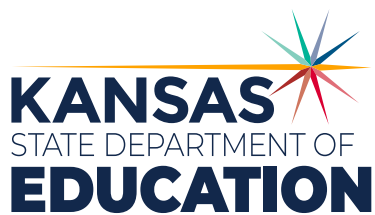


2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

COHERENCE



Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.



Kansas State Board of Education

Mission

To prepare Kansas students for lifelong success through rigorous, quality academic instruction, career training and character development according to each student's gifts and talents.

BOARD MEMBERS

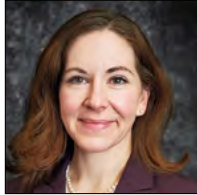
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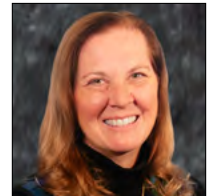
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DISTRICT 10



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Kansas Vision for Education

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

Motto

Kansans Can

Success defined

A successful Kansas high school graduate has the

- Academic preparation,
- Cognitive preparation,
- Technical skills,
- Employability skills and
- Civic engagement

to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

Kansas State Department of Education

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION



Dr. Randy Watson

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER Division of Fiscal and Administrative Services



Dr. Frank Harwood

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER Division of Learning Services



Dr. Renee Nugent

The Kansas State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: KSDE General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, KSDE, Landon State Office Building, 900 S.W. Jackson, Suite 102, Topeka, KS 66612, (785) 296-3201.

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Commissioner's Message



Dear Kansans,

As we reflect on the 2024–25 school year, one word captures both our progress and our vision for the future: coherence.

Education is complex. Every day, schools balance curriculum, assessments, staffing, funding, and the diverse needs of students and families. Yet when these pieces work in isolation, the impact is diminished. True transformation happens when all these efforts align, when goals, resources, and strategies point in the same direction. That is the essence of coherence, and it is the foundation of Kansas' school improvement initiative.

This initiative brings together the most essential elements of education: academic standards, instructional practices, assessment, accreditation, and supports for educators into a single, connected framework. By doing so, we ensure every student in Kansas is supported by a system that is clear, consistent, and purposeful. Whether a child is entering kindergarten, preparing to graduate, or exploring postsecondary opportunities, they and their families should experience a system that feels seamless and trustworthy.

Our agency has taken deliberate steps to strengthen this coherence. We have aligned state assessment cut scores with real-world indicators of success, invested in literacy training grounded in the science of reading, and provided districts with tools and resources to better serve students. These actions are not isolated programs but integrated parts of a unified approach to improvement.

The Kansas State Department of Education is committed to protecting the integrity of our work, supporting educators, and ensuring families and communities have access to timely, accurate, and transparent information. Above all, we remain focused on our vision: to lead the world in the success of each student.

Thank you for joining us in this important work. Together, through coherence and collaboration, we are creating a system that prepares every Kansas student for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Randy Watson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Randy" being more prominent than the last name "Watson".

Randy Watson, EdD
Kansas Commissioner of Education



Photo: Kansas Education Commissioner Dr. Randy Watson reads to Renwick USD 267 students celebrating Read Across America in March 2025. (Photo courtesy of Renwick USD 267)

KSDE Milestones

OCT. 1, 2024 - SEPT. 30, 2025

2024

OCTOBER

8: Kansas Education Commissioner Dr. Randy Watson presents the 2023-24 KSDE annual report to the Kansas State Board of Education, including a presentation on the incremental progress moving Kansas students out of the lowest level of reading, increases in the number of high school students taking postsecondary classes and earning credits and the fourth consecutive year of declines in chronic absenteeism.

8: The Fall Vacancy Report (FVR) report is presented to the State Board, showing special education having the highest number of vacancies at 480, followed by elementary education at 449.

8: A total of 243 schools receive the Star Recognition designation, including South Lyon County USD 252 as the only district that earned recognition in eight areas for a fourth consecutive year.

8: State Board approves structured literacy licensure tests and passing scores for some veteran educators who will be required to either pass one of the tests or be trained for licensure by July 2028.

8: Dorothy Dorman, a driver for First Student bus company (contracted with Wichita USD 259), is recognized by the State Board for winning first place in the small bus division of the 2024 National School Transportation Association's (NSTA) School Bus Driver International Safety Competition in June 2024.



23-25: The KSDE Great Ideas in Education Conference: Lighting the Path Forward, is held in Wichita. Beginning in 2025, this annual meeting will be held in late July to accommodate educators' summer schedules.



NOVEMBER

12: Kansas State Board of Education receives policy guidance recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Student Screen Time.

12: State Board receives information on the development of toolkits for educators to use that align with board-approved curriculum standards.

12: State Board members vote to approve board vice chair Jim Porter, Brad Neuenswander, superintendent of Jefferson West USD 340, and Cory Gibson, superintendent of De Soto USD 232, serve on the legislative education funding task force.

13: State Board hears update on the impact of the first year of non-resident, open enrollment. According to data, 24,250 K-12 students attended a non-resident school district in 2024-25, not including virtual students, a decrease of 224 students compared to 2023-24. A total of 1,519 non-resident students (6%) participated in open enrollment.

20: Sterling Grade School, Sterling USD 376, and Overbrook Attendance Center, Santa Fe Trail USD 434, are recognized as National ESEA Distinguished Schools.

DECEMBER

5: The newest cohort of Kansas LETRS® facilitators completed their 3rd Edition, Volume 1 LETRS® facilitator training after four full days of in-person professional learning under the guidance of a national LETRS® trainer at the Orion Education and Training Center, in Clearwater, Kan.

7: The Kansas Association for Career and Technical Education (K-ACTE) was recognized for meeting 2024 Quality Association Standards at the ACTE CareerTech Vision annual conference in San Antonio, Texas.

10: State Board members voted to accept the final report of the Blue-Ribbon Task Force on Student Screen Time with recommended guidance for districts for student use of digital technology in schools.

10: Members of the State Board vote to allow Healy USD 468 to disorganize and become part of Scott County USD 466, reducing the number of public school districts in Kansas to 285.

2025

JANUARY

8: Meredith Reid, vocal music educator at Girard USD 248's middle and high schools, received the 2024-25 Milken Educator Award.



14: Three new members join the Kansas State Board of Education after the Nov. 2024 elections - Beryl New, Connie O'Brien and Debby Potter. Melanie Haas was reelected to the board. Cathy Hopkins and Danny Zeck were elected chair and vice chair, respectively.



21: Six Kansas educators receive the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) for 2021 through 2023:

- 2021: 7-12 Science: Erica Huggard, Emporia High School, Emporia USD 253
- 2021: 7-12 Mathematics: Elizabeth Self, Kepley Middle School, Ulysses USD 214
- 2022: K-6 Science: Todd Flory, Wheatland Elementary School, Andover USD 385
- 2022: K-6 Mathematics: Angela Gray, Atchison Elementary School, Atchison USD 409
- 2023: 7-12 Mathematics: Robin Anderson, Andover Middle School, Andover USD 385
- 2023: 7-12 Science: Jennifer Hendrix, Dodge City High School, Dodge City USD 443

KSDE MILESTONES

24: Thirty-two (32) Kansas educators are named 2025 Kansas Horizon Award recipients.

FEBRUARY

4: Erin Tims, senior at Larned High School, Larned USD 495, and Sophia Hsu, senior at Mill Valley High School, De Soto USD 232, were selected as delegates to the 63rd annual United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP).



11: State Board holds public hearing on removal of the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) from state regulations governing the graduation requirements that began with the class of 2028 (2024-25 freshmen).

MARCH

3: Kansas Education Commissioner Dr. Randy Watson kicks off the 2025 Read Across America Week at Garden Plain Elementary, Renwick USD 267.

11: The State Board votes to remove the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) from state regulations governing the graduation requirements that began with the class of 2028 (2024-25 freshmen).

12: Dr. Renee Nugent, Atchison superintendent and 2025 Kansas Superintendent of the Year, is named KSDE deputy commissioner of the division of learning services. She succeeds Dr. Ben Proctor who returned to serve as superintendent of Hesston USD 460.



24: Enhanced spring general summative state assessments in English, math and science are offered.

27: The KSDE Insight Podcast was relaunched with a conversation about what events have influenced the Kansas and the U.S. education systems for the past 150 years.

APRIL

5 & 12: 2026 Kansas Teacher of the Year regional finalists announced.



8: State Board adds Foundations of the Science of Reading: Understanding and Applying Structured Literacy Principles, to the board-approved list of structured literacy training programs.

8: State Board members announce 200 Kansas high school seniors have earned recognition as 2025 Kansas Career and Technical Education (CTE) Scholars.

9: The Kansas Certificate in Child Nutrition Management certificates are awarded to nutrition professionals in:

- Atchison County Community Schools USD 377
- Jefferson West USD 340
- Olathe USD 233
- Prairie View USD 362
- South Brown County USD 430
- Wamego USD 320

MAY

4: 532 Kansas high school seniors, representing the top 1% academically, were honored as 2025 Governor's Scholars during a ceremony at Washburn University, in Topeka.

13: State Board approves new performance level descriptors (PLDs) for the enhanced 2025 state assessments.

JUNE

9-13: More than 140 Kansas educators meet in Topeka to set the cut scores for the new 2025 spring assessments.

10: Permanent changes are approved by the State Board for emergency substitute licenses.

10: State Board votes to strongly recommend districts prominently display their bullying reporting processes and procedures on their website homepages and in their handbooks.

JULY

8: State Board approves FY27 budget recommendations for the 2026-27 school year, including a request to make the board's daily rate of pay commensurate with that of legislators.

8: The graduate degree and youth apprenticeship tracks were added to the Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program (RTAP) by the State Board. The board also approved the MeadowLARK grant from the Kansas Office of Registered Apprenticeship to fund the additional tracks.

28-30: Great Ideas in Education Conference takes place in Wichita after previously held for many years in October.



AUGUST

12: State Board members vote to approve scales and cut scores for the enhanced 2025 spring assessments for English, math and science.

12: State Board members approve board goals for Aug. 2025-Dec. 2026.

12: KESA 2.0 graduation requirements are approved by the State Board.

SEPTEMBER

10: State Board accepts Kansas Education Commissioner Dr. Randy Watson's intent to retire.

20: Rachel Marlow, a music educator at Central Elementary, Olathe USD 233, is named the 2026 Kansas Teacher of the Year during a ceremony in Wichita.



26: Leena Dudi, of Blue Valley West High School, and Sriram Srinivasa Kalki, of Blue Valley North High School, Blue Valley USD 229, were named 2025 U.S. Presidential Scholars in academics. Tucker Wayne Leck, Neodesha High School, Neodesha USD 461, was named a 2025 U.S. Presidential Scholar in Career and Technical Education (CTE).

