



Kansas PTA
715 SW 10th Street, Topeka KS 66612
www.kansas-pta-legislative.org
kansaspta@gmail.com

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Testimony to Senate Selection Committee on Education Finance

Honorable Chair, Senator Jim Denning

Amy Robinson, Education Committee Assistant
Room 224-E State Capitol Building
300 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1504
Phone: [\(785\) 296-7368](tel:7852967368)
E-Mail: Amy.Robinson@senate.ks.gov

Kansas School Finance Bill.

Hearing: Friday, May 19, 2017, 8:30 pm Room 548-S

Chair [Sen. Jim Denning](#), Vice Chair [Sen. Carolyn McGinn](#), and Ranking Minority Member [Sen. Anthony Hensley](#)

Thank for the opportunity to provide written only testimony on the working school finance bill and related plans for a new formula. Our comments will be succinct, as we are a group of volunteer parents and our time to respond quickly to the evolving bills are limited. We would like to use this moment to first reflect on those components of the various legislative plans that align most closely with our legislative platform (<http://kansas-pta-legislative.org/?q=legislative-priorities-2014>) and guiding principles for a school finance formula (http://www.kansas-pta.org/files/documents/KsPTASchFinPosition2016_Final.pdf).

Kansas PTA Supports:

- **Funding base at actual costs.** Restoration of a base funding amount at or as close to the levels recommended by the Kansas Board of Education and KASB's in testimony from Jan 18, 2017, based upon their analyses of most recent cost estimates including the 2006 LPA cost study. We encourage the proposed performance audits to make use of cost functions and successful schools analyses to re-evaluate and inform the legislature on the actual costs associated with providing every Kansas child with the opportunity to achieve the state education performance outcomes.
- **All-day K.** Full funding of all-day kindergarten, enhancing students' readiness for learning and school.
- **At-risk weighting at LPA 0.484.** Increasing the at-risk weighting to the level recommended in the LPA study of 0.484, adding \$20 million toward closing the achievement gap and facilitating educational growth among students living in poverty. Kansas PTA supports performance audit studies to invest actual costs and to provide evidence-based recommended on adjustments.
- **Increasing PreK at-risk funding.** Increasing preK at-risk funding, again restoring resources toward prevention, increasing school readiness and minimizing development of achievement gaps among students living in poverty.

- **CPI.** Using a sensitive mechanism to continually adjust base funding levels to keep up with the rising costs of living, including health care costs.
- **Weightings.** The inclusion of weightings to account for additional expenses to districts, associated with cost factors outside of their control, in order to provide all Kansas kids with equal opportunity to achieve state education performance outcomes - including regional differences in wage costs, poverty, language, disability (fully fund special education), sparsity of population, facilities and such.
- **Performance audits.** Conducting studies to gather credible evidence, which can be used to inform the legislature about related education policy and constitutional funding levels.
- **Local authority.** Maintaining local authority, in name – LOB, calculated from the artificial base with a CPI adjustment.
- **Accountability and Accreditation.** Design and adoption of an accreditation system by the state board of education based on improvements in performance that reflects the state education goals and the reporting of district accreditation status / progress.

Kansas PTA Opposes:

- **Local Foundation Budget name change.** The local option budget was intended to fund extra educational programs, unique to the preferences of the local community, above and beyond the foundation programs and services provided by the state. In reality, school boards have had to redirect their LOB to backfill reductions in state foundational operating aid. State funding levels need to be reset at the actual costs to meet state performance outcomes, and thus to restore real budgeting authority over the additional property tax revenues to local school boards, as originally intended.
- **Local Excellence Budget in place of COLA.** Concerned about the addition of policy that challenges the provision of equity.
- **Regressive funding policies.** Oppose the inclusion of regressive tax policies, such as user fees rather than pursuing a stable revenue approach that draws upon a balance of income, sales and property taxes.
- **ABA.** Concerned about the precedence set by this un-vetted policy and one that excludes all key stakeholders from the educational decision-making process, operates separately from special education services, sets the public school system up for treating medical diagnosis and appears to be grossly underfunded.

Thank you for your consideration.

Denise Sultz

Denise Sultz, Kansas PTA President
kansaspta@gmail.com
[@KsPTALeg](https://www.instagram.com/KsPTALeg)

Cc: Monica Crowe, incoming Kansas PTA President, Josh Halperin, VP Advocacy;
 Devin Wilson, State Legislative Chair; Debbie Lawson, Mary Sinclair, PhD & Brian Hogsett, Team Advocates

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.