

Blue Valley Schools

2023 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.
- 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 receives less funding per student than any other district in Kansas with an enrollment of over 8,000 students. (Derived from the KSDE report for the 2020-2021 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 2020-2021 school year).
- The Blue Valley School District recoups 66.4% of its special education excess costs when state law prescribes a 92% 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.

Blue Valley Schools

2023 Legislative Positions

Priority Positions

Fully Fund Special Education

The current school finance system should be modified to fully fund the excess cost of special education services.

Apply At-Risk Funding to Defined Student Measures

The current school finance system should be modified to include poverty factors and additional indicators such as ELL, student academic performance data, attendance data, foster care, juvenile justice and homelessness so as to meet the needs of these underserved student populations.

Cost of Living Authority

The cost of living authority is all locally funded. The maximum cost of living authority should be increased above the current 5% cap to allow Blue Valley to attract & retain qualified staff, given the cost-of-living in our district.

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 and other illegal drugs among school-aged students.

Oppose Tax Credits and Vouchers for Private Schools

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

Blue Valley Schools

2023 Legislative Positions

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 not limited to, the following:

- Opposing limits placed on a local school board in determining local bonding capacity and authority.
- Remove regulatory requirements that hinder districts' ability to operate efficiently.
- The local school district being the sole determiner of the grade retention of students in its own district.
- The right of the local school district to control its virtual education course offerings and make its own decision on virtual education curriculum development and selection.
- 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, even those above the Rose Standards. 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.

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 to continue to meet its responsibility to fully fund the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS) without placing additional financial burden on local school districts.

Blue Valley Schools

2023 Legislative Positions

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.

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% proposal).

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2023 Legislative Positions

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 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 and expanding alternate licensure.

Non-Partisan School Board Elections

Supports school board elections remaining nonpartisan and returning school board elections to an even-year spring time frame.

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 and 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.