Literacy Initiative

The Kansas State Board of Education continues to support KSDE's structured literacy initiatives that began in 2018, the year the Kansas legislature created the Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia. This method of teaching literacy uses science of reading principles that have been proven to help all children learn how to read, including those with dyslexia.

This evidence-based methodology is one of the Four Fundamentals of the new school improvement model that serves as the foundation for the second iteration of the Kansas Education Accreditation System, known as KESA 2.0.

Beginning in July 2028, certain groups of Kansas educators, mainly at the elementary level, must complete and pass an approved structured literacy course or score at a level of proficiency on an approved test to obtain a Seal of Literacy as part of their license renewal requirements.

The 2024-25 school year afforded KSDE and school districts the time to build on the significant progress made after the adoption of the Kansas Education Framework for Literacy by the Kansas State Board of Education. This progress included the increasing number of elementary educators and administrators trained in structured literacy in order to earn the Seal of Literacy. The following training programs provided the pathways for these educators to either complete or be in the process of completing a structured literacy course:

- Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling,[®] (LETRS[®])
- Pathways to Proficient Reading
- Keys to Literacy
- Foundations of the Science of Reading: Understanding and Applying Structured Literacy Principles (Blueprint for Literacy course)
- Structured Literacy Intervention Specialist - Alphabetic Phonics (Cox) – Introduction
- R.E.A.D. Redefined.



Photo: Becca Silver, founder of The Whole Educator, was the keynote speaker during the 2025 Great Ideas in Education Conference's literacy summit in July 2025. She spoke about using a human-centered approach to break through resistance around structured literacy.

Literacy Summit

The first-ever literacy summit took place during the Kansas State Department of Education's annual Great Ideas in Education Conference in July. There were an estimated 117 attendees, who included primarily LETRS® facilitators and reading specialists, 63 of whom were from districts and 12 from the state's education service centers.

The summit included professional learning for the KSDE Literacy Leadership Cadre and incorporated additional literacy research on both teaching and assessments.

A highlight of the summit was the keynote presentation from Becca Silver, CEO and founder of the Whole Educator. She provided a practical approach to making the instructional shifts needed to align practice to structured literacy.

Blueprint for Literacy

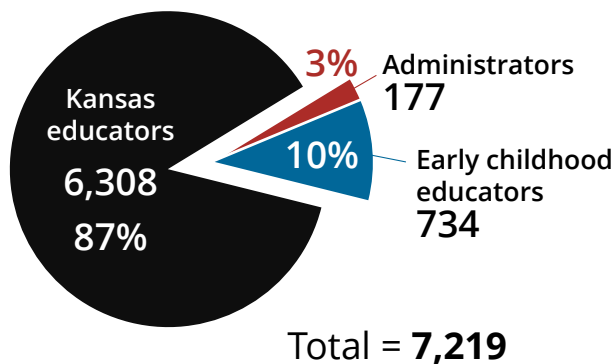
The Blueprint for Literacy, of which KSDE is a significant partner, is the structured literacy initiative created by the Kansas Board of Regents as a result of Senate bill 438 passed in 2024. This initiative ensures the state's regents institutions are teaching the foundations of structured literacy to students majoring in education to use as a model of instruction in the classroom.

The blueprint includes another avenue for Kansas educators to obtain a Seal of Literacy through the *Foundations of the Science of Reading: Understanding and Applying Structured Literacy Principles* course, approved by the Kansas State Board of Education in April 2025.

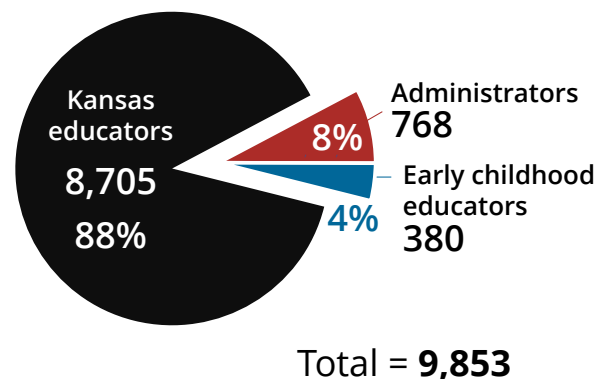


As of Oct. 1, 2025:

Number of educators who have completed LETRS® training and have post-test scores:



Number of educators who have LETRS® course licenses but have not completed the post-test:



School Improvement Initiative

The 2024-25 school year marked the first full implementation year of the second iteration of the Kansas Education System Accreditation process, known as KESA 2.0. This accreditation process is built on the school improvement model that utilizes the Four Fundamentals – structured literacy, standards alignment, balanced assessment and quality instruction. The school improvement model emphasizes the use of high-leverage actions, done with coherence, allowing districts and school systems to focus on the areas they believe will have the greatest impact on student achievement.

KESA 2.0 annually accredits systems while the previous process accredited systems every five years. This process emphasizes a model of support and provides a myriad of resources and collaboration opportunities for systems to formulate their action plans and meet accreditation requirements.

The KSDE accreditation and design team held 77 in-person school improvement days, facilitated by Kansas educators, from Sept. 2024 through April 2025. These days helped every one of the 303 school systems in KESA create their action plans that address at least one of the Four Fundamentals.

District leadership teams (DLTs), from three to five systems of similar in size and geographic location, focused on their data and other factors that would be the basis of their action plan for improving student achievement.

During a school improvement day in Jan. 2025, Shannon Hassler, a math teacher at West Franklin High School, West Franklin USD 287, said the new school improvement model has more meaningful processes to increase student achievement.

“This is much more user-friendly to be able to collaborate and make it more usable working in the trenches,” she said.



Photo: Dr. Ben Proctor, deputy commissioner for the KSDE division of learning services from July 2022 to July 2025, played a significant role in the implementation of the school improvement model, the foundation of KESA 2.0.

School improvement and compliance criteria reviewed

During the 2024-25 school year, all 303 public and private systems were reviewed in two areas: school improvement and compliance.

Beginning in March 2025, the KSDE accreditation and design team began completing check-ins with each KESA system to gauge the progress on their action plans. By Aug. 2025, all 303 systems had met the criteria for school improvement by submitting a “ready to implement” KESA action plan which was reviewed by KSDE’s action plan review team for clarity, alignment to the Four Fundamentals, and the use of district-level data.

The Accreditation Review Council (ARC) determined the majority of the systems met the standards in each of the 14 KESA compliance areas. As a result, the State Board approved the ARC’s recommendations that those systems be accredited for the 2025-26 school year. However, there are several systems that were deemed “Not In Compliance” in a few compliance areas.

Following the KESA evaluation process, a system’s accreditation status is not affected when not meeting standards for one year. If a system does not meet standards for two consecutive years in the same KESA area, the ARC will complete a more in-depth review to determine if the system should remain accredited or be accredited with conditions.



Photo: District leadership teams met in April 2025 for their School Improvement Day at the Smoky Hill Education Service Center in Salina. The balloon exercise demonstrated how they have many responsibilities and initiatives that can't be dropped.



Photo: The Hills Hackers, five students at Indian Hills Middle School, Shawnee Mission USD 512, were the 2025 champions of the National Space Grand Challenge, a prestigious, virtual, game-based cybersecurity competition. (Photo courtesy Shawnee Mission 512)

Overview of Accreditation Outcomes

Members of the Kansas State Board of Education (State Board) began working in Jan. 2025 to revise and align their goals with the school improvement model they adopted for the second iteration of the Kansas Education System Accreditation, known as KESA 2.0.

The new board goals, approved in Aug. 2025, not only reflect the board's commitment to coherence and the Theory of Action, it also aligns with the school improvement model the board approved for district and school system accreditation.

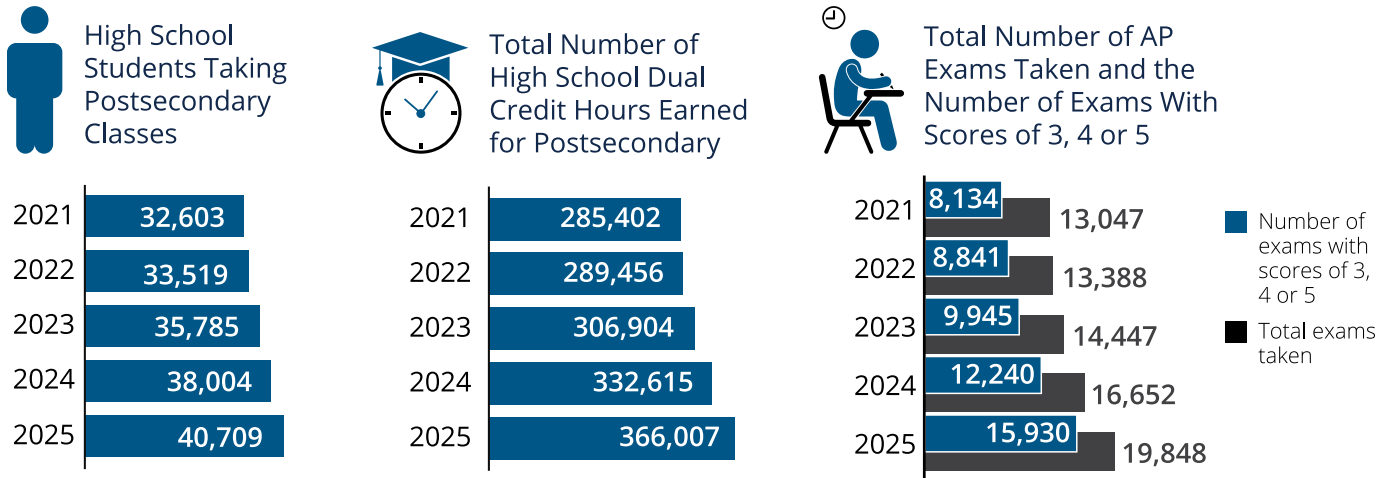
The State Board will use methods, lead indicators and measures of progress to determine success in achieving the following outcomes:

- **QUALITY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT** – We will support and emphasize the Four Fundamentals (structured literacy, standards alignment, balanced assessment and quality instruction) of school improvement in the KESA process.
- **QUALITY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT** – We have a culture of high expectations in our classrooms, buildings, and districts so that each student has access to quality instruction, grade level standards and expectations for success.
- **POLICY, REGULATION AND ALIGNMENT** – We will eliminate, align, and design policies and regulations in Pre-K-12 to enhance the school improvement process, allowing school systems to focus on student success.

