



Blue Valley School District

2021 Legislative Positions

We Believe

- All children can learn.
- All children have the right to a high-quality public education, which includes a focus on personal growth, social and emotional well-being, and academic achievement.
- A society of highly competent workers and responsible citizens needs a strong public education system. Innovation spurred by school districts is a primary way to ensure a strong, action-oriented public education system.
- An educated population is a cornerstone of a strong democracy.
- Strong public schools are the building block for local and state economic development.
- That academic curriculum decisions are a local school board responsibility, with curriculum decisions being 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 was rated as 99.38 percent efficient in dollars spent on student achievement. (Standard and Poor's Efficiency Study)
- The Blue Valley School District recoups 62.2 percent of its special education excess costs when state law prescribes a 92 percent rate. (Derived information from the Kansas Department of Education [KSDE])
- The Blue Valley School District's education related costs are, on average, 18.5 percent higher than other areas in Kansas. (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] Comparable Wage Index Study)
- The Blue Valley School District ranks in the bottom 15 percent of all school districts in the state of Kansas in regard to per pupil funding. (Derived information from KSDE)

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, as evidenced by the NCES wage study.



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Priority Positions

Fund Special Education at Statutory Amounts and Expand Def of At-Risk

The current school finance system should be modified to achieve the following: a) fund the excess cost of special education to the 92 percent statutory limit; and b) broaden the definition of at-risk to include not only poverty factors, but other indicators such as ELL, student academic performance data, attendance data and homelessness.

Enhance Student Mental Health

The Blue Valley School District urges expanded support for community-based behavioral and mental health initiatives. Further, the Blue Valley School District supports measures aimed at eliminating the possession, distribution and use of vaping products among school-aged students.

Eliminate Tax Credits and Vouchers for Private Schools

Opposes public funding of private schools, including offering public tax credits that decrease state revenue, that do not comply with the same standards and requirements of public-school districts, including governance by an elected local school board.

Standing Positions

Local Control of Education Systems

The Blue Valley School District supports changes in state statutes that will allow 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: opposing limits placed on a local school board in determining local bonding capacity and authority; and opposing legislative efforts to force school district employees into a state healthcare plan.

Academic Rigor and Local Curriculum Decisions

The Blue Valley School District supports rigorous state standards, even those above the Rose 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 provision.



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State Tax Policy for Education Funding

The Blue Valley School District supports a balanced and equitable tax policy to fund public education and opposes policies that allow for the shifting of the tax burden to the residential base as a result of commercial properties not being assessed to their highest and best use.

KPERS Funding

Urges the state of Kansas meet its responsibility to fund the unfunded liability of the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS) without placing additional financial burden on local school districts.

BOTA Appeal Process

Supports the continuation of the ability to appeal for the extraordinary costs of opening a new school

National Board Certification

Supports state appropriations to advance individual teacher candidates to receive national board certification.

Alternative Certification

Supports the ongoing efforts of KSDE in developing alternative teacher certification processes and any legislative actions to achieve an alternative certification system.

Early Education

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.

Sales Tax Exemption

Supports educational foundations being exempt from sales tax, as well as opposes any effort to expand the sales tax on school-related professional services.

State Mandates

Opposes any mandate which is not fully funded.

TABOR

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.



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Autonomy in Managing Resources

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 percent proposal).

Classroom Resources

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 that are dedicated to student learning and achievement.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Supports the continued review of options to enhance certified staff recruitment and retention, including the use of KPERs incentives to retain current employees.

Non-Partisan School Board Elections

Supports school board elections remaining non-partisan, and returning school board elections to an even-year spring timeframe.

Grade Retention

Supports the local school district being the sole determiner of the grade retention of students in its own district.

Virtual Education

Supports the right of the local school district to control its virtual education course offerings and make its own decisions on virtual education curriculum development and/or selection.

Student Data Privacy Act

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, voluntary and comply with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA).

Reserve Funds

Opposes legislative recapturing or sweeping of a school district's reserve funds.

Special Utility Rates for School Districts

Supports the provision of special utility rates for school districts given the public nature of a district.