Johnson County School Districts Legislative Priorities 2027

The Johnson County school districts are united in advocating for policies that provide Kansas students with the resources, opportunities and support necessary to succeed. We believe strong public schools are essential to strong communities, a strong workforce and the continued economic success of Kansas.

Fully Fund Special Education

We support the State of Kansas meeting its statutory obligation to fund **92% of excess special education costs** and increased federal funding for special education.

When special education is not funded at the required level, school districts must transfer significant resources from their general operating budgets to provide legally required services. This impacts **all students** by reducing resources available for classrooms, staff, programs and other student needs.

Maintain an Adequate, Equitable and Predictable School Finance System

We support a **constitutional, adequate, equitable and predictable school finance system** that recognizes the actual costs of educating students and provides districts the stability necessary to responsibly plan staffing, programs and facilities.

We oppose arbitrary limitations on school district budgets or local revenue that prevent districts from responding to increasing costs, changing enrollment and the needs of students and communities.

Support and Retain a High-Quality Education Workforce

High-quality educators and support professionals are essential to student success. We support providing school districts the resources and flexibility necessary to **recruit and retain high-quality employees, provide competitive compensation and a livable wage for all staff**, and address workforce shortages.

We also support policies that strengthen retirement benefits and create additional pathways into the education profession.

Protect Local Control and Community-Driven Decision-Making

We support the authority of **locally elected boards of education** to make decisions that best meet the needs and expectations of their students, staff, families and communities.

We oppose unfunded mandates and unnecessary administrative requirements that divert staff time and resources away from students. State policy should establish appropriate

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expectations and accountability while preserving the ability of local communities to determine how those expectations are best achieved.

Support Student and Staff Physical, Mental and Behavioral Health

We support continued investment in programs and partnerships that increase access to **physical, mental and behavioral health services** for students and staff.

Schools play an important role in identifying needs and connecting students and families with appropriate support. Continued state investment helps districts provide safe, healthy learning environments where students are prepared to learn and staff are prepared to serve them.

Prepare Students for College, Careers and the Kansas Workforce

We support continued investment in **career and technical education, work-based learning, apprenticeships, industry-recognized credentials, dual and concurrent credit, and partnerships with businesses and postsecondary institutions**.

Kansas public schools play a critical role in developing the state's future workforce. Policies should expand opportunities for students to graduate prepared for college, careers and meaningful participation in the Kansas economy.

Protect Public Education Funding

We support using **public dollars to support public schools** that serve all students and are accountable to taxpayers.

We oppose programs that divert public resources to private educational institutions that are not required to meet the same standards for student access, transparency, accountability and services as Kansas public schools.

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