Kansas State Board of Education Goals			
State Board of Education Goals	Methods	Lead Indicators	Measures of Progress
August 2025 – December 2026	(Reinforce lead indicators and sustain SBOE goals within the system)	(Actions that support implementation of the SBOE goals)	(How we know the action is being implemented effectively)
Quality School Improvement We will support and emphasize the four fundamentals of school improvement in the KESA process. Quality Leadership Development We have a culture of high expectations in our classrooms, buildings, and districts so that each student has access to quality instruction, grade level standards and expectations for success. Policy, Regulation & Alignment We will eliminate, align, and design policies and regulations in pre-K-12 to enhance the school improvement process, allowing school systems to focus on student success.	Board Meeting Planning	State Board meeting planning and agenda-setting include intentionality around the State Board's goals.	• Agendas Alignment • 6 Month Target • 1 Year Target
	Commissioner's Report	The commissioner consistently reports to the State Board on progress towards implementation of the State Board's goals.	• Agendas Alignment • 6 Month Target • 1 Year Target
	KSDE Staff & Educator Reports	KSDE staff and Kansas educators consistently report on progress towards implementation of the State Board's goals.	• Agendas Alignment • 6 Month Target • 1 Year Target
	Friday Notes	Each Friday there are resources shared that highlight research or other learning opportunities related to the State Board's goals.	• Agendas Alignment • 6 Month Target • 1 Year Target
	Educator Engagements	State Board members seek opportunities to engage Educators across Kansas to better understand how the State Board's goals are being implemented and are targeted to school improvement.	• Agendas Alignment • 6 Month Target • 1 Year Target
	Community Engagements	State Board members seek opportunities to engage Community members across Kansas to better understand how the State Board's goals are being implemented.	• Agendas Alignment • 6 Month Target • 1 Year Target
Kansas State Department of Education www.ksde.org #KansansCan			
Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.			

Academic Preparation

The number of Kansas students who are preparing for success after high school graduation has increased by 33% since 2021, according to the College Board. More students are taking postsecondary classes, earning dual credits for postsecondary courses and taking AP exams with scores of 3, 4, or 5.



New state assessments and cut scores

KSDE introduced a new assessment in 2025, and cut scores were developed accordingly. Kansas educators who came together in June 2025 to set the cut scores also addressed what multiple measures have shown to be a long-standing misalignment between assessment scores and actual student performance.

Through an in-depth study comparing individual state assessment results with ACT scores, AP coursework, dual credit, graduation rates and postsecondary outcomes, these educators found previous performance levels did not accurately reflect student readiness.

- This misalignment penalized students unfairly. Only about one in four Kansas high school students scored at Level 3 or 4 on state assessments, yet more than half went on to succeed in college or career pathways.
- Previous Kansas assessment cut scores were out of step nationally. In many cases, students had to score in the top 25% nationally to be labeled “proficient.” Educators noted examples of students at Level 2 on state assessments earning ACT scores of 22 – an inconsistency that eroded trust in the system.

“This process is about accuracy, fairness and alignment, not lowering expectations,” said Kansas Education Commissioner Dr. Randy Watson. “Kansas educators led this process, using their professional expertise and data to set cut scores that reflect what our students truly know and can do.”

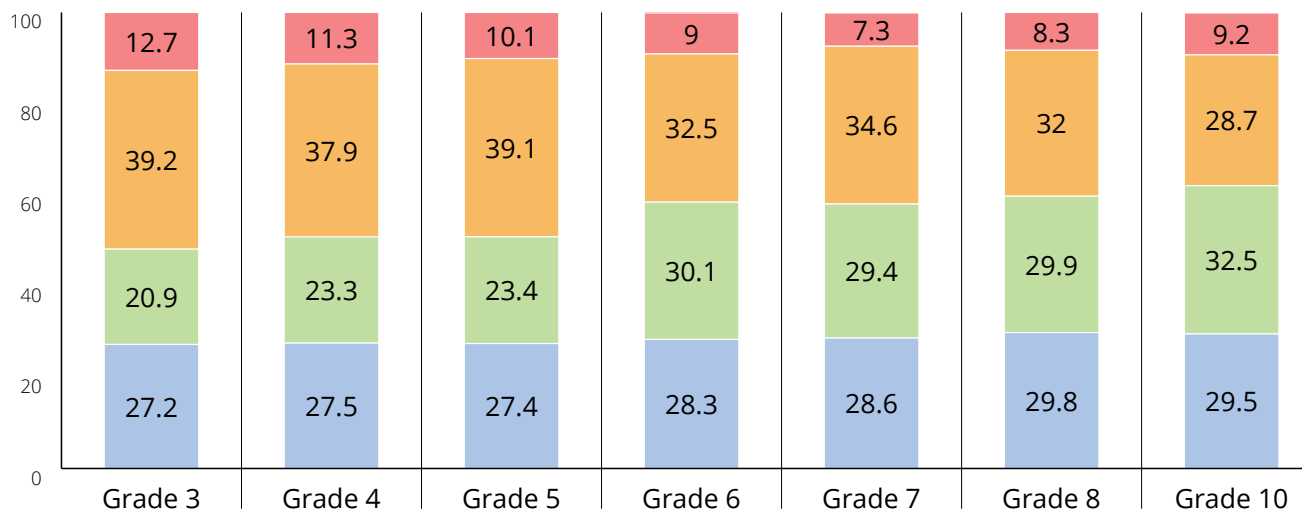
ACADEMIC PREPARATION

The Kansas assessment student performances are scored using four levels:

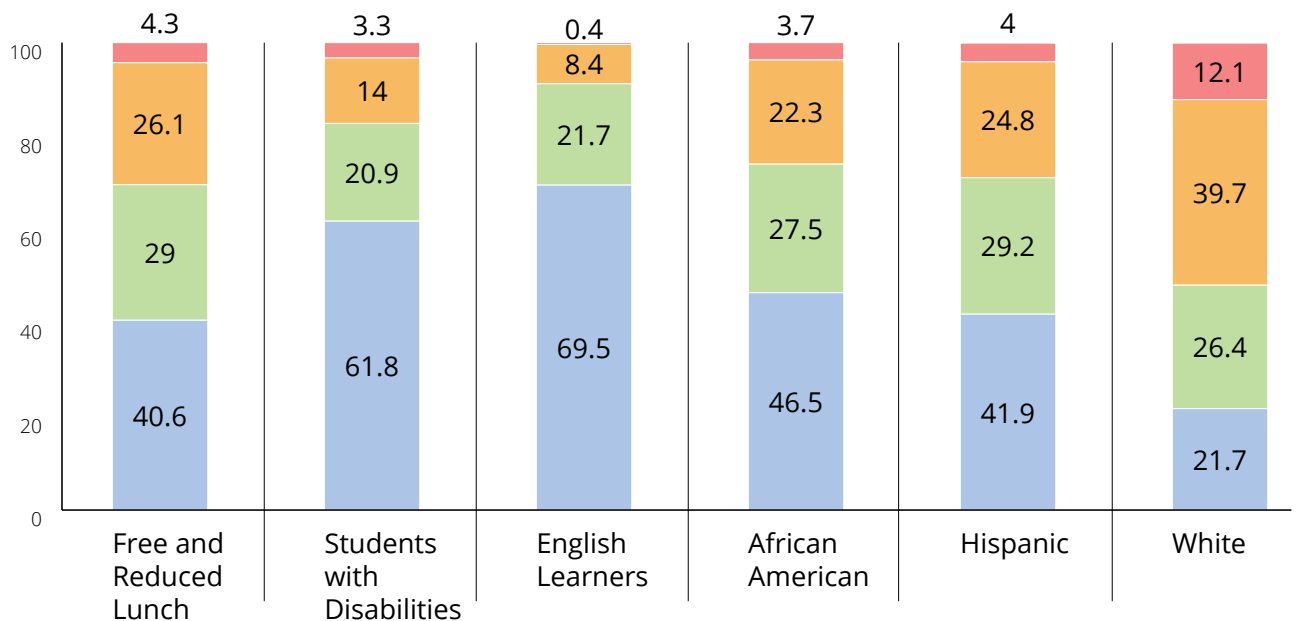
- Level 1:** A student at Level 1 shows a **limited** ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills of (third, fourth, fifth, etc.) grade (ELA, math, science) standards.
- Level 2:** A student at Level 2 shows a **basic** ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills of (third, fourth, fifth, etc.) grade (ELA, math, science) standards.
- Level 3:** A student at Level 3 shows a **proficient** ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills of (third, fourth, fifth, etc.) grade (ELA, math, science) standards.
- Level 4:** A student at Level 4 shows an **advanced** ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills of (third, fourth, fifth, etc.) grade (ELA, math, science) standards.

2025 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

BY GRADE



BY SUBGROUP



ACADEMIC PREPARATION

The Kansas assessment student performances are scored using four levels:

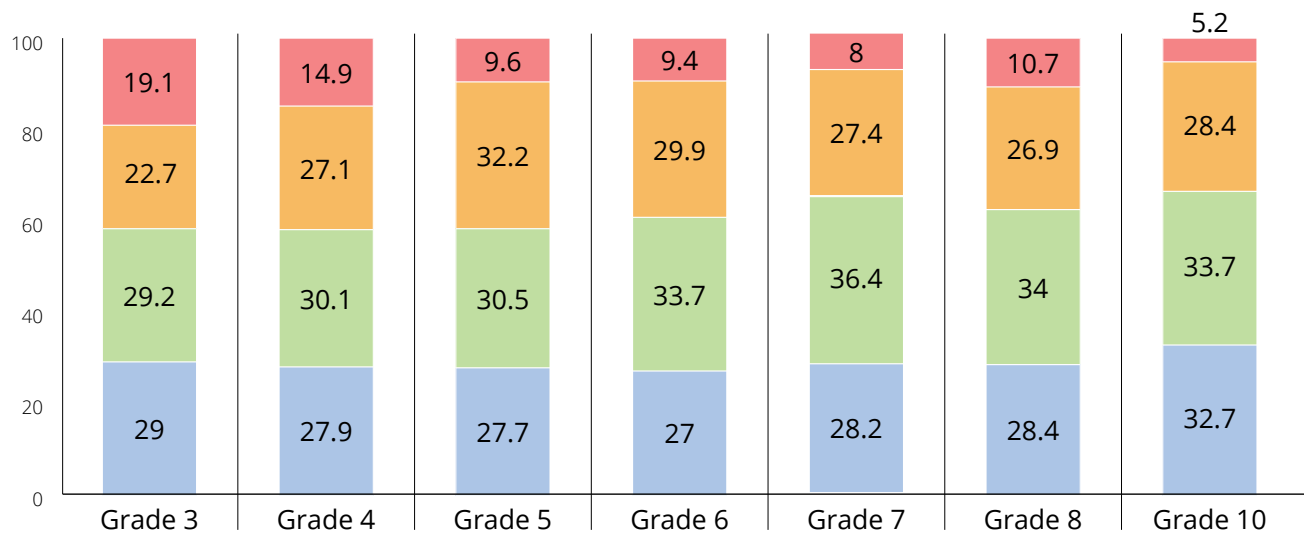
Level 1: A student at Level 1 shows a **limited** ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills of (third, fourth, fifth, etc.) grade (ELA, math, science) standards.

