

2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

REFLECTION

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

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.

VISION

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

MOTTO

Kansans Can

SUCCESS DEFINED

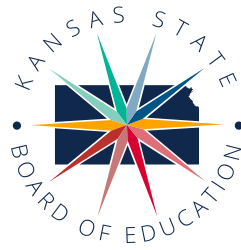
A successful Kansas high school graduate has the

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

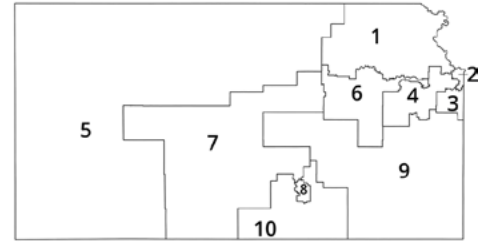
to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

OUTCOMES

- Social-emotional growth
- Kindergarten readiness
- Individual Plan of Study
- Civic engagement
- Academically prepared for postsecondary
- High school graduation
- Postsecondary success



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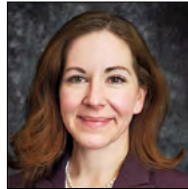


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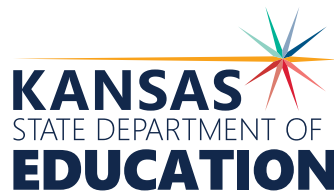


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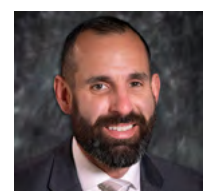
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Dr. S. Craig Neuenswander

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

Division of Learning Services



Dr. Ben Proctor

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Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

Jan. 13, 2023

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Commissioner's Message

With the world's improved understanding of the Coronavirus and the widespread availability of the vaccine, the 2021-2022 school year offered hope of a "return to normal." It also offered our first true glimpse at the impact the pandemic has had on Kansas education.

Students and educators were back in the classroom, but the challenges were far from over. Replacing the need for masks, social distancing and remote learning was the need for addressing learning loss, staff shortages and the mental health of our students and educators. Each of these issues impacting the next, so that one couldn't be fixed without addressing the others.

The welcomed influx of federal COVID-19 relief funds provided schools the opportunity to increase mental health services for students and staff, hire additional staff to support student learning and enhance summer learning programs.

For its part, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) used these funds to invest heavily in comprehensive early literacy training for elementary teachers, to create the highly successfully Sunflower Summer program to foster summer learning and family engagement, and to provide teacher-led professional development conferences across the state.

The Kansas State Board of Education aggressively addressed the teacher and substitute teacher shortages by approving several emergency licensing programs and directing KSDE staff to work with its education partners to find long-term solutions.

We continue to work with an eye toward the future with the goal to improve student academic performance, ensure graduation requirements are aligned to the needs of the current and future workforce, and that school improvement processes are meaningful and transparent. But above all, we continue to commit ourselves and our resources to ensuring the success of each Kansas student.

The impact of the pandemic will be felt for years to come, but I'm proud of how our State Board, schools, teachers, students and community members continue to respond to every challenge placed before them.

Sincerely,

Dr. Randy Watson
Kansas Commissioner of Education



2021-2022 Key Dates

2021

October

- 5:** Federal COVID-19 Funding for Kansas Public and Private Schools Report 2: Expenditures as of June 30, 2021, published.
- 12:** Kansas Commissioner for Education announced that Kansas postsecondary effectiveness rate increased by 4% in four years.
- 12:** ACT research (COVID-19 data impact) showed a decline more severe than any other observed in its history of school-day testing. The impact was most severe for younger students.
- 13:** State Board members hosted legislators to discuss State Board legislative positions for the next legislative session.



November

- 9:** Southern Lyon County USD 252 announced as first district to receive Kansans Can Star Recognition in all eight categories.
- 9:** The State Board approved new educator preparation program standards for deaf/hard of hearing, birth through third grade, pre-K-12.
- 17:** KSDE partnered with Kansas Department of Commerce to offer state's first Youth Registered Apprenticeship.

December

- 7:** Bertram Caruthers Elementary School, Kansas City USD 500, and Lincoln Memorial Elementary School, Caney Valley USD 436, named 2021 National ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) Distinguished Schools.
- 17:** Kansas selected as one of eight states to participate in a demonstration project utilizing Medicaid eligibility data to certify eligible students for free and reduced-price school meals.

2022

January

- 10:** 2022 Horizon Award winners announced.



- 12:** The State Board approved an emergency declaration allowing any individual meeting certain qualifications to apply for a Temporary Emergency Authorized License (TEAL).
- 13:** U.S. Senate Youth delegates announced: Gerrit Dangermond, Oskaloosa High School, and William Rues, La Crosse High School.



- 31:** Gov. Laura Kelly signs proclamation designating February as Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month in Kansas.

February

- 10:** The State Board approved the Kansans Can Redesign plans for nine schools.
- 15:** Federal COVID-19 Funding for Kansas Public and Private Schools Report 3: Expenditures as of Sept. 30, 2021, published.

March

- 8:** The State Board voted to approve establishing a Literacy Advisory Council for the purpose of helping support and advance gains in literacy achievement for all Kansas students.
- 8:** Dr. Ben Proctor named Deputy Commissioner of Learning Services.



- 26-27:** 2023 Kansas Teacher of the Year finalists announced.



April

- 12:** One-hundred-forty Kansas high school seniors named 2022 Kansas CTE Scholars.
- 15:** Ninety-two Kansas schools named recipients of the 2021 Challenge Awards.
- 21:** Federal COVID-19 Funding for Kansas Public and Private Schools Report 4: Expenditures as of December 2021 published.

April

- 26:** Ryan Pfeifer, a science educator at Washburn Rural High School, Auburn-Washburn USD 437, and Megan Morgan, a library and media specialist at Oliver Brown Elementary School, Manhattan-Ogden USD 383, awarded a \$25,000 Milken Educator Awards.



May

- 13:** 2022 Presidential Scholars announced: Shekhar Kumar Gugnani, a senior at Fort Scott High School, Fort Scott USD 234; Jordin Reese MacKenzie, a senior at Blue Valley North High School, Blue Valley USD 229 (U.S. Presidential Scholar in Arts); and Gauri Yadav, a senior at Olathe North High School, Olathe USD 233.



- 17:** Beloit Elementary, Beloit USD 273, named National School of Character; McClure Elementary, Topeka USD 501, named State School of Character.
- 28:** 2022 Sunflower Summer Program launched with 90 participating venues across Kansas.

June

- 17:** The State Board passed two emergency motions modifying licensure requirements in order to help alleviate a shortage of teachers and substitute teachers.



- 24:** Federal COVID-19 Funding for Kansas Public and Private Schools Report 5: Expenditures as of March 31, 2022, published.

July

- 1:** KSDE announced plan to offer a statewide data collection and analytics system to provide educators real-time, actionable insights to guide interventions and programs to improve outcomes for Kansas students.
- 7:** 2022 Sunflower Summer Family Campout at Milford State Park hosted 105 participants; Kansas teachers delivered education sessions.



- 9:** State Board awarded \$5 million in school safety grants and \$10.3 million in grants for school-based mental health services approved by the Kansas Legislature.
- 15:** State Board members authorized any retired teacher who previously had a Kansas teaching license to receive a transitional teaching license for the 2022-2023 school year.

August

- 10:** State Board members approved the recommended performance levels and cut scores for the new 10th grade math assessment.
- 10:** KSDE Child Nutrition and Wellness team announced 2022 recipients of Kansans Can Best Practices Awards.



- 14:** 2022 Sunflower Summer Program closed for the year with 121,198 student participants and 82,636 adult participants.

September

- 15:** State Board members approved KSHSAA amendment to apply an enrollment multiplier factor when determining classification numbers of private high schools.
- 21:** 2021 Blue Ribbon Schools announced: Cottonwood Elementary School, Andover USD 385; Morris Hill Elementary, Geary County USD 475; R.L. Wright Elementary School, Sedgwick USD 439
- 24:** Brian Skinner, an interrelated special education English teacher at Newton High School, Newton USD 373, named 2023 Kansas Teacher of the Year.



- 26:** Kansas Education Commissioner Randy Watson kicked off a 25-district fall visit.



Kansas Commissioner of Education Dr. Randy Watson read books to kindergarten and first grade students at Grant Elementary School, Kansas City USD 500, in May 2022.

Outcomes key to reaching vision

Since 2015, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and the Kansas State Board of Education have worked diligently together to focus on the outcome areas tied to the Kansas Can vision for education – Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

Here is an overview of each outcome area, as well as some of the initiatives taking place:

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL GROWTH

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the social-emotional growth and mental health of students. Schools and districts across the state have been increasing staff and support programs to address this issue.

In summer 2022, the State Board recommended continuation and expansion of the Mental Health Intervention Team (MHIT).

The 2018 Kansas Legislature approved nine school districts to enter into agreements with local community mental health centers for the 2018-2019 school year. The one-year pilot was established to address challenges schools were experiencing through increases in students and families with mental health needs. The program helps eliminate barriers for students and families who need clinical therapy and access to local community mental health centers.

