efficient in the use of public dollars ([Taylor et al, 2019](#))

**Restored dollars going toward student needs.** The Kansas Association of School Boards has provided aggregate data that indicates restored dollars, to date, have been put to good use ([KASB, Jan 2021](#)):

- Districts were able to increase instructional spending on teachers, paraprofessional and classroom aides and other direct teaching costs by \$536 million.
- Districts were able to restore other student and teacher supports services like counselors, nurses and mental health, libraries, and expand technology by \$188 million.
- This includes \$275 million spent solely on high needs students in special education, at-risk and bilingual programs.
- Districts restored over 3,600 FTE positions since 2017 to date. Many of these positions were restored from cuts made from 2009 to 2017.
- Over 80% of positions are for instruction (teachers, special education para and classroom aides) and positions supporting students and teachers, including building administrators (principals and staff).
- Less than 5% of positions were in general administration and central services, half of the funding allocation that is allowed for private school administrative expenses under the Tax Credit Scholarship Act.

**Equity.** Kansas public schools do and are required to provide educational learning opportunities for all school-aged youth in the state, regardless of their learning needs, and are held to accountability standards designed to ensure a quality experience, when adequately funded by the state under [KESA](#).

Thank you for your time and consideration. We urge you to support the KSDE budget.

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Cc: Debbie Lawson, Kansas PTA Legislative Chair  
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### ***THE PTA POSITION***

*Kansas PTA is a nonpartisan association that promotes the welfare of children and youth. The PTA does not endorse any candidate or political party. Rather, we advocate for policies and legislation that affect Kansas youth in alignment with our legislative platform and priorities. [PTA mission and purpose](#) have remained the same since our inception over 100 years ago, focused on facilitating every child's potential and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.*