Level 2: A student at Level 2 shows a **basic** ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills of (third, fourth, fifth, etc.) grade (ELA, math, science) standards.

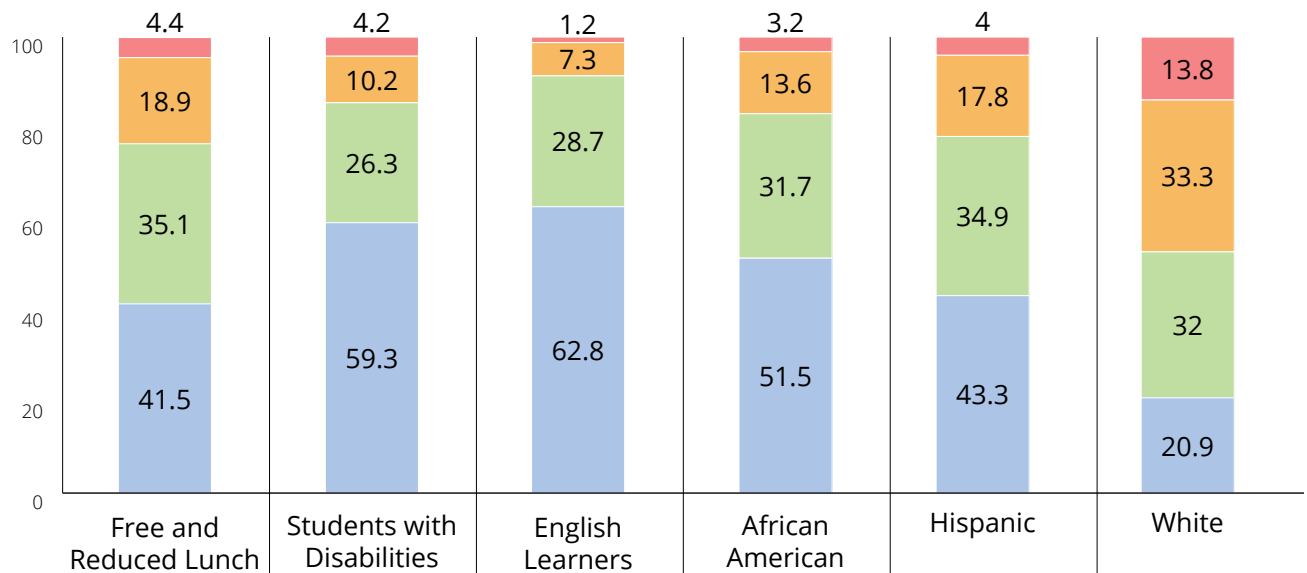
Level 3: A student at Level 3 shows a **proficient** ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills of (third, fourth, fifth, etc.) grade (ELA, math, science) standards.

Level 4: A student at Level 4 shows an **advanced** ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills of (third, fourth, fifth, etc.) grade (ELA, math, science) standards.

2025 MATH BY GRADE



BY SUBGROUP



Graduation

The Kansas high school graduation rate broke another record for the class of 2025, coming in at 90.5%, up a full percentage point from the previous year's 89.5% that had been the highest in state history and a 4.4% increase since 2015.

Over the same 10-year period, graduation rates also increased 6.1% for English language learners, 8.5% for students who qualify for free and reduced meals and 7.3% for students with disabilities.

Several data points contributed to the 90.5% rate for the 2024-25 school year. Those points include the highest number of Kansas high school students taking college-level courses, earning dual credits and high school students taking Advanced Placement exams (and earning the highest scores of 3, 4 and 5 on the AP exam; see p. 14). The graduation rate also reflects the state's highest ever number of Kansas high school students taking career and technical education (CTE) courses which national data indicate CTE students stay on track to graduate.

The 2025 Kansas Legislature passed Senate Bill 45 that established an alternative calculation for the yearly graduation rate. However, currently for accreditation purposes, districts and school systems continue to calculate their graduation rate based on federal law.

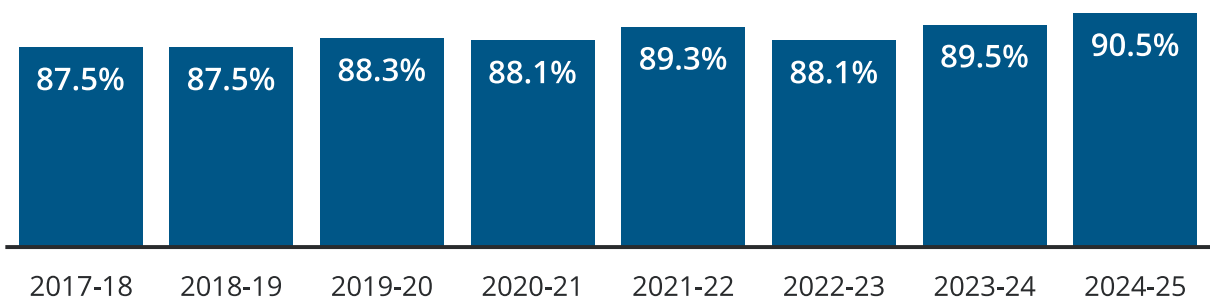
In Aug. 2025, the Kansas State Board of Education approved graduation standards as a requirement of the accreditation process known as KESA 2.0. These graduation standards go into effect for the 2026-27 school year.

The KESA graduation rate is calculated by taking a district or school system's total number of graduates from the five most recent graduating classes and dividing by the total number of students in the four-year cohort in each of those classes.

The KESA graduation standards' performance categories beginning in the 2026-27 school year include the following:

- Districts and school systems will be considered to have exceeded performance expectations if they have a graduation rate of 95% or higher.
- Districts and school systems will be considered to have met performance expectations if they have a graduation rate of 88% to 94.9% and the KESA graduation rate doesn't decrease more than 2% from one KESA graduation cohort to the next the following year. A "meets performance expectations" designation can also be achieved by having a lower than 88% KESA graduation rate but the rate increases from one cohort to the next.
- Districts and school systems will be identified for improvement toward performance expectations if they have a KESA graduation rate between 88% and 94.9% and the rate decreases more than 2.0% from one KESA graduation cohort to the next. A KESA graduation rate below 88.0% and a rate that doesn't increase from one cohort to the next can also identify a district or school system for improvement toward performance expectations.

Graduation Rate



GRADUATION

Graduation Requirements

The high school freshman during the 2024-25 school year comprised the first graduating class in 2028 who fall under the new minimum high school graduation requirements approved by the Kansas State Board of Education in 2024.

The minimum number of credits required to receive a diploma remain at 21. However, how students attain these credits has changed to the following:

- 3.5 credits of ELA and one-half credit of communication.
- 1 STEM elective
- .5 credit of physical education and a .5 credit of health
- .5 credit of financial literacy and 4.5 electives aligned with their individual plan of study (IPS).
- Completion of at least two postsecondary assets as defined by the State Board.

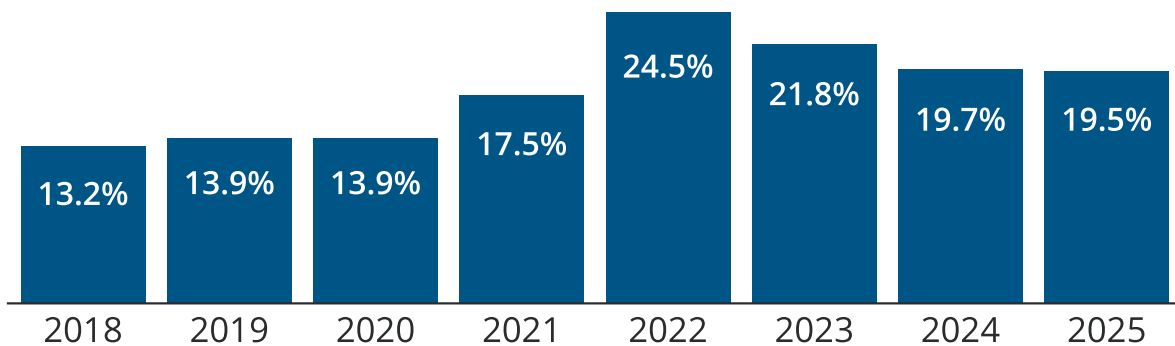
Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is defined as a student missing school 10% or more of the time for excused and unexcused absences. It can be caused by multiple factors including student disengagement, little to no access to supports and student and/or family health challenges.

High school students who are chronically absent are four times more likely not to graduate, according to the U.S. Department of Education. This includes a higher likelihood third-graders will fall behind in reading and sixth graders failing subjects.

The rate of chronic absenteeism in Kansas has continued to decrease since 2022 when it hit a high of 24.5% just as the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning to subside. The rate dropped nearly three percentage points to 21.8% in 2023. From there, it fell another two percentages points to 19.7% in 2024 and then went down another .2 percentage point to 19.5% in 2025.

Chronic Absenteeism



Postsecondary Success

The Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce conducted a state-by-state research study that predicts 73% of the jobs in Kansas will require some form of education after high school graduation by 2031. This will require 70-75% of all the state's high school graduates complete some level of postsecondary education. To meet the state's workforce needs, this includes attaining a two- or four-year degree, completing a certification program or entering the military.

From 2019 to 2023, the five-year postsecondary effectiveness average rate stayed flat at 50%, from the previous 2018–2022 rate. Data that points to expected future growth of the five-year postsecondary effectiveness average include the 2024-25 high school graduation rate of 90.5%, the highest in state history, along with record-setting numbers of Kansas high school students earning dual college credits and taking Advanced Placement tests and earning the highest scores of 3, 4 and 5 (see p. 14).

The number of high school graduates taking career and technical education (CTE) courses increased by 8.5% from 2021-22 to 2024-25. The number of high school graduates enrolled in technical colleges has also increased by 68.2% since 2015 and by 38.5% since 2021. These data points indicate expected future growth in the postsecondary effectiveness rate.



Photo: Ryan Mellick, (pictured on the front row, far right), a member of the 2025 Kansas Teacher of the Year team, poses with his industrial technology class at Bonner Springs High School, Bonner Springs USD 204. (Photo submitted by Ryan Mellick)

Initiatives

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Recruiting more teachers into the classroom and growing the state’s educator workforce remained priorities for KSDE and its partner organizations.