At the end of the first year, nine school districts served more than 1,700 students, including 212 foster students. Overall improvement was shown in academic performance,

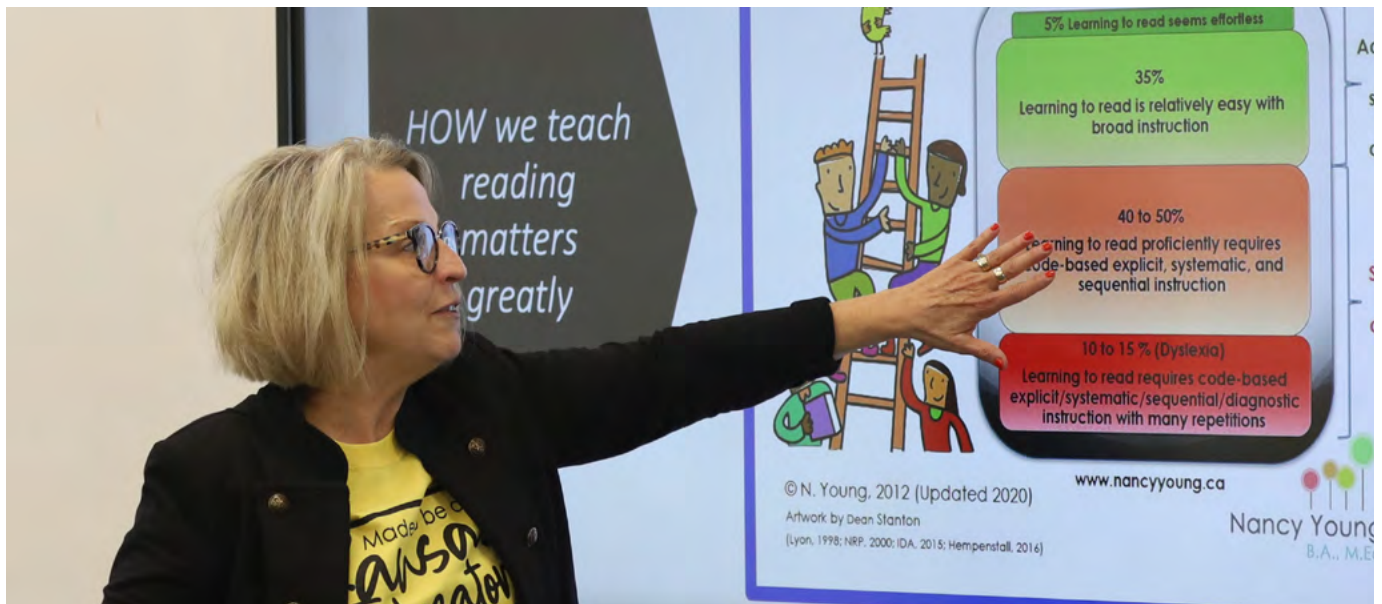
attendance and behavior in many of the students.

The Kansas Legislature recently passed House Bill 2567 that provides \$10.5 million to school districts for mental health grants in fiscal year 2023. An additional \$3 million was set aside so a study can be conducted on the effectiveness on the MHIT pilot program, and the program can be expanded.

The State Board in July 2022 voted to award \$10.3 million in grants to 67 districts for MHIT pilot programs, including 12 districts added as a result of the expanded funding from the Kansas Legislature. Since it started, the program has increased from nine districts and 1,700 students served to 55 school districts and 5,117 students served.

KSDE's Division of Learning Services team funds professional development and coaching to integrate school mental health and trauma-informed practices within a district's tiered system of supports.

By leveraging school and community resources; facilitating collaboration among school districts and community partners, including mental health



The first Kansas LEADS (Linking Educators Across Districts) Conference took place in April 2022 in the Wichita area. Kansas LEADS was created with \$300,000 from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III fund.

providers; and providing professional development, District-Community Leadership Teams (DCLTs) are guided through a structured process that leads to improved outcomes for students, educators and caregivers.

Keystone Learning Services, Families Together Inc., Kansas Parent and Information Center and The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning use the KSDE Technical Assistance System Network (TASN) to develop this shared evidence-based system of professional development critical to achievement of the State Board's vision and outcome for social-emotional growth.

Eight Kansas DCLTs located within five community mental health center regions use the ongoing training, planning tools and coaching to forge strong partnerships while developing, implementing and working toward sustaining a framework of effective, evidence-based practices to support the mental health needs of all children.

As a result, participating teams made substantial progress throughout the year as measured by clearly defined phases of implementation on the components of the Kansas SMH Implementation Guide, <https://www.ksdetasn.org/smhi>. Teams translated

these skills into practice, monitoring the progress of 36 children/youth through a trauma-responsive support planning process, with 100% making progress in their targeted areas.

In addition to coaching district teams, the School Mental Health Initiative (SMHI) team hosted 48 events with 907 attendees total.

Modules are available 24/7 at no cost for all Kansas schools and communities at <https://moodle.kansastasn.org>. Topics include Trauma-Responsive Support Planning, Caregiver Well-Being, Neuroscience in Education, an advanced clinical coaching series and Navigating Anxiety in Children.

During the 2021–2022 school year, 1,368 educators, administrators, mental health providers and caregivers participated in the online modules, and 105 SMH online resources have been accessed 9,217 times.

KSDE was recently awarded additional implementation funding to increase the number of School Mental Health District Community Leadership Teams.

The Kansans Can Competency Framework, which is a partnership between KSDE and developers Dr. Pattie Noonan and Dr. Amy Gaumer Erickson, supports educators in systematically embedding

intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies into daily course content. In this way, educators help students become career equipped, socially and emotionally engaged, lifelong learners.

The Kansans Can Competency Framework includes a multiyear professional development process, fidelity tools, foundational lessons, instructional resources and formative assessments.

In the past five years, Kansas educators from 281 districts have participated in professional learning, accessed/implemented competency instruction and/or facilitated students' reflection on intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. Eight instructional leaders have completed a rigorous professional learning process to become recognized Kansans Can Competency Trainers.

During the 2021-2022 school year, middle and high school curricula in self-regulation, assertiveness, conflict management and self-efficacy were made available to all public Kansas high schools. There were 259 districts that accessed the free curricula, which featured more than 200 instructional activities and companion student workbooks. There were 104 professional learning events,

including online courses, multisession workshops, webinars and team coaching.

The Career, Standards and Assessment Services team at KSDE facilitated Summer Academies, including both school counseling and social, emotional and character development (SECD), that offered professional development for field educators. Academies were conducted in Manhattan, Goddard, Garden City and virtually. More than 250 educators attended the counseling and SECD sessions at the academies.

KSDE has a long-standing relationship with the Collaborative for the Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). In fact, the agency was an original member of CASEL's Collaborative States initiative, which continues to support other state educational agencies in providing technical assistance around social-emotional learning.

Within this partnership, KSDE is working on developing strategies to address social-emotional learning within the career domain. KSDE has been invited to join CASEL and the Coalition for Career Development in developing resources and guidance focusing on the development integration of social-emotional learning and workforce development.

Kansas joined Delaware and Wisconsin to address the development and implementation of social-emotional learning integrated with career and workforce development efforts.

KSDE recently produced the Individual Plan of Study Digital Reference Guide and the Work-Based Learning Digital Reference Guide that include a career-advising model to help schools implement, with fidelity, a student's IPS.

In an effort to help address social-emotional growth in Kansas, the Career, Standards and Assessment Services team developed the "Grow Your Own Model for School Counseling." The U.S. Department of

Education recognized KSDE's program as a best practice. This model has been successful for several Kansas school districts in addressing the shortage of counselors.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS

Preparing a child for success begins long before he or she walks through a kindergarten classroom door. A focus on early childhood education and a commitment to strong families and community partnerships are essential.

KSDE and the State Board's goal is that each student enters kindergarten at age 5 socially, emotionally and academically prepared for success.

Evidence-based developmental screening is an essential tool to ensure teachers understand a child's needs so they can provide appropriate supports to the children they serve. Since 2018, all Kansas elementary schools have been required to partner with families of incoming kindergartners to administer the Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot (Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition and Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition), which help provide a snapshot of a child's developmental milestones. Parents/caregivers are asked to complete both questionnaires since they know their children best.

For the 2021-2022 school year, as part of a larger initiative to expand ASQ screening statewide, the Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot window opened in the springtime to allow school districts an additional opportunity to integrate required developmental screenings into strategies to support transitions into kindergarten.

The state ASQ Online system is now available to any community partner serving children from birth to age 5. A regional system was created for the 29 Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services (Part C) programs to manage all accounts in their service areas in August 2021.

OVERVIEW OF VISION OUTCOMES

Additionally, every public school district and accredited private school system in the state has an account administered through KSDE and completes an ASQ screening with each student entering kindergarten.

KSDE, the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, the Kansas Department for Children and Families and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment continue to partner on the All in For Kansas Kids strategic plan. In 2019, more than 6,100 Kansans offered input for the strategic plan. Today, early childhood partners are working together to put this plan into action.

The Kansas Early Childhood Needs Assessment found gaps in the capacity of preschool programming to serve Kansas children. The Preschool-Aged At-Risk program provides state school finance formula funding for students who meet certain eligibility criteria and who are enrolled in approved programs that meet state requirements. Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, funding expanded to include eligible 3-year-old students, in addition to eligible 4-year-old students.

In the fall of 2021, KSDE and the Children's Cabinet aligned eligibility requirements for the Kansas Preschool Pilot (KSDE) and Early Childhood Block Grants (Children's Cabinet) and developed an aligned application. Applicants seeking funding to provide preschool services submitted one application, proposals were reviewed collaboratively by both agencies, and together, the agencies made determinations regarding the most suitable funding source.

In 2019, the State Board of Education approved the recommendations of the Dyslexia Committee for preservice teacher programs, professional learning, screening and evaluation, and evidence-based reading practices. The Kansas Alternate Early Literacy Screener, kindergarten through third grade, is now available.



Gov. Laura Kelly on Tuesday, April 12, 2022, signed a bill designating the sandhill plum as the state fruit. The project to designate the sandhill plum as the state fruit began at Sabetha Elementary School, Prairie Hills USD 113, in 2021 in Jobi Wertenberger's language arts class. Students were studying the importance of government when they decided to look into why Kansas was one of only 19 states that didn't have a state fruit. After the Sabetha students worked with other students across the state to get the bill passed, several of Wertenberger's students presented to the Kansas State Board of Education.

It provides districts with a performance level to meet the dyslexia reporting requirements for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The screener also provides educators with valuable information on strengths, needs and next steps for students in kindergarten through third grade who have a most significant cognitive disability.

Nutrition also plays a key role in setting young children up for success. KSDE's Child Nutrition and Wellness team has been busy assisting schools in the implementation of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which is a federal program that provides reimbursement for healthful meals and snacks served to children. Serving young children nutritious meals teaches them healthy eating habits that last a lifetime.

INDIVIDUAL PLAN OF STUDY

Beginning in middle school, schools work with parents and students to develop an Individual Plan of Study (IPS) for each child. An IPS helps guide students to become a working professional.

As students navigate through their middle and high school years, it is important that students set

educational goals and create a road map for success.

