

Kansas PTA

Legislative Update

April 24, 2022

The Kansas legislature will reconvene in Topeka on Monday, April 25, to complete their work for 2022 legislative session. Their sole obligation is to pass a budget. Note that the primary responsibility of all states is to fund public education, for which most states allocate about half of their general funds ([National Conference of State Legislators](#)).

Vetoed. Two bills that Kansas PTA had under **action alert** were vetoed Friday, April 15 by Governor Laura Kelly.

- ▶ The bill referred to as *parent rights* passed narrowly in the legislature but vetoed by the Governor ([SB 58](#)). Kansas PTA also had serious reservations about this bill that came from out-of-state and appeared this session in multiple versions ([see PTA testimony](#)). Not one Kansas parent testified for this bill and it was overwhelmingly opposed by over 90% of those who formally testified in Topeka ([HB 2662](#), [SB 496](#)). Kansas PTA opposes bills that disregard constitutional authority, in this case locally elected school boards ([Priority 1](#)). Other reservations were due, in part, to the bills potential for taking teachers time away from student learning, taking administrators away from supporting educators and students, and opening districts up to lawsuits – for a level of parent access and engagement already established by public schools ([Standing Policy](#)).
- ▶ The bill on *participation in athletics among transgender students* passed by the legislature but vetoed by the Governor ([SB 160](#)). Over 90% of the testimony was in opposition to this bill that also came from out-of-state, with over 100 Kansans and education related organizations formally opposing the legislation ([SB 484](#)). Kansas PTA opposes bills that dismiss designated authority and expertise, in this case the guidelines already established the Kansas High School Activities Association (KSHSAA). The bill attempted to override the authority of the Kansas educators and students who serve on this member board ([Priority 1](#)).

Full Funding of Special Education Services. Several steps to fully fund special education were initiated at the end of March and throughout April – *including a 15 minute window in which the House passed an amendment to add \$68 million before it was undone.* **The main question being asked is why a record surplus in state funds is not being used to fully reimburse districts for special education services? If not now, when?** Kansas superintendents estimate \$155 million in excess costs next school year, to meet the mandated needs of students with disabilities enrolled in both public and private schools. Without reimbursement, these costs come out of local general fund budgets that would otherwise support a district's day-to-day operations. Learn more here: [KASB SpEd Brief April 20](#), [SBOE & KASB State of SpEd Funding in KS Forum April 16](#), [Keeping Score for KS Kids Rally April 23](#), [Ousley legislative amendment March 22](#).

Still Under Watch. The main remaining **RED FLAG bill** under watch is the separate K-12 budget and policy bundled bill, that includes open enrollment among other problematic policy elements.

- ▶ Separate K-12 Budget bundled with Policy thwarting K-12 Public Education along with challenges for the State Department of Education and the Children's Cabinet: [HB 2567](#) (formerly HB 2512). Kansas PTA opposes the process of separating education funds from the Governor's overall budget and bundling with unfriendly policy and cuts. Kansas PTA oppose the bill due to several problematic elements ([Priorities 1, 2 and 3](#)):
 - If space is available, requires districts be open to out-of-boundary transfers. Districts must assess and report capacity in compliance with state statute, for each school building, by grade, defining elementary and middle school capacity by student-teacher ratio. High school capacity is to include special programmatic capacity. Districts have 30 days to conduct lottery if capacity exists. Non-resident student once accepted has the right to remain until graduation unless disciplinary issues. No transportation funding is provided to the for the receiving district. Kansas PTA opposes the legislative attempt to dismiss the constitutional authority of local school boards ([Priority 1](#)) and to dismiss the serious concerns identified by superintendents to plan for facility and staffing needs. Almost every district already has policy guiding the admissions of non-residents.
 - Mandates local districts pay an out-of-state vendor for program development and use of virtual math supplemental material (formerly Math Nation) beginning with \$4 million across all districts with at least 50% of **students performing at grade level** or below in 6th through 12th grade.
 - Cuts another \$5 million in state aid from K-12 BASE funding to cover the costs for school safety grants.
 - Requires districts to use their budgets to pay for mandated state special education Dyslexia Coordinator, rather than allocate \$100,000 to the Department of Education to pay for the position.
 - Authorizing non-public students to participate in KSHSAA activities.
 - Authorizing school districts to provide part-time enrollment options for home schoolers and non-public students
 - Adds duplicative, non-instructional, bureaucratic requirements to the budget development process, and to the assessment and reporting that takes administrative and teacher time away from student learning. And more.

Please contact your state legislators today and through the next week of April 25. Urge them to support students and learning recovery. Remind your senator and representative to stay focused on RESTORING the billion dollars cut from state aid back in 2009 and 2012 for the 500,000 plus Kansas public school students and to fully fund special education

services. To find your state representative and senator, enter your full address at <https://openstates.org/>. Send an email or leave a voice message.