The KSDE teacher licensure team remains committed to increasing the number of participants in the Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program (RTAP), a grow-your-own initiative that allows school districts to encourage their paraprofessionals or other district staff members to become certified teachers and provide them the financial means to do so. Go to <https://www.ksde.gov/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Teacher-Licensure-TL/Registered-Teacher-Apprenticeship> for more information about the RTAP.

The RTAP is a four-year competency-based apprenticeship. Districts build on-the-job training plans for their apprentices based on their teacher training rubric, so that each apprentice can learn, practice, and become proficient with all competencies required to be a teacher.

The RTAP rapidly grew from 12 apprentices representing six districts during the 2023-24 school year to 90 participants representing 42 districts during the 2024-25 school year. The 2025 fall cohort has 166 apprentices representing 74 districts.

Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program

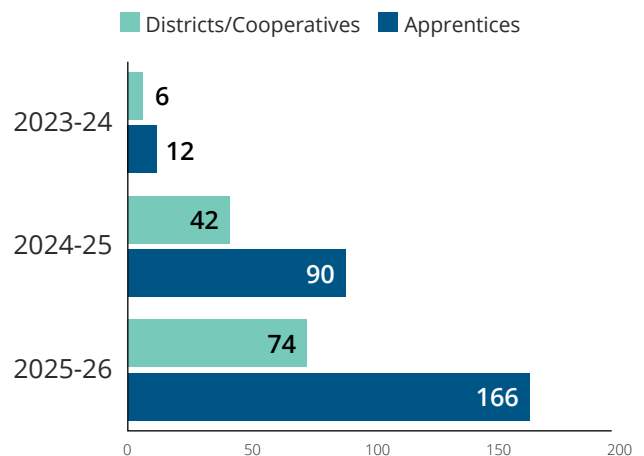
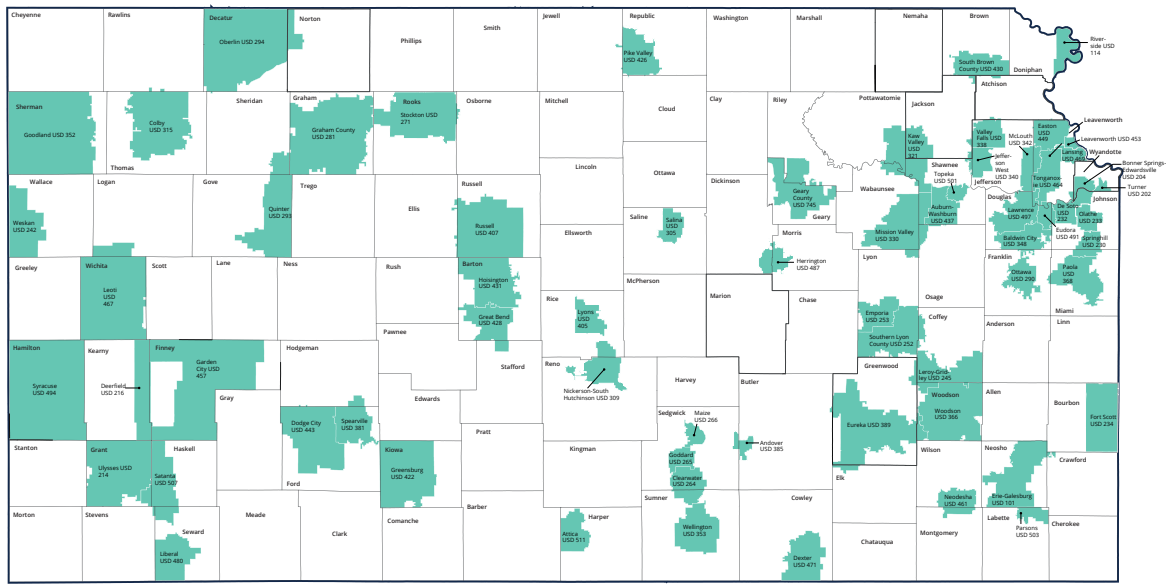


Photo: Kansas Education Commissioner Dr. Randy Watson, State Board members and KSDE leaders spoke with and inspired Kansas high school students attending the Kansas Future Teachers Academy at Emporia State University in July 2025. (Photo submitted by Todd Roberts, Emporia State University)

2025-26 Registered Teacher Apprentice Program Cohort Members



Kansas Legislative Research Department July 23, 2025

- Andover USD 385
- ANW Special Education Interlocal 603
- Attica USD 511
- Auburn-Washburn USD 437
- Baldwin City USD 348
- Bonner Springs USD 204
- Brown County Kansas Education Interlocal 615
- Clearwater USD 264
- Colby USD 315
- Deerfield USD 216
- Desoto USD 232
- Dexter USD 471
- Dodge City USD 443
- East Central Kansas Cooperative in Education 614
- Easton USD 449
- Emporia USD 253
- Erie-Galesburg USD 101
- Eudora USD 491
- Eureka USD 389
- Fort Scott USD 234
- Garden City USD 457
- Geary County USD 475
- Goddard USD 265
- Goodland USD 352
- Graham County USD 281
- Great Bend USD 428
- Greensburg USD 422
- Herrington USD 487
- Hoisington USD 431
- Jefferson West USD 340
- Kansas State School for the Blind
- Kaw Valley USD 321
- Lansing USD 469
- Lawrence USD 497
- Leavenworth USD 453
- Leoti USD 467
- Leroy-Gridley USD 245
- Liberal USD 480
- Lyons USD 405
- Maize USD 266
- Marion County Special Education Cooperative 617
- McLouth USD 342
- Mission Valley USD 330
- Neodesha USD 461
- Nickerson-South Hutchinson USD 309
- Oberlin USD 294
- Olathe USD 233
- Ottawa USD 290
- Paola USD 368
- Parsons USD 503
- Pike Valley USD 426
- Quinter USD 293
- Reno County Special Education Cooperative 610
- Riverside USD 114
- Russell USD 407
- Salina USD 305
- Satanta USD 507
- South Brown County USD 430
- South East Special Education Cooperative 637
- Southern Lyon County USD 252
- Southwest Kansas Area Cooperative 613
- Spearville USD 381
- Springhill USD 230
- Stockton USD 271
- Sumner County Educational Services 619
- Syracuse USD 494
- Tonganoxie USD 464
- Topeka Public Schools USD 501
- Turner USD 202
- Ulysses USD 214
- Valley Falls USD 338
- Wellington USD 353
- Weskan USD 242
- Woodson USD 366

INITIATIVES

In July 2025, the Kansas State Board of Education approved adding separate graduate degree and youth apprenticeship tracks to the Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program (RTAP). The board also approved the MeadowLARK grant from the Kansas Office of Registered Apprenticeship to fund the additional tracks.

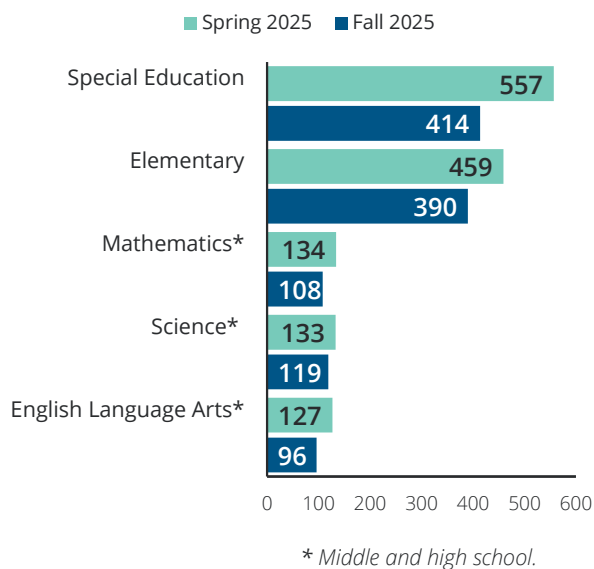
In Aug. 2025, the RTAP was nominated for a “To the Stars: Kansas Business Award.” The annual award program, managed by the Kansas Department of Commerce, recognizes companies and individuals around the state for the positive impact they make on the Kansas economy and their communities.

Teacher Vacancy Assignments

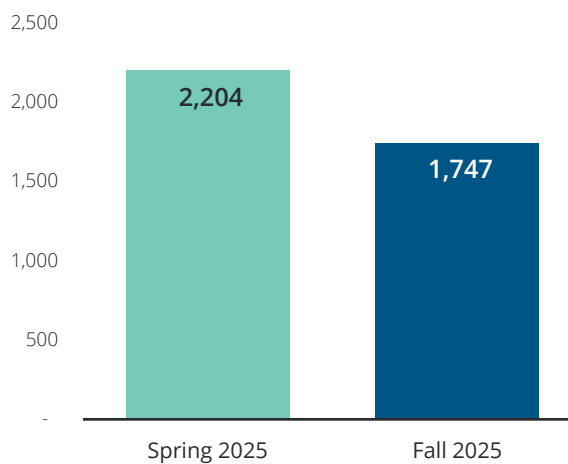
Although there was a decline in the number of vacancies from the spring to the fall, special education and elementary educators remained the top two highest in-need categories. Mathematics and science switched places from the spring to the fall and English language arts remained the fifth highest category for vacancies.

The number of licensed educator vacancies in Kansas decreased by 457 from spring to fall in 2025, representing a 21% reduction, something that is worth celebrating in the ongoing efforts to fill the gaps in the state’s educator workforce.

Top Five Teacher Vacancies



Total Reported Educator Vacancies



Blue Ribbon Task Force on Student Screen Time

In Dec. 2025, the Kansas State Board of Education voted to accept the final report of the Blue-Ribbon Task Force on Student Screen Time that outlines recommended guidance for student use of digital technology in schools. The vote included authorizing the Kansas State Department of Education to release the report to districts.

