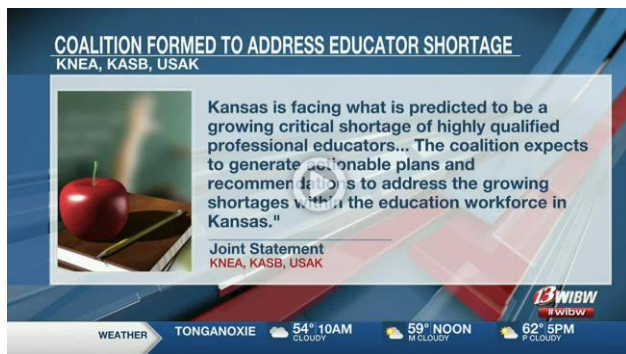


Kansas educators team up to fight labor shortage as schools face effects of COVID-19 pandemic



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TOPEKA, Kan. (WIBW) - Kansas educators are teaming up to confront a growing teacher shortage in the Sunflower State.

Recognizing the impacts of new trends in the teaching profession worsened by an ongoing COVID-19, the [Kansas National Education Association](#), [Kansas Association of School Boards](#) and [United School Administrators Kansas](#) said they have committed to leverage the unique capabilities of Kansas teachers throughout the state to address shortages in the workforce.

“Kansas is facing what is predicted to be a growing critical shortage of highly qualified professional educators including administrators, paraprofessionals, classified staff, and teachers,” said a spokesperson for the coalition. “The strategic focus of this coalition is to collect, analyze and organize data so that it can be used to inform stakeholders as we confront workforce shortages.”

Dr. Bret Church, Associate Professor at [Emporia State University](#), said he will lead the coalition to collect and examine data from a statewide survey of educators.

“We believe that making public schools great for every Kansas student begins with doing all we can to ensure that dedicated, diverse, and highly qualified educators lead every classroom,” said Sherri Schwanz, President of Kansas NEA.

The coalition said educators and staff from every district in Kansas have been invited to participate in the survey as it is available through mid-November. The survey dives into five key data sets: Retention factor ratings, Retention factor prioritization rankings, Most and least rewarding aspects of teaching, Teacher engagement, and the likelihood of retention.

“Educator shortages are reaching severe levels. USA, KNEA, and KASB have a vested interest in retaining our great teachers. We are pleased to work with The Teacher’s College and Assistant Professor Church on this important research project,” said John Heim, Executive Director of Kansas Association of School Boards.

“The time is now, we can no longer wait and expect this staffing shortage to fix itself. As Kansas educators, it’s time to come together to develop a solution for this shortage. This survey is a critical first step,” said G.A. Buie, Executive Director of USA Kansas.

From this research, the coalition said it expects to generate actionable plans and recommendations to address growing shortages within the education workforce in Kansas.

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