



2024 Legislative Positions

We Believe...

- All children can learn.
- All children have the right to a high-quality public education, which includes a focus on academic achievement, personal growth, and social and emotional well-being.
- An educated population is a cornerstone of a strong democracy.
- A robust public education system is essential for nurturing a society of highly competent workers and responsible citizens. Actively driving innovation forward within school districts stands as a crucial way to ensure a strong, action-oriented public education system.
- Strong public schools are the building block for local and state economic development.
- Academic curriculum decisions are a local school board responsibility, with curriculum decisions made to meet the highest standards of academic rigor in order to provide students the opportunity to compete on a global scale.

We Know...

- The Blue Valley School District receives less operating funding per student than any other district in Kansas with an enrollment of over 8,000 students. (Derived from the KSDE report for the 2021-2022 school year.)
- The Blue Valley School District is the **12th** lowest in funding per student out of 286 districts in Kansas. (Derived from the KSDE report for the 2021-2022 school year).
- The Blue Valley School District recoups only **63.1 percent** of its special education excess costs when state law prescribes a 92 percent rate.

Therefore, We Endorse...

- Measures and appropriate funding levels that encourage all school districts to pursue exemplary, and not just merely proficient, educational and well-being outcomes for their students.
- School finance policies that allow greater opportunities for local control.
- School finance policies that allow greater opportunities for increased funding levels in higher-cost areas.

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PRIORITY POSITIONS

Fund Special Education

The Blue Valley School District supports funding the excess cost of special education services at the statutory 92 percent rate.

Oppose Tax Credits and Vouchers for Private Schools

The Blue Valley School District opposes public funding of private schools, including the offering of public tax credits to taxpayers for tuition payments to private schools that do not comply with the same standards and requirements of public school districts.

Apply At-Risk Funding to Defined Student Measures

The Blue Valley School District supports modifying the current school finance system to include poverty factors and additional indicators such as ELL (English Language Learners), student academic performance data, attendance data, foster care, juvenile justice and homelessness to meet the needs of these underserved student populations.

Enhance Student Mental Health

The Blue Valley School District supports an expansion of community-based behavioral and mental health initiatives. Further, the Blue Valley School District supports expanding the criteria for the statewide school-based mental health grants to include providers outside of the County Health Departments who reside in the school buildings.

Funding on Current Year or Largest of Two Previous Years

The Blue Valley School District supports utilizing the highest of current year or two previous years' count for school funding purposes.

Recruitment, Retention, and Alternative Teacher Certification

The Blue Valley School District supports the continued review of options to enhance certified staff recruitment and retention, including the use of Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS) incentives to retain current employees and expand alternate licensure. Urges the state of Kansas to continue to meet its responsibility to fully fund KPERS without placing additional financial burden on local school districts or employees. Additionally, the district supports the ongoing efforts in developing alternative teacher certification processes and any legislative actions to achieve an alternative certification system.

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STANDING POSITIONS

Local Control of Education Systems

The Blue Valley School District supports changes in state statutes that will allow for greater decision-making ability on the part of local Boards of Education to efficiently and effectively operate their education systems. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Opposes limits placed on a local school board in determining local bonding capacity and authority.
- Opposes regulatory requirements that hinder districts' ability to operate efficiently.
- Opposes anyone other than the local school district being the sole determiner of the grade retention of students in its district.
- Supports the right to exercise local control as it relates to open enrollment.

Academic Rigor and Local Curriculum Decisions

The Blue Valley School District supports rigorous state standards of student achievement. In addition, a local school board should retain the responsibility to select the curriculum to meet the state standards of student achievement.

Ability for Judicial Review of State School Finance Provision

The Blue Valley School District opposes any constitutional amendment that limits or eliminates a local school board's right to bring about a judicial review of state school finance provisions.

National Board Certification

The Blue Valley School District supports state appropriations to advance individual teacher candidates to receive national board certification.

Sales Tax Exemption

The Blue Valley School District supports educational foundations being exempt from sales tax, as well as opposes any effort to expand the sales tax on school-related professional services.

Early Education

The Blue Valley School District supports legislation that would increase state programming and support of early education programs, such as Parents as Teachers, without adversely impacting K-12 funding, as well as supports the ongoing investments of early childhood programs through the full use of the Children's Initiative Fund.

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State Mandates

The Blue Valley School District opposes any mandate which is not fully funded.

TABOR

The Blue Valley School District opposes legislative efforts (i.e., TABOR) that dictate expenditures only be allowed to increase at the rate of population and inflation, thus impairing the school district's ability to continue to provide education of exceptional quality.

Autonomy in Managing Resources

The Blue Valley School District opposes state mandates that weaken a local board's opportunity to choose the proper educational standards for its community or mandates that impede the ability of locally elected school boards to manage and allocate resources (i.e., 65% proposal).

Classroom Resources

The Blue Valley School District supports the inclusion of ancillary services (including, but not limited to, library services, counseling services, paraprofessional support, nursing services, occupational therapy, physical therapy and education support teams) into calculations of resources dedicated to student learning and achievement.

Student Data Privacy Act

The Blue Valley School District supports changes in the Student Data Privacy Act so that no undue burden is placed upon school districts to comply with the requirements. Further, the law should be amended to exempt vision and hearing screening from the prohibition of collected data, as well as allow passive parental consent for surveys that are anonymous and voluntary, and comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA).

Reserve Funds

The Blue Valley School District opposes legislative recapturing or sweeping of a school district's reserve funds.