The task force's report can be accessed here:

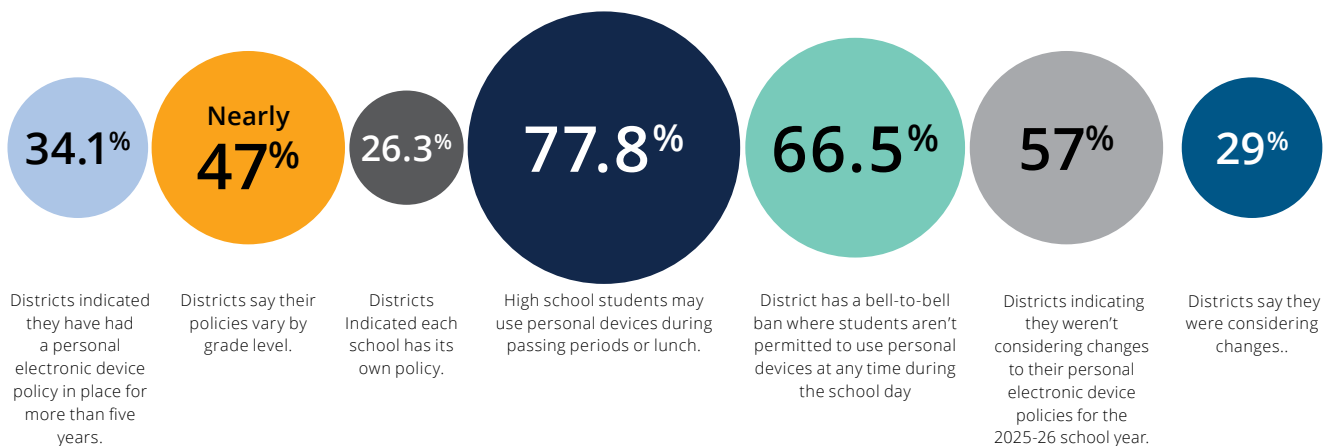
<https://www.ksde.gov/Agency/Office-of-the-Commissioner/BlueRibbonTaskForceOnScreenTime>

This evidence-based report developed by the 36-member task force, comprised of students, parents, administrators and state lawmakers, serves as guidance for local boards who want to create new or modify their current student technology policies. State Board members believe local boards, districts and communities should decide what digital policies they want to adopt for their own students.

In July 2025, the State Board received results of a survey taken by superintendents across the state, asking them what their policies are regarding students' use of personal devices during the school day.

According to the survey, 34.1% of districts indicated they have had a personal electronic device policy in place for more than five years. Nearly 47% of districts say their policies vary by grade level while 26.3% indicated each school has its own policy. Another 77.8% said their high school students may use personal devices during passing periods or lunch, and 66.5% said their district has a bell-to-bell ban where students aren't permitted to use personal devices at any time during the school day.

Other survey results include 57% of districts indicating they weren't considering changes to their personal electronic device policies for the 2025-26 school year while 29% say they were considering changes.



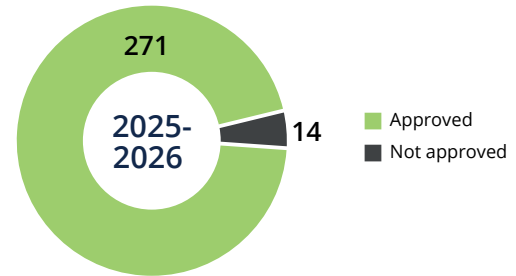
INITIATIVES

Kindergarten Readiness

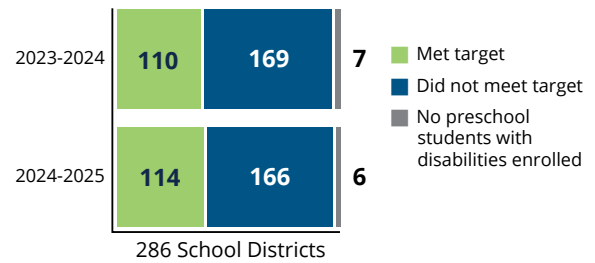
During the 2024-25 school year, Kansas early childhood programs made progress on two important indicators of program quality that help get our youngest Kansans ready to learn when they enter kindergarten.

- A record number of Parents as Teachers programs in Kansas, 96, earned the prestigious “Blue Ribbon Endorsement” from the Parents as Teachers National Center during the 2024-25 school year. This endorsement recognizes the top-performing home visiting programs within the Parents as Teachers international network. In April, the 2025 Kansas Legislature and Gov. Laura Kelly created the Office of Early Childhood with the passage of House Bill 2045. The Kansas Parents as Teachers and other home visiting programs will be included under the umbrella of this office beginning July 1, 2026. Local school districts will still operate their own PAT programs following this change next year.
- During the 2024-25 school year, 114 Kansas school districts met federal Indicator 6 targets for providing early learning opportunities for preschool students with disabilities, four more districts than in 2023-24. Providing excellent early learning opportunities for preschool students with disabilities is an important area of focus as districts seek to improve kindergarten readiness.

School Districts With Approved Preschool-Aged At-Risk Programs

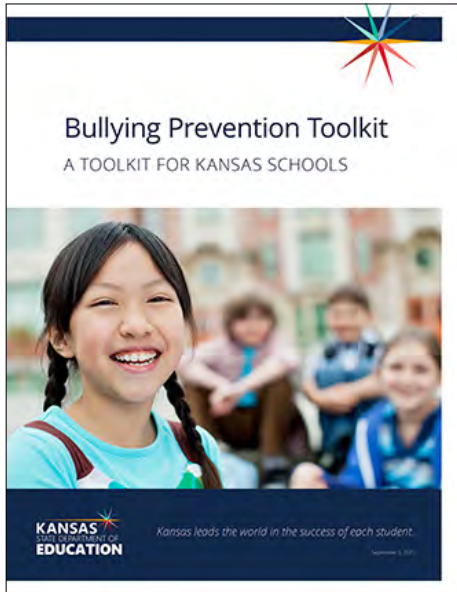


School Districts That Met Federal Indicator 6 Targets



Social-Emotional Growth

Educators across the state continue to employ the Kansans Can Competencies in their classrooms ensure students are developing critical thinking skills that lead to resiliency in an ever-challenging world.



Building these non-academic skills can help stem negative behaviors including bullying and suicide ideation. During the 2024-25 academic year, KSDE developed standards-aligned toolkits for school mental health professionals and other educators to address bullying and suicide. An estimated 1,200 school mental health professionals have trained on the suicide prevention toolkit. The *Bullying Prevention Toolkit* was finalized in Sept. 2025.

KSDE has helped further the work of various interagency consultation teams. One such team is the Educational Service Centers mental health team that ensures professional development and other resources are consistently provided across Kansas to schools' mental health staff, teachers and administrators.

The other team is a school mental health leadership team made up of representatives from the Kansas School Social Workers Association, Kansas Association of School Nurses, Kansas School Counselors Association, and the Kansas School Psychologists Association.

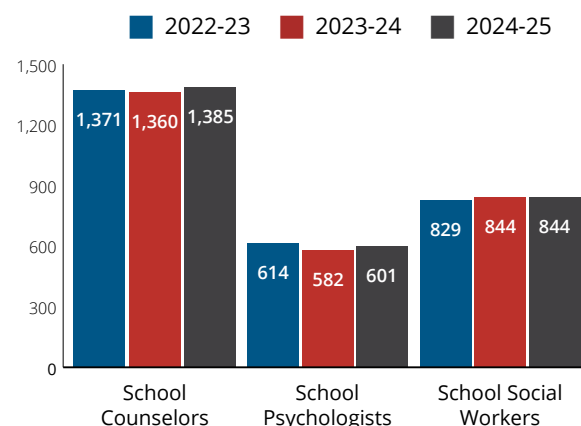
KSDE continued its work to ensure the Kansans Can Competencies are embedded in the KESA school improvement model's Four Fundamentals of structured literacy, standards alignment, balanced assessment and quality instruction. Additionally, KSDE completed the development of grade-span learning indicators for the Kansas Curricular Student Competencies for Pre-K-12 physical education for developing personal and social skills related to movement.

These competencies help students develop the personal responsibility, social awareness, and responsible decision-making skills necessary to exhibit empathy and respect for others and foster and maintain relationships. In addition, students develop skills for communication, leadership, cultural awareness, and conflict resolution in a variety of physical activity settings.

School counselors, school psychologists and school social workers

The ratios for students to school counselors, school psychologists and school social workers remained above recommended ratios during the 2024-25 school year. However, the number of Kansas school counselors and school psychologists increased from 2023-24 to 2024-25. The number of school social workers remained flat after increasing from 2022-23 to 2023-24.

School Mental Health Personnel 2022-2025



INITIATIVES

Civic Engagement

Believing connectedness in one's community is a leading indicator of a successful Kansas high school graduate, the Kansas State Board of Education adopted civic engagement as an outcome of their Kansans Can vision.

Civic engagement is defined as individuals sharing their skills and knowledge through actions intended to improve communities, states, nations, the world, and themselves.

Under the umbrella of the Kansas State Department of Education since 2018, the Kansas Volunteer Commission has championed the State Board's civic engagement outcome through the work of the Civic Advocacy Network (CAN). This network promotes Pre-K-12 civic engagement as a part of all students' experiences by recognizing schools that actively involve students in civic engagement.

Kansas ranked fifth in the nation for the number of citizens engaged in volunteerism, according to the latest AmeriCorps' Volunteering and Civic Life in America Report. The majority of the Kansas Volunteer Commission's work is through AmeriCorps that has a strong focus on education.

Despite experiencing federal funding setbacks during the spring of 2025 that impacted the AmeriCorps program, the Kansas Volunteer Commission continued to plan for the Civic Advocacy Network conference set for Nov. 2025.



The following schools have received the 2025 Civic Advocacy Network award:

North Lyon County USD 251

Northern Heights High School

Derby USD 260

Derby Middle School

Derby High School

Salina USD 305

Sunset Elementary School

Heusner Elementary School

Colby USD 315

Colby High School

Colby Middle School

Colby Elementary School

Buhler USD 313

Buhler Grade School

Wamego USD 320

Wamego High School

Kaw Valley USD 321

Rossville Grade School

Solomon USD 393

Solomon High School

Geary County USD 475

Morris Hill Elementary

Derby USD 260 is the only Kansas school district to manage its own AmeriCorps grant. The district recruits its own high school-aged members and adults in the community; the district's AmeriCorps program supports USD 260's early childhood programs, kindergarten readiness summer camp and math and reading and small group interventions done by high school students.

The majority of the Kansas Volunteer Commission's work is through AmeriCorps that has a strong focus on education. According to the latest data available from the AmeriCorps' Volunteering and Civic Life in America Report, Kansans increased their formal volunteering by 8.1% from 2021 to 2023. The average rate for formal volunteering for Kansas was 39.6%, well above the national rate of 28.3%.

Individual Plan of Study

The Individual Plan of Study (IPS) incorporates coherence, a key tenant of the Kansas Education System Accreditation's (KESA) school improvement process. It provides an aligned, guided roadmap for a student's coursework to achieve their academic goals, increasing their employability and chances of success in their postsecondary pursuits. This coherent approach is the foundation for the partnership between the business community and schools to prepare students for high-demand, high-wage jobs to keep the Kansas workforce and economy thriving.