The process of developing this plan includes parents and teachers talking with students about their passions and then planning for the student to take classes that align with that passion.

As a child progresses through school, his or her IPS is revisited at least twice per year and updated.

KSDE offered IPS Professional Learning Virtual Networks facilitated by four trainers. Three educational service centers also provided IPS Professional Learning Networks. KSDE trainers worked with 106 participants, and the service centers worked with 87 participants.

KSDE also hosted IPS quarterly webinars with topics such as IPS Overview, Xello and IPS, Electronic Portfolio and Kansans Can Star Recognition: IPS Component. These webinars averaged about 62 attendees each session.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Teaching students to become civically engaged helps them become informed, thoughtful and engaged members of their communities upon graduation.

Civic engagement is about individuals sharing their skills and knowledge through actions intended to improve communities, states, nations, the world and themselves. It is something that students can learn through a variety of hands-on activities.

The State Board of Education includes civic engagement in its outcomes established around the vision. The State Board also uses the phrase in defining a successful Kansas high school graduate - someone who 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.

Through KSDE's Civic Advocacy Network (CAN), 53 Kansas schools during the past five years have been recognized for the civic engagement opportunities they offer students. The CAN program was developed to recognize schools that actively involve students in civic engagement opportunities. It also allows KSDE to collect exemplary practices to share with other schools across Kansas.

Every school year, KSDE invites schools to apply for CAN awards.



Left to right, Amiah McMurray Hall, a Topeka student, Elizabeth Herrera, a Kansas City student, and Elijah Spooner, a Smoky Valley student, said the Kansas Future Teacher Academy (KFTA) at Emporia State University in June 2022 helped them decide if teaching is the right career choice for them. This was the 32nd year for KFTA, which exposes high school students to the rewards of the teaching profession.

Schools that meet the award criteria receive one of two designations – School of Excellence or School of Promising Practice.

The first awards were presented to schools during a special ceremony on Constitution Day, Sept. 17, 2018, in Topeka.

This year's awards were announced in September 2022. School districts are eligible to receive Star Recognition in civic engagement based on the percentage of schools in the district that are part of CAN.

ACADEMICALLY PREPARED FOR POSTSECONDARY

A successful high school graduate has to be academically prepared to pursue his or her postsecondary plans – whether that is technical school, joining the military, attending a two- or four-year college or going straight into the workforce.

While academics are inarguably important, they alone won't guarantee a student's success after high school.

In working to ensure that students have complete skills to be successful in their adult life, the State Board also recognizes the importance

of cognitive preparation, technical skills, employability skills and civic engagement in its definition of a successful high school graduate.

KSDE through its Kansans Can Star Recognition Program is recognizing school districts that are doing an outstanding job of making sure students are academically prepared for life after high school. However, KSDE also recognizes those districts that are doing a good job ensuring students are civically engaged and socially-emotionally prepared.

"The school districts that do academics, social-emotional and civically engaged skills extremely well are the districts that are really helping students get ready for a successful life after high school," Kansas Commissioner of Education Dr. Randy Watson said.

Ensuring students are academically prepared doesn't start in high school. It starts at a much younger age – even as young as 3 and 4. Even in the earlier grades, districts are personalizing experiences for students and working with KSDE to determine where gaps are so those gaps can be remediated early.

For example, all Kansas elementary schools are required to offer

incoming kindergarten students the Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot.

In higher grade levels, students in grades third through eighth, as well as 10th, are assessed in English language arts and math through the Kansas Assessment Program. The ACT and WorkKeys assessments also can be good measures of academic preparedness.

While these are all good measurements of where a student is at, there are other indicators, too, such as grade point averages (GPA), social-emotional skills and civic engagement.

In July 2021, a \$15 million initiative to address early literacy was announced. The three-year initiative trains educators in the science of reading through the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS®) program.

KSDE's Special Education and Title Services team coordinates with Pittsburg State University for a network that supports educators and technical assistant providers to ensure equitable outcomes for all students, pre-K-12. This group, TASN, is responsible for conducting multiple activities on KSDE's behalf, one of which is LETRS®.



Allyson Peterson smiled after receiving her diploma from Atchison County Community High School, Atchison County Community Schools USD 377, in May 2022. High school is an important stepping stone in a student's life. However, every student needs to graduate career-ready or prepared for college.

During the 2021-2022 year, TASN enrolled 1,381 educators in LETRS® units one through eight and 144 educators in LETRS® early child care.

Eighty-two LETRS® professional development events took place. Of the participants completing 272 post training evaluation surveys, 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the training was high quality.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

The State Board in 2015 set a lofty goal of a 95% graduation rate in the state. The state is moving closer to that goal. However, the percent of jobs in Kansas only requiring a high school degree or less is just 29%. This means Kansas schools must not only increase the number of students graduating high school, but also increase the number of students graduating with the skills and attributes needed to be successful.

Each student needs to graduate career-ready or prepared for college, which means a diploma plus a market-value asset. Market value assets can be college credits earned while in high school; industry-recognized credentials; and career experiences, such as internships or job shadowing.

From 2015-2020, there was an increase of 6.5% in the number of English Language Learners graduating.

During that same time, there also was a 3.7% increase in the number of free and reduced-price lunch students graduating and a 3.1% increase in the number of students with disabilities graduating.

The percent of all students graduating fell slightly from 88.3% in 2020 to 88.1% in 2021. However, this is still an increase over previous years.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted student success.

Enrollment in 2019 was 491,764. It decreased to 476,435 in 2021. While enrollment went down, chronic absenteeism increased – from 13.93% in 2019 to 17.54% in 2021. Truancy also increased from 767 to 2,239 in the same time period.

Time will tell if the pandemic also impacted the number of students graduating from high school and moving on to postsecondary institutions.

The Kansas Graduation Requirements Task Force was established in June 2021 to take a comprehensive look at Kansas' current high school graduation requirements.

The group met numerous times during the past year and has shared recommendations with the State Board of Education.

The State Board will continue to discuss the recommendations and may act before the end of the year.

POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS

Learning doesn't stop after high school graduation.

Kansas needs 73% of workers to have a postsecondary certificate or degree; about 37% need to be a bachelor's degree or higher; and about 36% need to have a certificate or associate degree.

Often, students can earn an industry-recognized certificate while they're in high school.

The 2019-2020 Governor's Council on Education recommended that work-based learning (WBL) in Kansas should be implemented as a comprehensive policy approach that ensured Kansas students had equitable access to high-quality, work-based learning experiences designed to prepare each student for postsecondary and workforce success.

Kansas conducted a state cross-



Dr. Kelly Spurgeon, left, a senior education research analyst for the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), and Kansas Commissioner of Education Dr. Randy Watson discussed postsecondary success during a recording of Insight Podcast, KSDE's monthly podcast hosted by Watson. The 20- to 30-minute podcasts enable Kansans to access education news when it's convenient for them. Episodes can be accessed by visiting <https://anchor.fm/ksdeinsight>.

agency WBL regional pilot that served as a model to scale high-quality WBL across Kansas and develop a statewide system alignment. WBL in Kansas is organized along a continuum of experiences that offer students varying levels of exposure to career awareness, exploration and specific preparation activities that allow them to participate in real-life work experiences while still in high school.

The pilot kicked off in January 2020 with six school districts taking part in five workforce regions across Kansas. The pilot brought together representatives from education, business/industry and economic development to coordinate WBL learning experiences.

Within the five workforce regions, there was one regional WBL intermediary; community and/or technical college partners; school districts or cohort of districts; an identified school district WBL coordinator, and a KSDE regional consultant. The Local Workforce Development Board in each region served as the regional WBL intermediary, connecting all of the

partners and coordinating work-based learning experiences for students.

The second phase was in the fall of 2020 when 13 additional school districts joined. Phase three was in the fall of 2021 when 25 districts participated in the third and final year.

The work has rolled into the Kansas Association of Workforce Boards Work-Based Learning initiatives project, which has three specific goals:

- Systematically increasing employer engagement within K-12 schools.
- Increasing awareness of career exploration in high-demand, high-wage fields for all students.
- Increasing engagement among high school students in career preparation experiences.

An important measure for Kansas education is postsecondary effectiveness rate. This measures the percent of students who are pursuing or have earned a postsecondary degree/certification two years after high school graduation.

In the past four years, Kansas has increased its postsecondary

effectiveness rate by 4%.

Recently, Kansas Commissioner of Education Dr. Randy Watson at the September 2022 State Board of Education meeting highlighted three districts that are doing well in the area of postsecondary effectiveness: Chase County Unified School District 284, Goddard USD 265 and Triplains USD 275.

In 2015, Chase County USD 284 had a postsecondary effectiveness rate of 40%. By 2022, it had increased to 68.3%.

In 2015, Goddard had a 52.2% postsecondary effectiveness rate. By 2022, the district had a 61.6% postsecondary effectiveness rate.

Triplains, which has fewer than 90 students, in 2015 had a 10% postsecondary effectiveness rate. By 2022, it had a 64.7% postsecondary effectiveness rate.

The gains Kansas is experiencing in the area of postsecondary success, coupled with the positive initiatives taking place in outcome areas, affirms that Kansas is on the right path toward achieving its education vision.





Southern Lyon County USD 252 is being honored for the second year in a row in all eight categories of the Kansans Can Star Recognition Program. The district serves the communities of Hartford, Neosho Rapids and Olpe.

Kansans Can Star Recognition Program Spotlight

Southern Lyon County recognized in all eight categories

Ask Dr. Mike Argabright, superintendent of Southern Lyon County, what has contributed to his district being recognized in each of the eight categories of the Kansans Can Star Recognition Program, and you're likely to hear that while the district offers some innovative and unique opportunities for its students, it's mainly because staff members, students and the community place an emphasis on all of the outcome measures Kansans said they value.

For the second year in a row, Southern Lyon County Unified School District 252 is the only district in the state to be recognized in all eight categories of the program.

Southern Lyon County serves three communities – Hartford, Neosho Rapids and Olpe – and about 600 pre-K-12th grade students. The district has 60 certified staff members.

