

2020-2021 LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS
Five Shawnee County Public School Districts

ONE UNITED VOICE



Shawnee County School Districts

The 27,705 students of Shawnee County, Kansas, are served by five public school districts. Leadership from all five Shawnee County public school districts worked collaboratively to create our 2020-2021 Shawnee County Legislative Positions. Our Legislative Positions were mutually created with the belief that Shawnee County students are our top priority, there are significant societal benefits gained by supporting exemplary public education, and all Kansas students deserve an adequate and equitable public education.

Shawnee County Combined Facts

Student enrollment:	27,705	Economic Impact on Shawnee County Economy:	
Square miles served:	483	• Total FTE Staff	4,849
Facilities:		• Total Payroll	\$272,831,891.42
• Elementary Schools	32		
• Middle Schools	10		
• High Schools	7		
• Alternative Programs	7		

COVID-19 has presented numerous challenges and needs that have required new and different ways to address them.

- Social-emotional needs have sharply increased
- Access to technology and reliable internet connectivity have presented challenges
- Repurposing spaces to expand building capacity to protect social distancing have increased costs
- New personal protective equipment and disinfecting procedures have been required
- Increased staffing needs have surfaced to teach students in repurposed spaces



2020-2021 Shawnee County School Districts Legislative Positions

School Funding

We support

- **Funding the safe operations of school in each Phase of Education (Phase 3 Onsite, Phase 2 Hybrid, Phase 1 Remote)**
As a result of COVID school operating guidelines will require additional resources such as masks, cleaning and sanitizing; space for social distancing; remote access and other needs.
- **Implementation and assessment of standards and the accreditation process adopted by the Kansas State Board of Education.**
- A formula must account for changing student needs, higher expectations, and increasing costs. Given the significant statistical relationship between socio-economic status and students to be found to be at-risk of academic failure, reliable measure of poverty, such as free-lunch status, must be an indicator for allocating funds intended to address the needs of at-risk students
- Fully fund early childhood education.
- Fully fund special education. The state is not funding its statutory commitment to pay for 92 percent of excess special education costs.
- Consider high and low enrollment.
- Provide equalization aid for Capital Outlay.
- Continue Local Option Budget.
- Fund Bond and Interest at the full percentage required by law.

Teacher Recruitment

We support:

- Local Boards of Education hiring the most qualified candidate, and if necessary, to pay any actuarial costs established by KPERS if a KPERS retiree is the most qualified candidate.
- Alternative methods for obtaining professional licensure and increasing reciprocity with other states.
- Establishing statewide financial incentives to encourage teachers to both enter and stay in the profession during the pandemic.

Access to Technology

We support:

- **Access to affordable broadband service for all Kansas students, families, and schools.**
- COVID has highlighted the need for broadband as students have relied on remote access to schools and may continue doing so due to underlying health conditions and quarantines. One of the major issues identified by school districts is the lack of broadband access and devices by students and families for remote learning. Students are in need of individual devices.

KPERS

We support:

- Long-term, sustained commitment towards the funding of KPERS.
- Equitable provisions for all public employees when working after retirement.

Social Emotional Health

We support:

- **Increasing support for mental health needs of students and staff.**
Educators expect many students will face additional mental health issues associated with the COVID pandemic. COVID-related issues follow years of growing concerns about mental health issues affecting student health, safety and learning, and when long-term access to health services may be worsened by the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Districts may need to alter or increase services under on-site, hybrid and remote learning models. School and mental health providers will need to work together to determine the best delivery model for each community.
- Expand Medicaid, which will increase health insurance coverage for a significant number of families in our community, promoting family access to health care, as well as increased opportunities for students to be successful in school.

Approved by each Board of Education

Auburn-Washburn School District #437
Seaman School District #345
Shawnee Heights School District #450
Silver Lake School District #372
Topeka Public Schools #501

Tom Bruno
James Adams
Lauren Tice Miller
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