The student, school staff members and family members work collaboratively to develop a flexible IPS aligned with the following components:

- A graduated series of strength finders and career interest inventories to help students identify their preference toward career clusters.
- Eighth- through 12th-grade course-builder function with course selections based on career interests.
- A general postsecondary plan (workforce, military, certification program, two- or four-year college).
- A portable electronic portfolio which promotes self-reflection and gives the student greater ownership in assessing and articulating their learning. It also provides them with a resource they can use for future employment.

The original IPS scope and sequence was developed for eighth- through 12th-grade students. That document was expanded during the 2024-25 academic year to include a Pre-K through seventh grade scope and sequence.



Photo: Valley Center USD 262 second grade students have been getting a real-world lessons in business for the past 10 years through their English language arts curriculum. They've used math, social studies, teamwork, public speaking, and active listening to create their own popcorn businesses. (Photo courtesy of Valley Center USD 262)

INITIATIVES

Career and Technical Education Initiatives

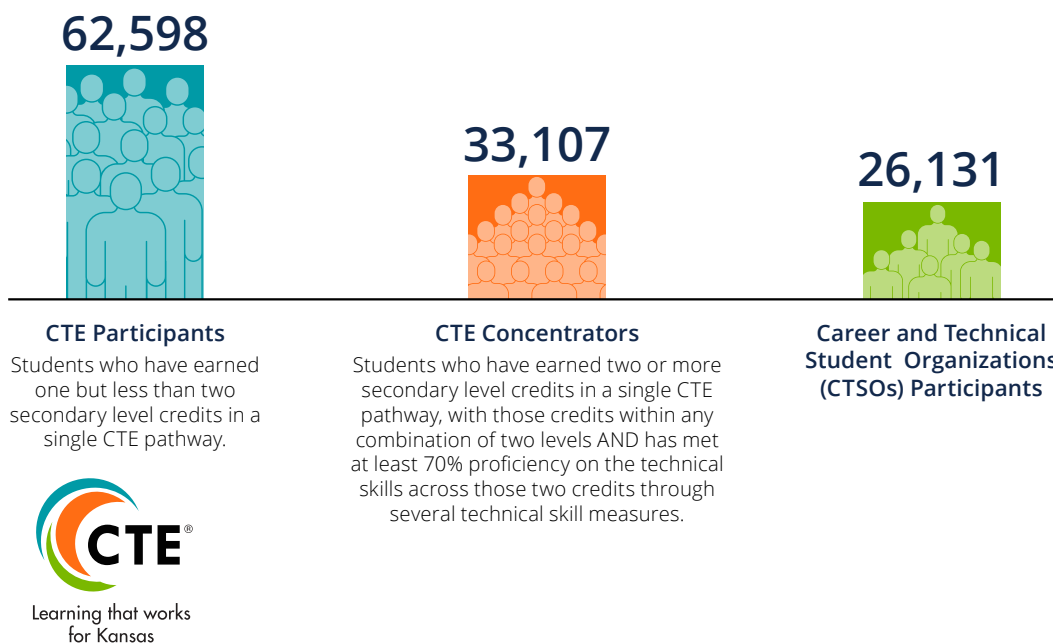
KSDE is taking a systemic, coherent approach in working with the Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL), the Kansas Department of Commerce (KDC) and the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) to provide the latest high-wage, high-demand job data to Kansas students and their families. One example of this collaboration is a website KDOL developed in early 2025 called, "Today's Occupations, Tomorrow's Opportunities," or "T.O.T.O.," that is intentionally categorized by the KSDE career clusters and pathways.

The Kansas career clusters and pathways were updated in Jan. 2025 with the 2025 KSDE CTE Resource Guide posted on the KSDE Individual Plan of Study (IPS) webpage. This guide focuses on seven main industries in Kansas with the state's occupations organized around knowledge and skills that have common characteristics and job duties, known as career clusters. These pathways lay out the career, education and training options students can follow toward their future occupation.

In Feb. 2025, KSDE unveiled the postsecondary readiness digital reference guide during the state's annual CTE conference. CTE teachers requested this resource that included input from industry representatives on the Kansas Advisory Council for Career and Technical Education (KACCTE). For the first time, this resource centralizes the information districts need for their postsecondary preparation programs.

Since Oct. 2024, Kansas has been one of eight states that are early adopters of the National Career Clusters® framework for the healthcare and human services careers. The other states include Arkansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Montana, New Mexico, South Dakota and Tennessee. Supported by medical and social services, the goal of this cluster is to improve the overall health of individuals, families and communities through technical, mental and therapeutic services.

2024 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Student Participation



Kansans Can Star Recognition Program

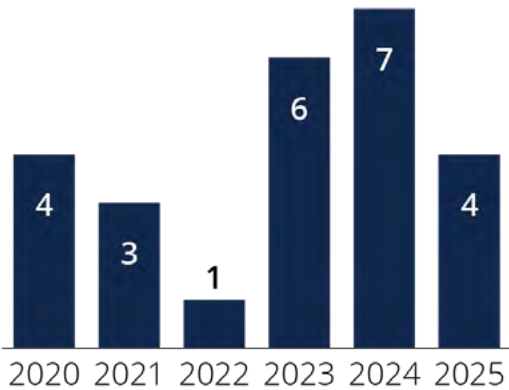
The Kansas State Board of Education and the Kansas State Department of Education have honored districts across the state with the Kansans Can Star Recognition Program since 2020, recognizing districts that have excelled quantitatively and qualitatively. Districts have the opportunity to receive gold, silver, bronze and copper awards based on their level of achievement in the following categories:

- **Quantitative measures:** Academically prepared for postsecondary success. High school graduation. Postsecondary success.
- **Qualitative measures:** Social-emotional growth. Kindergarten readiness. Individual plan of study. Civic engagement.

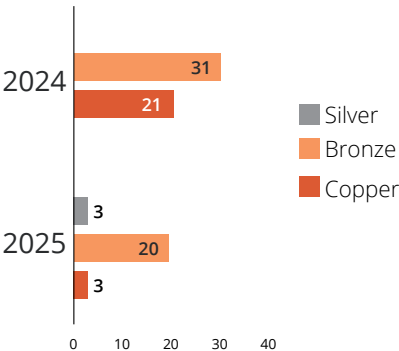
KSDE automatically calculates the quantitative measures for Star Recognition based on district-level data submitted to KSDE. Districts have to submit applications for recognition of qualitative measures. During the 2024-25 school year, work concluded on revamping the qualitative application to better align with current practices and KSDE initiatives. Districts needed to reapply to be considered for recognition by these measures.

The Commissioner’s Award recognizes districts that outperform their predicted postsecondary effective rate above a .40 standard deviation. In 2025, there were four districts that received the Commissioner’s Award with Highest Distinction.

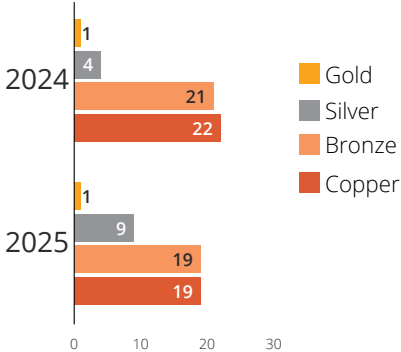
Commissioner’s Award with Highest Distinction



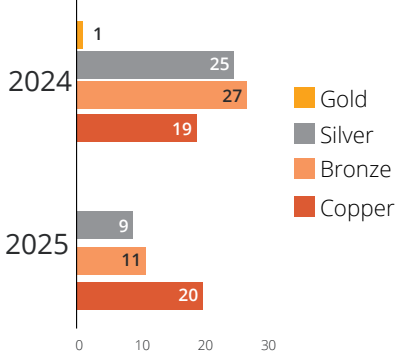
Kindergarten Readiness



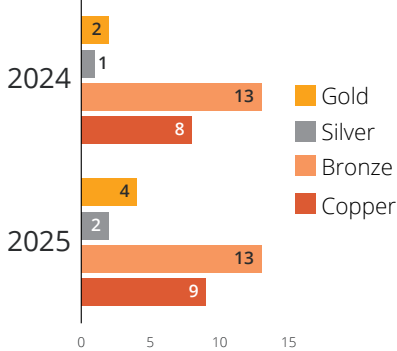
Individual Plan of Study



Social-Emotional Growth



Civic Engagement



The Kansas Math Project



The Kansas Math Project (KMP) is a robust professional learning program that supports Pre-K-12 educators and administrators in strengthening their strategies for teaching mathematics. This evidence-based initiative uses modules aligned with the Kansas math standards and the school improvement model approved by the Kansas State Board of Education in 2024 to further a strong understanding of math content.

The KMP, in partnership with the Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment (MTSS), continued to offer training modules throughout the 2024-25 academic year with the opportunity to earn up to seven hours of college credit from Newman University, in Wichita. Data provided by Kansas MTSS shows 1,014 educators were participating in the modules from August 1, 2024, through July 31, 2025.

According to the KMP, these modules “develop the math practitioner’s aptitude to use the language of mathematics, integrate modeling and practice, and incorporate mathematics concepts and procedures that build students’ fluency within the four operations, and their ability to set-up and solve text-based problems.” The work of KMP also expands each participant’s content knowledge of Kansas math standards from preschool to Algebra 2.

KSDE Insight Podcast



In March 2025, Dr. Randy Watson relaunched the KSDE Insight Podcast with a conversation with education leaders about what events have influenced Kansas' and the U.S. education systems for the past 150 years.

Each month, Dr. Watson hosts an episode of the podcast that covers education-centered topics and issues important to families such as literacy skills and the confident reader, the impact of chronic absenteeism on learning, what your child's state assessment results mean and why academic rigor matters, to name a few.



Photo: Kansas Education Commissioner Dr. Randy Watson hosts the KSDE Insight Podcast in July 2025, discussing districts' success in reducing chronic absenteeism with Justin Coffey, principal of Ulysses High School, Ulysses USD 214, Shanna Rector, deputy superintendent of Salina USD 305, and Jenn Reed, assistant superintendent for learning services, Haysville USD 261.

Education Summary

Public School Characteristics



Number enrolled
(headcount enrollment)

000

476,833



Number of Title I
schools

645

School District Characteristics



Number of school districts

285*

* The number of districts in Kansas was reduced due to the closure of Healy USD 468.