The Kansans Can Star Recognition Program recognizes districts across the state for excelling in outcomes established around the vision for education in Kansas, which is Kansas leads the world in the success of each student. The Kansans Can Star Recognition Program and the Commissioner's Award Program recognize district success in the

following outcome areas:

- Social-emotional growth.
- Kindergarten readiness.
- Individual Plan of Study (IPS).
- Civic engagement.
- Academically prepared for postsecondary success.
- High school graduation.
- Postsecondary success.

The outcomes areas are categorized into either quantitative or qualitative measures.

The program started during the 2019-2020 school year with recognition of quantitative measures, which include academically prepared for postsecondary, high school graduation and postsecondary success. Awards for these areas are automatically calculated by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), so districts don't have to apply.

In 2020, districts were able to apply for recognition for qualitative measures – social-emotional growth, kindergarten readiness, IPS and civic engagement.

Districts can receive gold, silver, bronze or copper stars in both the quantitative and qualitative measures.

Districts also can receive special recognition – the Commissioner's Award – for outperforming their predicted postsecondary effectiveness rate. A district's postsecondary effectiveness rate factors in the degree to which identified risk factors known to depress academic success, such as poverty, chronic absenteeism and student mobility, are present in a district's student population.

In 2021, Southern Lyon County received the following honors:

- Social-emotional growth: Bronze.
- Kindergarten readiness: Bronze.
- IPS: Copper
- Civic engagement: Gold.
- Academically prepared for postsecondary: Copper.
- High school graduation: Gold.
- Postsecondary success: Silver.
- Commissioner's Award.

The district was honored in all eight areas again in 2022:

- Social-emotional growth: Silver.
- Kindergarten readiness: Bronze.
- IPS: Copper.
- Civic engagement: Gold.
- Academically prepared for postsecondary success: Copper.
- High school graduation: Bronze.
- Postsecondary success: Silver
- Commissioner's Award.



"We zero in on those areas as priorities," Argabright said. "Those components bring about a well-rounded student."

At Southern Lyon County, all educators are asked to serve on a committee dedicated to one of the outcome measures.

"I think the committee approach has moved us into being successful," said Shane Clark, who has served as principal of Olpe Schools for 14 years. "It gives ownership to everyone. Each committee develops goals and sets strategies."

It helps to have strong, consistent leadership in place, too, Clark said. Argabright has been superintendent of the district for 17 years.

Southern Lyon County participated in the Kansans Can School Redesign Project's Gemini II cohort, which helped the district prepare its applications for the Kansans Can Star Recognition Program and go through the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) process. The district is in its fifth year of the five-year accreditation cycle.

"We felt like they all blended together," Argabright said. "They all complement each other."

The district has operated a 3- and 4-year-old child care program since 2014, but recently added a program for babies 6 weeks to toddlers up to 2 and one-half years old.

Southern Lyon County begins the transition from preschool to kindergarten in the fall and spring of the 4-year-old preschool year, and the district even has a kindergarten transition team. All children entering kindergarten in fall 2022 completed the Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot, and the USD 252 Early Childhood programs provide screenings for all infants and toddlers, as well as 3- and 4-year-old students.



"Our district has a goal of implementing all protocol and parental support to maintain parental participation at 100% for the upcoming school year," the district noted in its Star Recognition Program application. "Data is used from all assessments to drive MTSS (Multi-Tier System of Supports) instruction in early childhood as our students transition into kindergarten. All instruction is intentionally designed to provide individualized instruction and developmentally appropriate learning experiences across all settings."

Southern Lyon County's high school students take core classes, such as math, English language arts and science, every day instead of using a block schedule where students are only exposed to core classes a few days per week, Clark said. Seniors at Southern Lyon County need 32 credit hours to graduate, which is higher than the required minimum of 21.

The district offers a wide range of dual-credit opportunities through a partnership with Allen County Community College; offers the opportunity for juniors and seniors to attend Flint Hills Technical College to pursue industry-recognized certificates; and allows high school students the time to participate in internships throughout the three communities and surrounding areas.

"Being creative in scheduling is important," Clark said.

Every student at the district (middle through 12th grade) has an Individual Plan of Study (IPS) in place. The traditional parent-teacher conferences are student-led, and USD 252 offers seven Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways.

The district has implemented a variety of ways to make sure that the social-emotional needs of students are met. District staff members are



able to identify strengths of students and then build on those strengths to address areas needed for growth. Counseling services have been expanded, and a district social worker was hired.

Older students pair up with younger students for reading and other learning experiences because the district's attendance centers are pre-K-12.

"They truly are growing up together," Argabright said. "It's the culture. It's very much a family-centered district."

The district works hard to engage its students, too, by partnering with outside agencies, businesses and organizations, Clark and Argabright said.

The district partners with CrossWinds Counseling and Wellness in Emporia and CrossWinds staff members come to district buildings to offer services to students.

"Our communities are very involved – very supportive," Clark said. "That is huge."

A district might let its size hinder its progress. For example, one district's leaders might think their district is too large to offer particular services while another district's leaders might think their district is too small to offer certain opportunities.

“It’s all about how you define an opportunity,”

Clark said.

“It’s a lot of work, but I love it.”



Programs like the Kansas Future Teacher Academy (KFTA) at Emporia State University expose high school students in Kansas to the rewards of the teaching profession. As other high school students were enjoying their summer in June 2022, these 60 students were spending a week on the ESU campus focusing on project-based learning and social-emotional learning; discussing state assessments; and listening to presentations from top educators and leaders, such as Kansas Commissioner of Education Dr. Randy Watson and Deputy Commissioner of Fiscal and Administrative Services Dr. Craig Neuenswander.

State Board, KSDE use creative thinking to address teacher shortage

COVID-19 causes shortage of substitute teachers, paras and teachers

The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and the Kansas State Board of Education had to do some out-of-the-box creative thinking during the 2021-2022 school year to help address a substitute teacher and teacher shortage exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Districts were really struggling," said Shane Carter, director of Teacher Licensure for KSDE.

Data collected for the spring 2022 teacher vacancy report showed there were 1,381 teacher vacancies across Kansas. The fall 2021 teacher vacancy report showed there were 1,253 vacancies. The top five vacancies in both reports were in special education, elementary, English language arts, mathematics and science.

The Kansas State Board of Education on Wednesday, Jan. 12, unanimously approved an emergency declaration that allowed any individual meeting certain qualifications to apply for a Temporary Emergency Authorized License (TEAL).

Usually there is a minimum requirement of 60 semester credit hours from a regionally accredited college or university in order to obtain an emergency substitute license. The emergency declaration removed this minimum requirement for the TEAL. However, candidates had to:

- Meet the minimum age requirement of 18.
- Have a high school diploma. Individuals with a general educational development (GED) diploma/certificate weren't eligible.
- Have a verified employment commitment from a district or system.
- Be fingerprinted and pass a background check.
- Submit a completed application to KSDE.

From January through May 2022, KSDE's Teacher Licensure team issued 914 Temporary Emergency Authorized Licenses, Carter said.

Any TEAL obtained through the emergency declaration expired June 1, 2022. So the State Board at its June meeting approved two additional motions that continued to help alleviate the shortage of teachers and substitutes.

State Board members once again passed an emergency declaration. This time, it allowed anyone with a five-year substitute teaching license, an emergency substitute teaching license with a baccalaureate degree fill long-term teaching positions through June 30, 2023.

The State Board also approved modifying the qualifications of the emergency substitute license to include applicants with a high school diploma who complete a KSDE-approved online substitute training program and have received verification of hire at a state accredited local education agency.

The license limits recipients to work no more than 15 consecutive days in the same assignment, and the provision expires Dec. 31, 2022.



Shane Carter, director of KSDE's Teacher Licensure, discussed educator vacancy data with higher education faculty, superintendents, principals, teachers, human resource staff members, service center employers and others during a meeting in July 2022. KSDE's Teacher Licensure team had three meetings across the state to find out what areas should be addressed when it comes to teacher vacancy.

At that same meeting, the State Board also approved bringing the Teacher Vacancy and Supply Committee and the Professional Standards Board together to discuss permanent solutions for the teacher and substitute shortage.

In July, the State Board took more action to help alleviate the teacher shortage by authorizing any retired teacher who previously held a Kansas teaching license to receive a transitional teaching license for the 2022-2023 school year.

The modified, temporary transitional license allows any educator who has retired into the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERs) to obtain a license upon filling out an application and passing a background check. While the application processing fee will be waived, a fingerprint card and a \$50 fee will be collected for a background check if required.

KSDE also has partnered with institutions of higher learning for different pathways to the classroom, such as the limited elementary

apprenticeship program. The Kansas State University College of Education in July added the master of arts in teaching residency, which leads to elementary licensure. The 18-month online program provides candidates with a limited apprentice license that allows them to earn a salary as a teacher in a Kansas classroom while completing their coursework.

The federal government in 2022 approved teaching as an apprenticeship program, Carter said, which will help further efforts to extend the teacher pipeline and address teacher shortages. The Tennessee Department of Education announced in January 2022 that it was the first state to be approved by the U.S. Department of Labor to become the first registered apprenticeship program for teaching in the country. KSDE is currently in the process of looking into establishing a similar program, Carter said.

In an attempt to develop long-term strategic solutions to the teacher shortage, KSDE had meetings at three

universities across the state to find out what areas should be addressed. The meetings took place May 31, June 22 and July 28. Meetings were attended by higher education faculty, superintendents, principals, teachers, human resource staff members, service center employees and others.

Information gathered from the meetings show the five top areas to focus on are **apprenticeship programs, school leadership in Kansas, classroom design, a review of teacher licensure exams and a solid communication plan.**

"We have small individual working groups focused on those five areas," Carter said.

The groups plan to share recommendations at a future State Board of Education meeting.



The first two-week session of Satanta Unified School District 507's Summer Learning Program for elementary school students focused on deep sea creatures. Students learned about sharks, coral reefs, oceans, crabs and narwhals.

Pandemic relief funds help districts address student learning loss

Funds used to expand summer learning opportunities at camps

Federal relief funds tied to the COVID-19 pandemic continued to make a positive impact for public and private schools throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund pumped nearly \$190 billion into states in order to help them navigate COVID-19's impact on schools.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law in March 2020 and included \$13.2 billion in ESSER I funds. Kansas received \$85 million in ESSER I funds. School districts had until Sept. 20, 2022, to spend the ESSER I funds.