Number of schools

1,268

Teachers



Average
age

42.9



Average years of
experience

13



Number of full-time equivalency
(FTE) teachers**

35,289

** Includes special education teachers.



Average teacher
salary ***

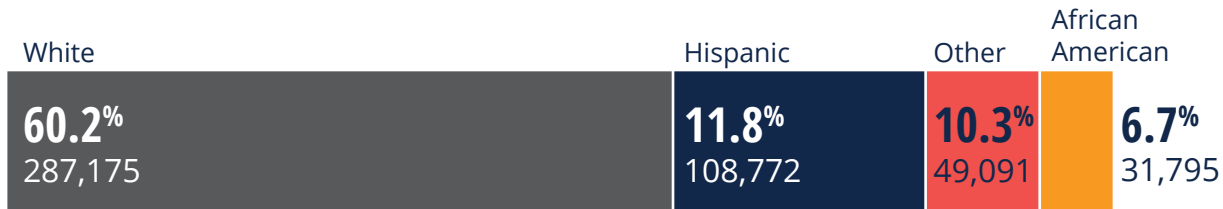
\$67,931

*** Includes supplemental and summer school salaries and fringe benefits.

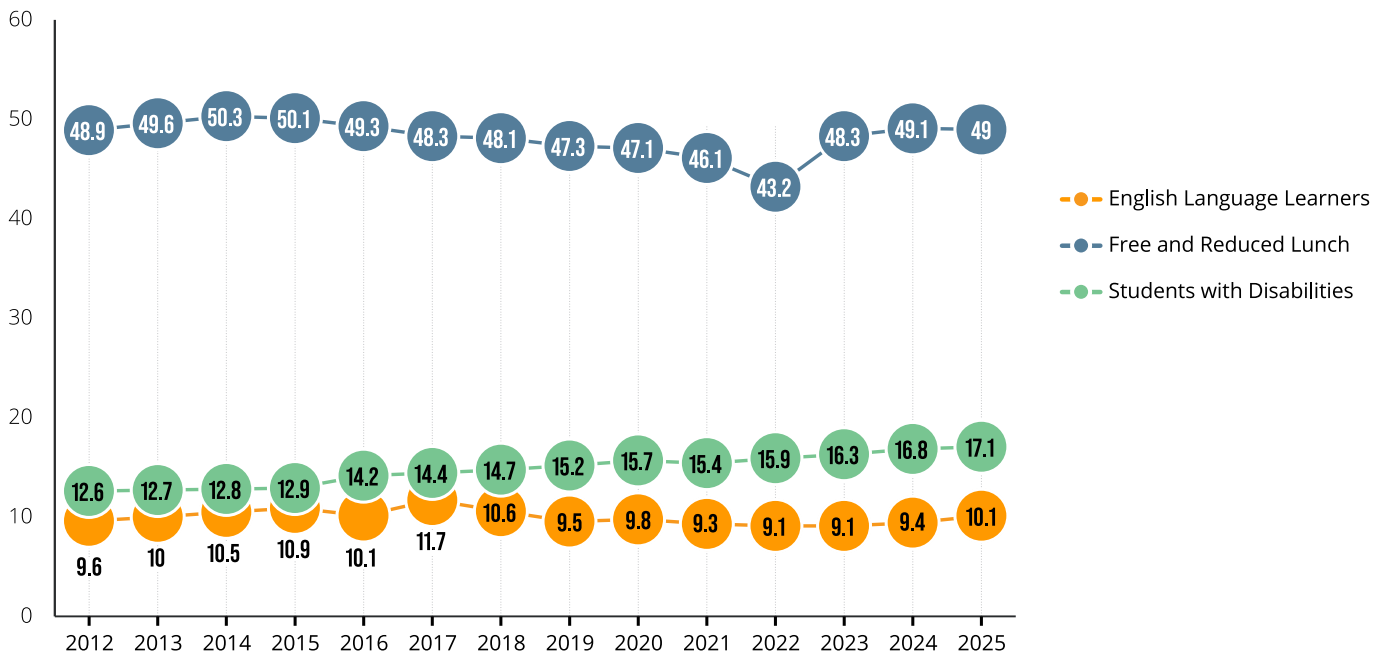
EDUCATION SUMMARY

Student Characteristics

Public schools data only.

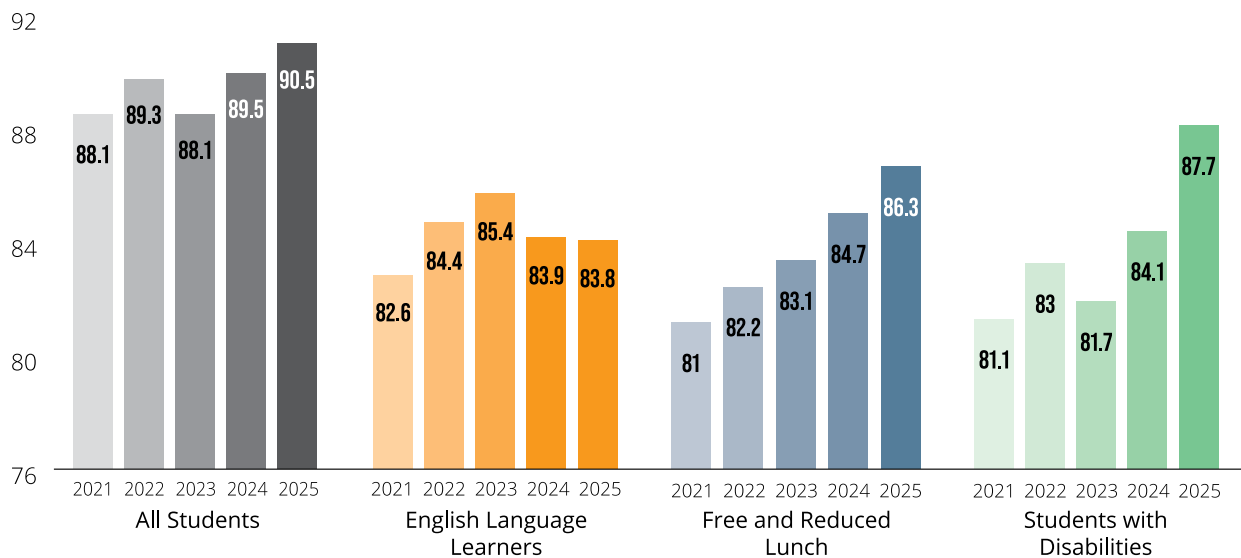


Student Population Subgroups



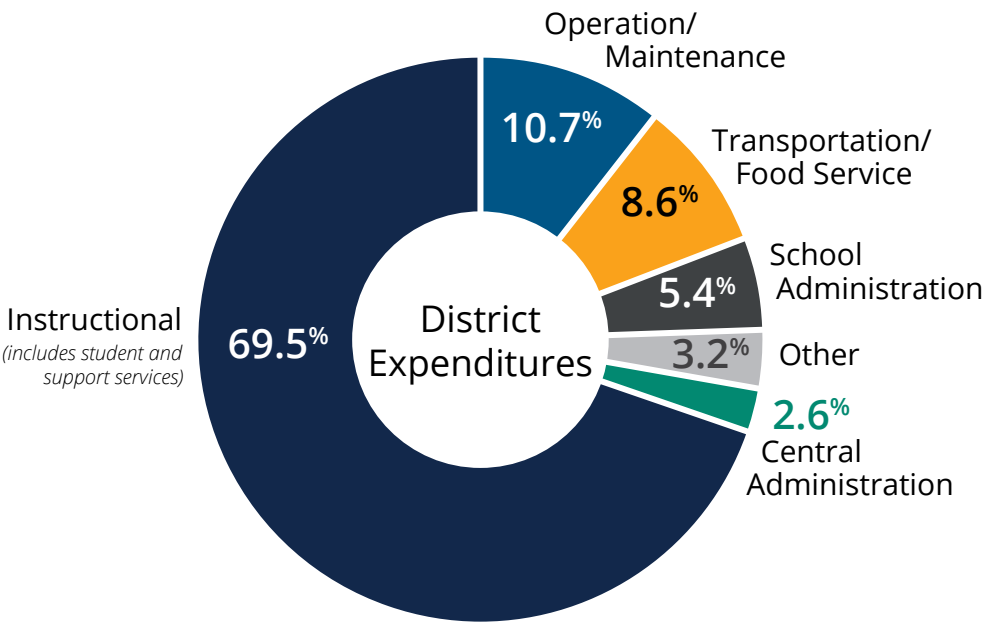
Graduation Subgroups

All students in public and private schools in Kansas.



District Fiscal Summary

Expenditures

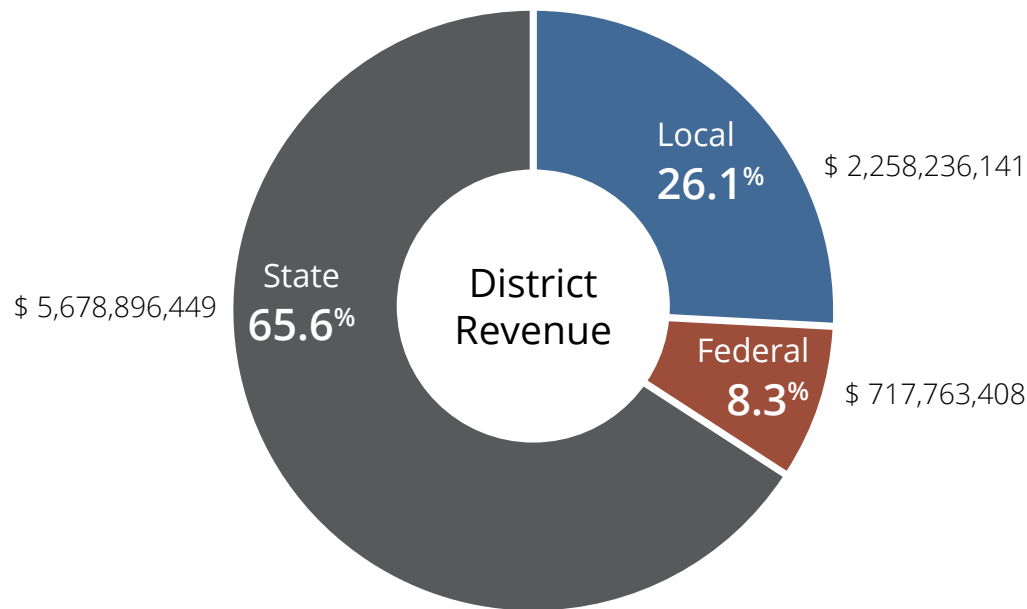


Current operating expenditures	\$ 7,438,289,556
Current operating expenditures per pupil*	\$ 16,207
Total nonoperating expenditures**	\$ 1,216,185,328
Total expenditures	\$ 8,654,474,884
Total expenditures per pupil	\$ 18,858

* Based on FTE of 458,940.1
** Bond, interest, capital outlay

DISTRICT FISCAL SUMMARY

District Expenditures by Revenue Source



DISTRICT FISCAL SUMMARY

For more information, contact:

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