Under the ESSER fund, state educational agencies, like the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), awarded subgrants to school systems to address the impact COVID-19 has had on school districts. ESSER funds have to be

used for COVID-related allowable uses as defined at the federal level. Some of the allowable uses include coordination of COVID-19 response; training on minimizing the spread of COVID-19; educational technology; addressing remote student needs; providing mental health services and supports; addressing learning loss; and continuity of operations.

In December 2020, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations ACT (CRRSA) (ESSER II) was signed into law, providing an additional \$54.3 billion in ESSER II funds. Kansas received \$343.5 million. Districts have until Sept. 30, 2023, to spend those funds. As of September 2022, KSDE had allocated \$321.1 million. The top three areas where districts plan to expend those funds are premium pay (\$86.3 million), learning loss (\$51.7 million) and education technology (\$35.5 million).

The American Rescue Plan (ESSER III), signed into law March 11, 2021, included \$768.1 million in assistance for Kansas. Districts have until Sept. 30, 2024, to spend the ESSER III funds. As of September 2022, KSDE had allocated \$243.5 million. The top three areas where districts plan to expend those funds are premium pay (\$133.7 million), learning loss (\$93.2 million) and summer and supplemental learning (\$24.7 million).

The state approval process for ESSER III experienced some delays because of changes in federal guidelines, according to KSDE's Special Education and Title Services team. For example, systems were required to gather and address community input for local district plans prior to submitting ESSER III applications for approval.

The guidelines also specified that 20% of a district's allotment must be spent on learning loss, specifically for those most impacted by COVID-19, such as

foster children, homeless children, English language learners and those students who are incarcerated.

In order to aid systems with the new guidelines, the Special Education and Title Service team developed a toolkit with updates and additional information. The team also hosted one-hour Zoom calls once per month where districts could log on and ask any questions they had pertaining to ESSER funds.

"It's a whole other world for them," said Dean Zajic, assistant director of the Special Education and Title Services team, speaking about local and state guidelines vs. federal guidelines.

Several districts throughout the state were able to add an innovative component or different direction to their summer school program thanks to the infusion of ESSER funds.

For example, in Satanta Unified School District 507, ESSER funds allowed students to treat residents there to some new experiences, such as an ice cream shop, a taco truck and even a drive-in movie theater, thanks to the district's summer learning program. The students didn't just have a fun, hands-on experience, they learned while doing meaningful projects.

About 48 grade school students participated in the summer program this year. There were about 20 students who took part in the junior high/high school program this summer.

During the first-two week session for sixth- through 12th-grade students, a pop-up taco bus was planned for one day on main street in Satanta.

Students chose the menu, determined prices, prepared the food, publicized the event and ran the pop-up restaurant. They served street tacos, quesadillas, burritos, fresas con crema, horchata and empanadas.

For the second session, the older students divided into groups and selected different projects to work on,

including creating an ice cream shop with homemade ice cream, making and selling cheesecake, making and selling candles and even organizing a drive-in movie night.

Garden City USD 457 was able to expand its summer program with the ESSER funds it received.

This year, students from three elementary schools – Gertrude Walker Elementary School, Alta Brown Elementary School and Jennie Wilson Elementary School – gathered at Gertrude Walker from June 6-17, 2022, for a summer camp. There were 96 students in grades kindergarten through fourth who participated.

Camps took place at three other elementary schools across the city. In total, there were 300 kids served at all four sites.

It was one of the district's largest camps, staff members said.

Camps focused on English language arts, math and STEM activities.

KSDE used ESSER funds to develop new programs to address learning loss in students and the need for educators to reconnect after the COVID-19 pandemic.

In July 2021, Kansas Commissioner of Education Dr. Randy Watson and the Kansas State Board of Education announced \$15 million in funding to address early literacy.

The \$15 million is being spread out of a three-year initiative called Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS®).

LETRS® helps educators identify, problem-solve and provide intervention for reading deficits before students suffer from reading failure.

Kansas LEADS (Linking Educators Across Districts) is a new series of conferences planned for teachers by teachers. It was created with \$300,000 from the ESSER III fund. The first conference took place April 8-9, 2022, in Wichita and Andover, and

a second one took place June 3-4, 2022, in the KC Metro area.

The event planning committee budgeted about \$30,000 for each conference. Organizers plan to have two more conferences per year. The cost of the conference, along with meals and lodging, are covered by Kansas LEADS. However, mileage costs are the responsibility of the attendee.

Preservice teachers, as well as public and private school teachers (pre-K-12), are invited to attend the conferences. Educators can be nominated by their peers or nominate themselves to attend.

"After the completion of the first Kansas LEADS Conference, I feel more connected to fellow educators and more passionate about education than ever," said Danielle Espinosa, an instructional technology coach at Mayberry Cultural and Fine Arts Magnet Middle School for Wichita USD 259, who attended the April 2022 conference. "I also find myself being more reflective as an educator to do better and be better for my teachers, students, school and community."



Parker Kersten and his grandmother, Lori Kersten, who live in Wichita, were two of the thousands of Kansans who participated in the 2022 Sunflower Summer learning opportunity, which was made possible through COVID-19 relief funds. Parker sent this thank you letter to KSDE after the program ended.



There was a large turnout for the Boy Scouts of America Awareness Camp in Wichita thanks to the 2022 Sunflower Summer Program. Sunflower Summer paid for 120 campers as part of the new day camp extension this year. In total, nearly 230 students were served through the Awareness Camp.

2022 Sunflower Summer program gives students opportunity to learn, engage with family members at 90 educational venues across Kansas

The 2022 Sunflower Summer program gave 121,198 students an opportunity to engage in learning throughout the summer months while allowing 82,636 adults to engage with their children at various museums, zoos, historic landmarks and parks for free.



Through Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding, students in grades pre-K through 12th and their families could select from 90 Kansas-based educational venues for free after downloading the free Sunflower Summer app.

The COVID-19 pandemic left behind in its wake student learning loss across the nation. The Kansas State Department of Education developed the Sunflower Summer program as a strategy to help address the learning loss in Kansas. Venues participating in the program developed learning activities for students and families in order to provide directed learning that could engage both children and adults.

Kansas Commissioner of Education Dr. Randy Watson announced in the spring of 2022 that the Sunflower Summer program would be able to continue through 2024 thanks to Gov. Laura Kelly's decision to provide an additional \$6 million in pandemic funding to the program.

For the second summer, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks had a Sunflower Summer Campout. This year, the campout took place at Milford State Park. There were 105 campers – representing 26 families – who participated in the campout on July 7-8. Students and families were able to enjoy fishing, archery, canoeing, a campfire with s'mores and educational opportunities delivered by Kansas teachers throughout the two-day event.

New for 2022, families also were invited to Sunflower Summer Sundays with the Wichita Surge baseball team. Attendees could watch a game and receive a personal tour of the new baseball museum. The museum features trivia and historical artifacts showcasing Wichita's baseball history.

In June, Sunflower Summer participants were invited to attend the 150th anniversary of Dodge City. Children and their families were able to learn about the Old West through reenactments, exhibits and demonstrations.

Bird City had its Annual Thresher Show on July 30, and Sunflower Summer participants could help the city celebrate its rural history, learn about World War II and honor military men and women. The day featured military vehicles and equipment, military reenactments from WWII, steam engine races and more than 200 antique tractors.

Lori Kersten and her grandson, Parker, who live in Wichita, were two of the thousands of Kansans who took advantage of the Sunflower Summer learning opportunity. Lori Kersten was asked by Parker's parents to enrich his learning through the summer.



Lori Kersten and her grandson, Parker Kersten, both of Wichita, used the 2022 Sunflower Summer Program to attend 12 education venues.

"Of course we would work on math, reading, writing and science," she said. "But I also feel that a lot of learning can take place outside of the classroom. I was watching the news and was excited to hear about the Sunflower Summer app."

The two visited 12 venues through the Sunflower Summer program.

“It was so much fun to watch Parker get so excited about learning new things firsthand,” Lori Kersten said.

"The look on his face, the reactions to new experiences, and the questions he had are a priceless memory we will always share. The joy of a butterfly landing on his

shoulder. The discovery of artwork that encouraged painting his own picture, the giggles from watching the ducks scurry to get the food we were feeding the turtles. The smiles from petting stingrays, and the cheers from landing his rocket on the moon will always have a special place in my heart."

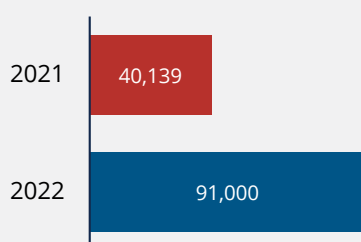


Parker really enjoyed most of the places he and his grandma visited. However, his favorite place to visit was the Cosmosphere because he likes space.

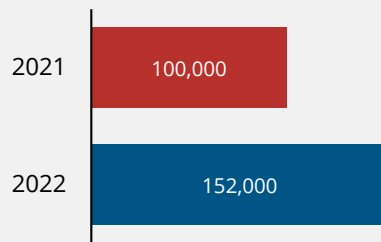
"Thank you so much for creating the app and letting us go to these places for free," Parker said.

Sunflower Statistics

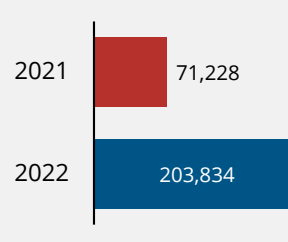
TOTAL APP DOWNLOADS



TOTAL ACCOUNT USERS



TOTAL PARTICIPANTS





KSDE partnered with educational service centers across the state for regional trainings. Katie Perez, with ESSDACK, worked with Apollo III schools in the fall of 2021. A cohort of schools attended Apollo III redesign training at ESSDACK, and training teams comprised of service center staff members and KSDE staff members led them through the process. KSDE also partnered with service centers and Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) and Alignment for the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) regional model.

School redesign transitions into KESA model, new team forms at KSDE

The current model used to accredit systems/school districts, called Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA), was approved by the State Board of Education in 2016. Since that time, KSDE employees have found themselves on a journey to discover what works best when it comes to the accreditation process.

Within the past year, the Kansans Can School Redesign Project, at the building level, and the KESA model, at the system level, have now been blended together, said Jay Scott, director of the Accreditation and Design team at KSDE.

Scott served as the secondary school redesign specialist for the project, which launched in 2017 with the Mercury 7. All Kansas school districts were invited to apply for the redesign project. Districts agreed to designate one elementary school and one secondary school to be redesigned around the outcomes established by the State Board – elements identified as defining a successful Kansas high school graduate.

Fourteen schools across seven districts – dubbed the Mercury 7 – kicked off the Kansans Can School Redesign Project. That cohort was followed by Gemini I in 2017-2018; Gemini II in 2018; Apollo in 2019; Apollo II in 2020; and Apollo III in 2021.

By the time the names of the schools and districts were

announced for the Apollo III cohort, there were 71 districts participating and nearly 200 schools.

While KSDE staff members are continuing to support redesign schools, the agency is now focusing on taking a regional approach that the Kansans Can School Redesign Project successfully implemented and bringing that model of support to KESA. During the 2021-2022 school year, 11 systems entering their second cycle in KESA – they were accredited in 2020-2021 – piloted this model of support. The test pilot systems met five times in the past year, Scott said.

KSDE partnered with service centers and Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports and Alignment (KS MTSS) for the regional pilot model.

At each meeting, staff members from the three partner organizations walked systems through the KESA process.

“We built this together,” Scott said. “We started in September 2021, and it will end April 2023.”

Each of the 11 systems sent five to 10 people to the meetings. Five teams met at Greenbush North in Lawrence, three met at Orion Education and Training in Clearwater, and three met at Southwest Plains Regional Service Center in Sublette.

The systems each did a data analysis, similar to a needs



KSDE is focusing on a regional approach to the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) model. KSDE partnered with service centers and Kansas MTSS and Alignment for the KESA regional pilot model. At each meeting, like this one at Southwest Plans Regional Service Center in Sublette, staff members from the three partner organizations walked systems through the KESA process.

assessment; set goals; determined strategies; implemented those strategies; and then analyzed those strategies.

The Accreditation and Design team also had focus groups in spring 2022 to look at ways to better improve KESA. The focus groups were comprised of superintendents, curriculum leaders, teachers and those who are participating in the KESA regional pilot. Based on information collected from the focus groups, KSDE developed two internal work groups to look at the KESA process and growth in student performance. Scott is hopeful the two working groups will have recommended changes by spring 2023 and that those changes can be implemented during the 2023-2024 school year.

Scott and the Accreditation and Design team are taking the best of what they learned from redesign and KESA and blending them together for the best outcome, he said.

"What we learned from redesign is that to fundamentally make and sustain change, you have to address the culture for learning in your building," Scott said. "Shifting the mindset from fitting students into your system to fitting the system to each student is highly challenging work. But it's the right work because it puts each student at the center of the learning environment."

For the first time, the team also had KESA summer check-ins in 2022. KSDE staff members asked a random sample of systems that are in year five of the KESA process to attend a one-hour meeting either in person or via Zoom. Twenty-

five systems participated and were able to ask questions and share thoughts about the KESA process.

“The feedback that we received from these systems was, **‘Keep doing this. It was very valuable and impactful as we enter our accreditation year,’**” Scott said.

The upcoming year holds more change for the Accreditation and Design team. In summer 2023, a regional system of support for KESA will be put in place. KSDE will hire KESA “regional executives” who will work remotely in four regions across Kansas. These executives will offer accountability and support for systems in their area going through the KESA process.

As Scott said, change is hard. But Kansas school systems are dedicated to making change to ensure all students are successful.

“I’m really proud of our schools for trying their best to make changes according to what Kansans said – and continue to say - they valued during the community conversations and what is best for their students,” Scott said.

Longitudinal data links assessments to graduation, postsecondary success

The Kansas State Department of Education has been able to use longitudinal data to link Kansas assessments to graduation rates, postsecondary success and ACT scores. This data emphasizes that Kansas students who have a performance level of 2 on Kansas assessments aren't failing.

"They are above the state average on the ACT," Deputy Commissioner Dr. Ben Proctor said. "For those in the top half of level 2, 60% meet the postsecondary effectiveness rate, and well over 90% graduate. We should not call these students failing or nonproficient. These are students who are on track to be successful."

But the data also shows that there are still too many Kansas students at Level 1.

The Kansas assessment student performances are scored using four levels:

 Level 1: A student at Level 1 shows a limited ability to understand and use the skills and knowledge needed for postsecondary readiness.	 Level 2: A student at Level 2 shows a basic ability to understand and use the skills and knowledge needed for postsecondary readiness.	 Level 3: A student at Level 3 shows an effective ability to understand and use the skills and knowledge needed for postsecondary readiness.	 Level 4: A student at Level 4 shows an excellent ability to understand and use the skills and knowledge needed for postsecondary readiness.
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The Kansas Assessment Program (KAP) includes a variety of tests and other tools aligned to Kansas curriculum standards, according to <https://ksassessments.org>. These tests and tools are designed to help evaluate student learning, as well as to meet the requirements for federal and state accountability. The tests are developed by The University of Kansas' Achievement and Assessment Institute (AAI).

Each year, students in grades third through eighth and 10th are assessed in English language arts and math. A science assessment is provided in grades five, eight and 11. KAP score reports relay information about student performance in terms of scale scores, which is a mathematical conversion of the total number of points a student earns on an assessment into a score along a predefined scale. Scale scores on all KAP assessment range from 220 to 380. Performance level descriptors are the levels discussed earlier – Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4. Scale scores dividing the performance levels are called cut scores.

"We set the highest standards in academics in the country in language arts and mathematics," Kansas Commissioner of Education Dr. Randy Watson said. "We also set the highest cut scores."

Proctor and Watson, with the help KSDE's Information Technology (IT) department, began to dig deeper into the assessment data to find out what it means.

"We're looking at that data and correlating it with graduation," Proctor said.

They took assessment data from 10th graders in 2017 – who graduated in 2019 – and correlated it with graduation, postsecondary effectiveness rates and mean ACT scores (rounded up). Next, instead of breaking the performance levels into four areas, they included Level 1 (Bottom); Level 1 (Top); Level 2 (Bottom); Level 2 (Top); Level 3 (Bottom); Level 3 (Top); Level 4 (Bottom); and Level 4 (Top).

There were about 35,000 students involved in the new data.

Data shows that students who scored in the Level 2 (Top) category in ELA had a 92% graduation rate, and students who scored in the Level 2 (Top) category in math had a 94% graduation rate. Those who scored in the Level 2 (Top) category in ELA had an ACT mean score of 20.8, and those who scored in Level 2 (Top) in math had an ACT mean score of 21.5. In Kansas, the average ACT score is 19.8, Proctor said.

The agency is now able to correlate performance levels with graduation, postsecondary effective rates and mean ACT scores (rounded up) because there is finally enough longitudinal data to complete calculations. The in-depth look at the data will continue to see if there is any additional information to be discovered.

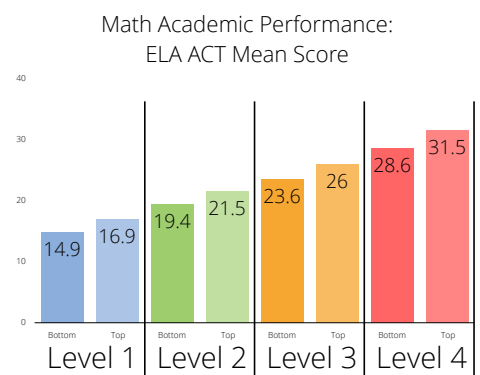
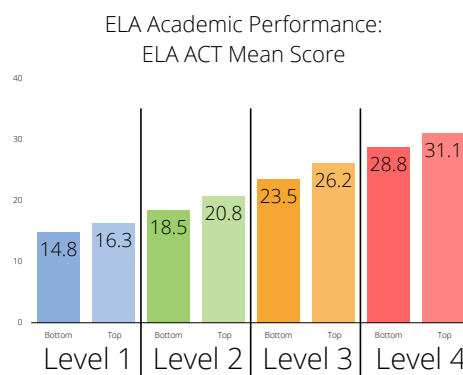
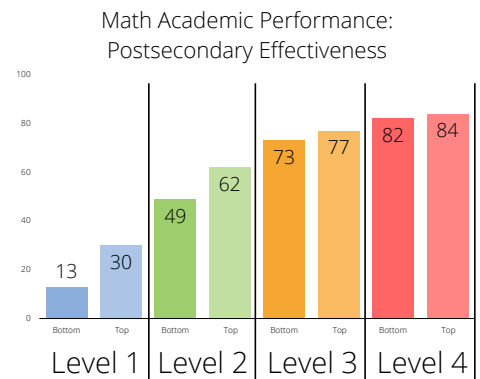
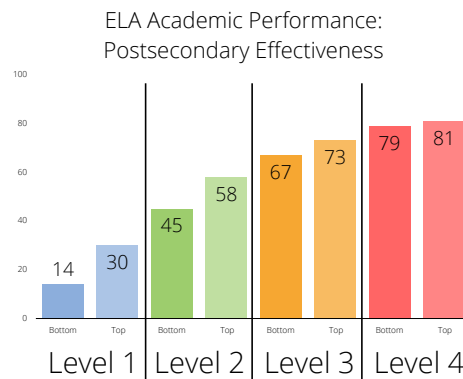
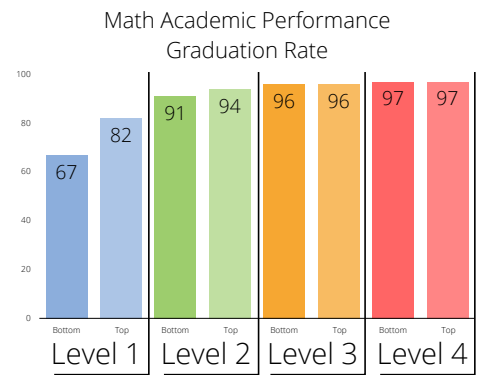
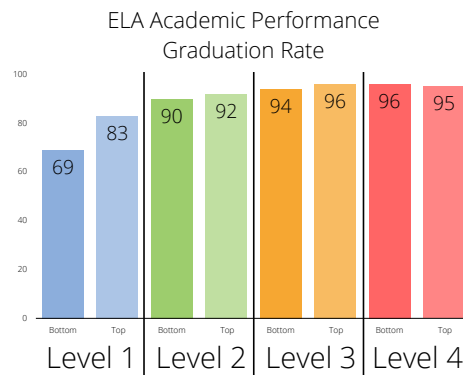
While KSDE staff members recognize there are too many Kansas students in Level 1 (Top and Bottom) and there is more

work to be done, they also understand that some students may never be able to move out of level one.

“We still need to make sure we are putting them on the best path for success,” Proctor said.

This means strong Individual Plans of Study (IPS) and early childhood programs need to be in place. An emphasis needs to be placed on increasing academic, as well as social-emotional skills, and a well-rounded Career and Technical Education (CTE) path should be easily accessible.

“We have a lot of work to do,” Proctor said. “And we are really eager to do that work. There’s a big story to tell. It’s not that we need to start elevating state assessments as this paramount measure, but we need to understand how to use academic performance data to improve. This data shows us that level two kids aren’t failing. It also tells us that we have too many kids in level 1, and while every one of these kids has gifts and talents and abilities, academic performance is a limiting factor for them. Too many are not finding success in postsecondary. They don’t have a lot of options for postsecondary based on an entry score. That’s where an Individual Plan of Study or CTE program is really important. Supports for these students are really important. **Social skills are really important. The message is level two isn’t failing, and we need to move students out of Level 1, while providing additional supports and structures for students who may have academic limitations.**”



2022 Academic and Cognitive Preparation

The Kansas assessment student performances are scored using four levels:

Level 1:

A student at Level 1 shows a limited ability to understand and use the skills and knowledge needed for postsecondary readiness.

Level 2:

A student at Level 2 shows a basic ability to understand and use the skills and knowledge needed for postsecondary readiness.

Level 3:

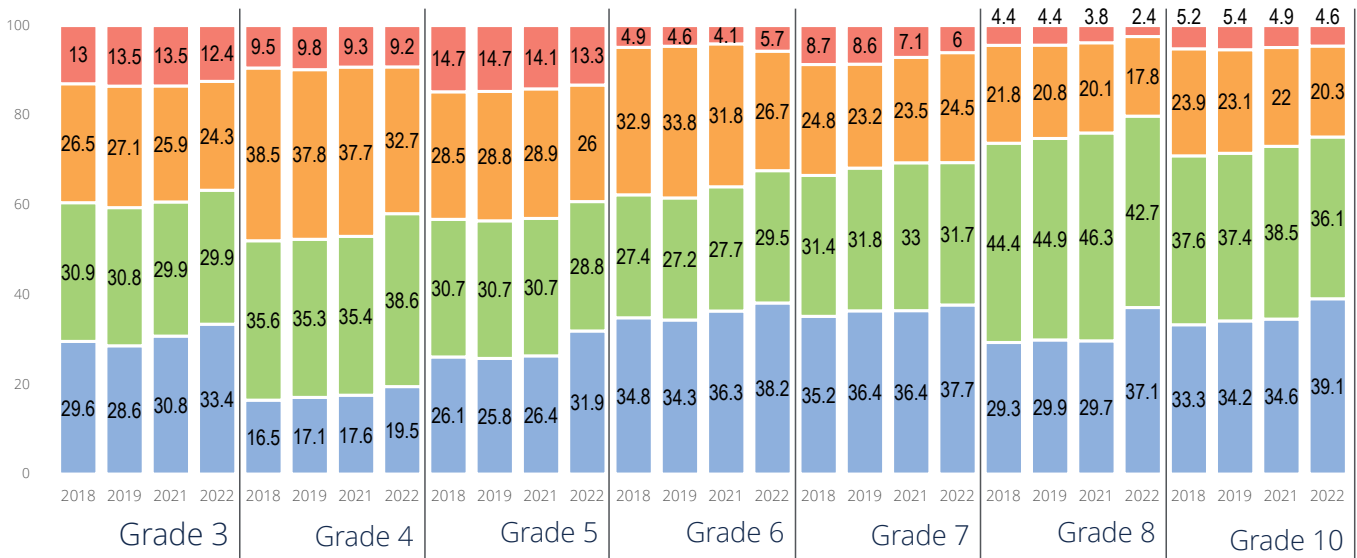
A student at Level 3 shows an effective ability to understand and use the skills and knowledge needed for postsecondary readiness.

Level 4:

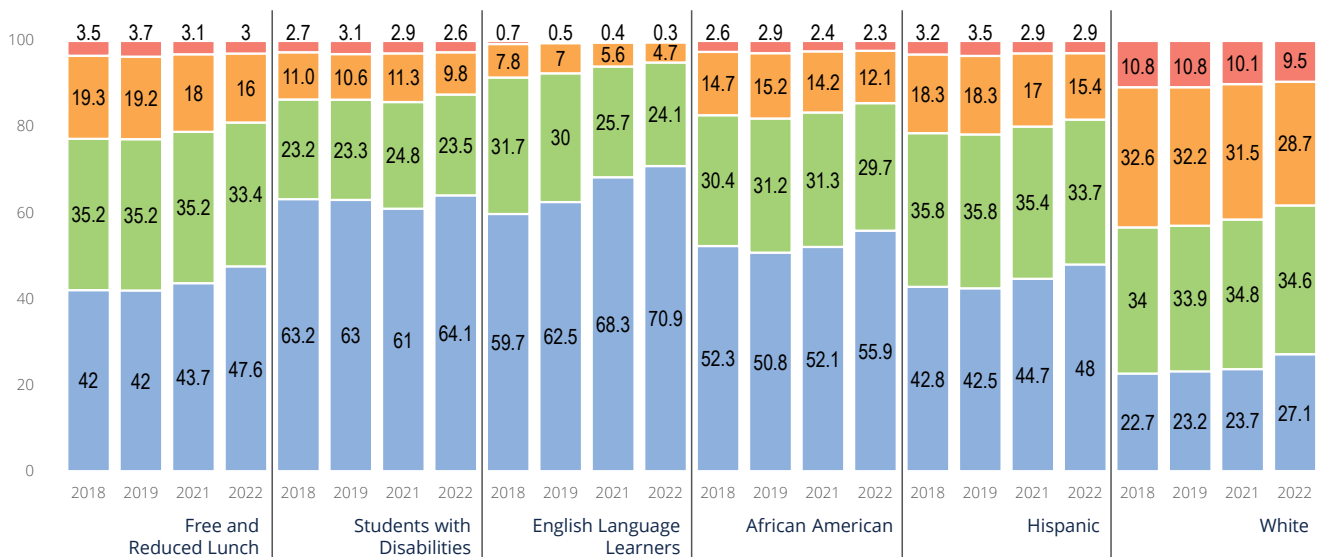
A student at Level 4 shows an excellent ability to understand and use the skills and knowledge needed for postsecondary readiness.

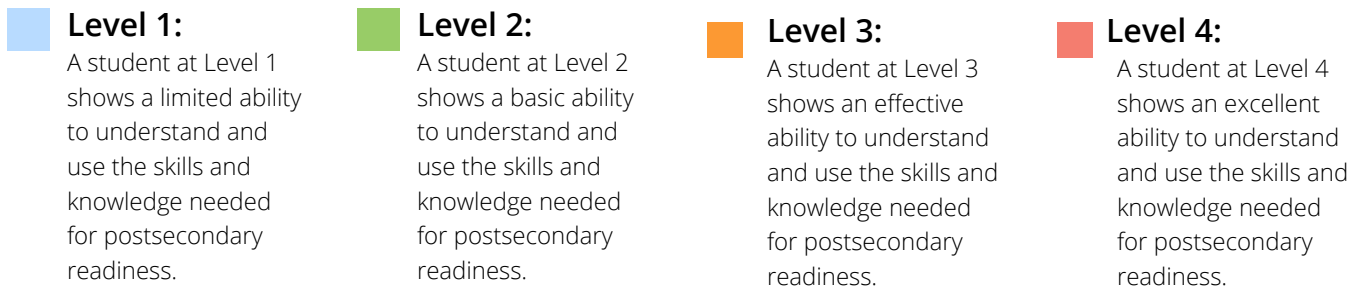
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

BY GRADE



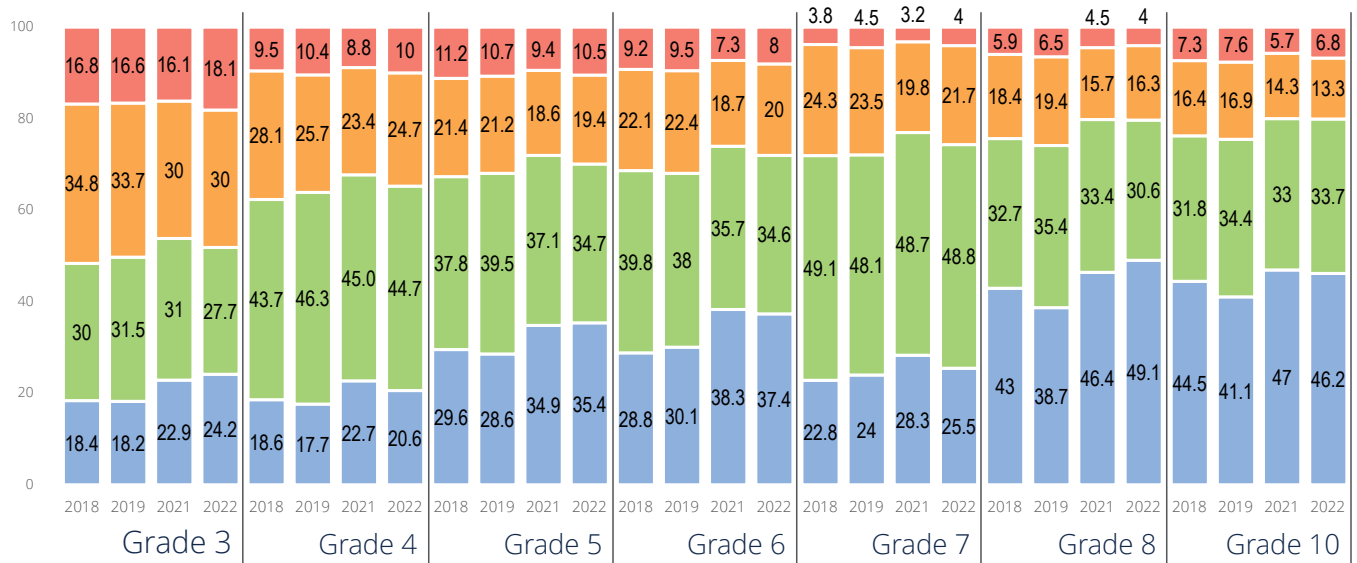
BY SUBGROUP



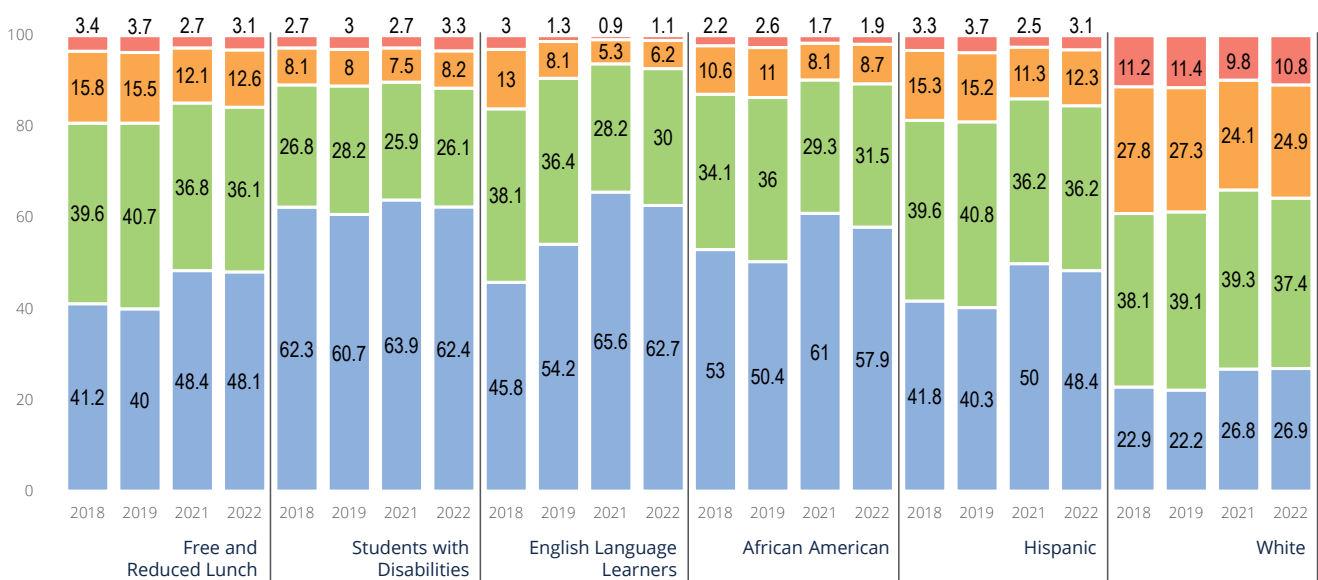


MATH

BY GRADE



BY SUBGROUP



Education Summary

Public School Characteristics

Number Enrolled (headcount enrollment):	479,743
Number of Title I schools:	652

School District Characteristics

Number of school districts:	286
Number of schools:	1,329

Teachers

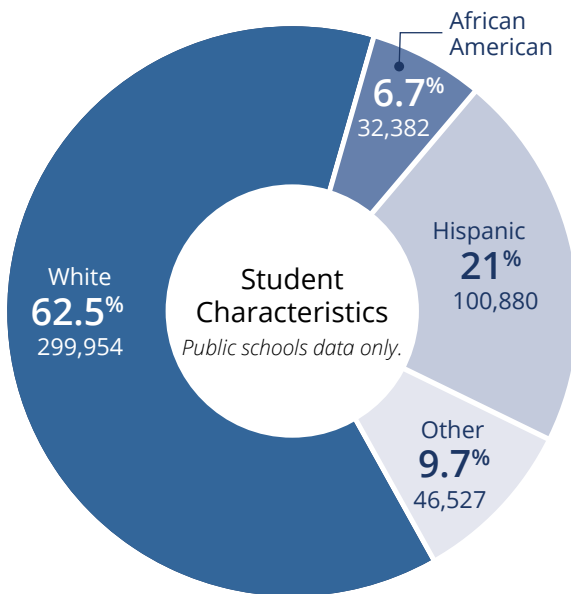
Average age:	42.85
Average years of experience:	13
Number of full-time equivalency (FTE) teachers*:	36,370
Average teacher salary**:	\$61,070

* Includes special education teachers.

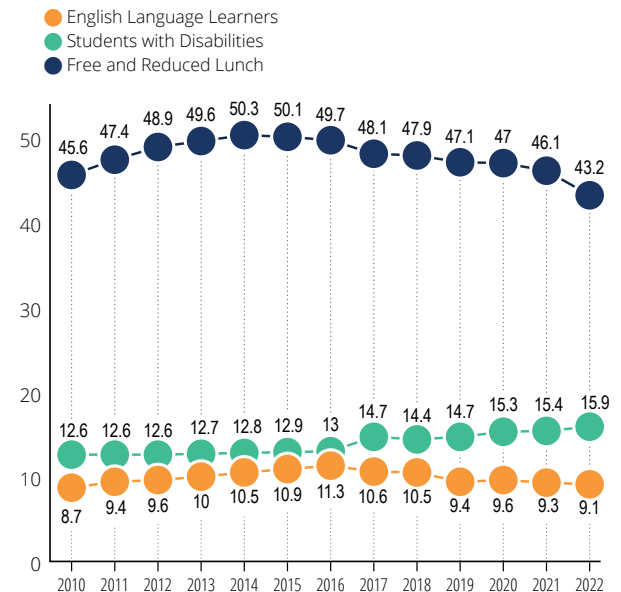
** Includes supplemental and summer school salaries and fringe benefits.

Student

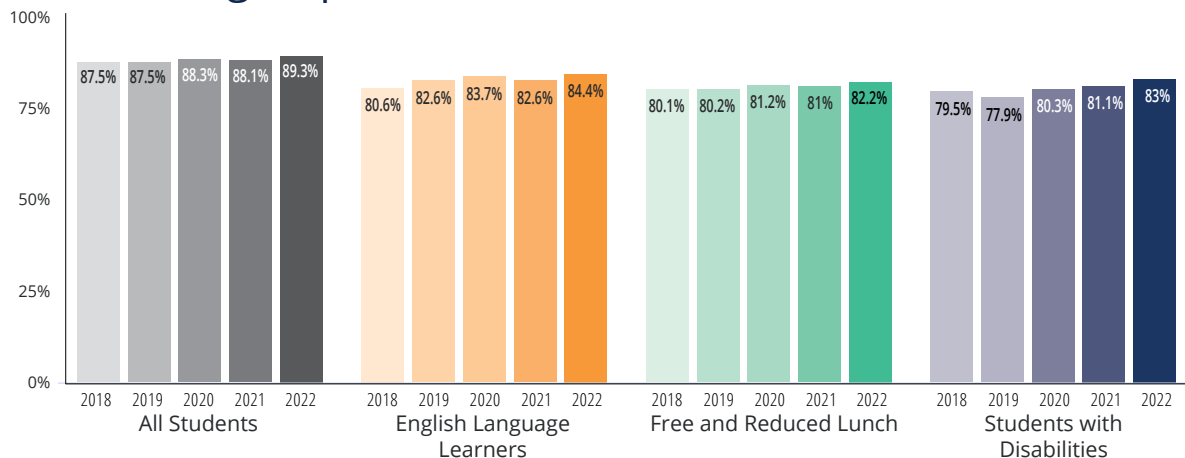
STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS



STUDENT POPULATION SUBGROUPS



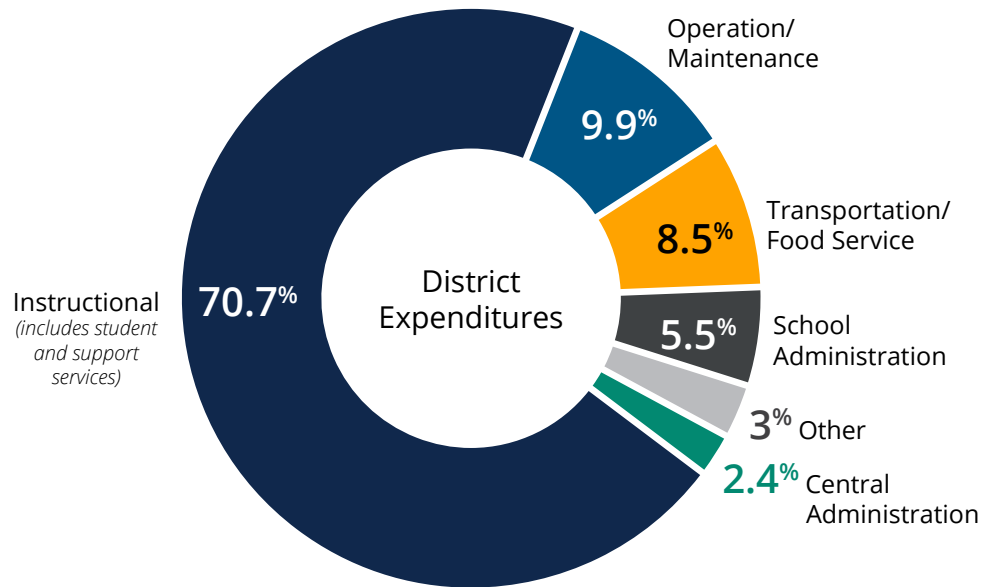
Graduation Subgroups[†]



[†] All students in public and private schools in Kansas.

District Fiscal Summary

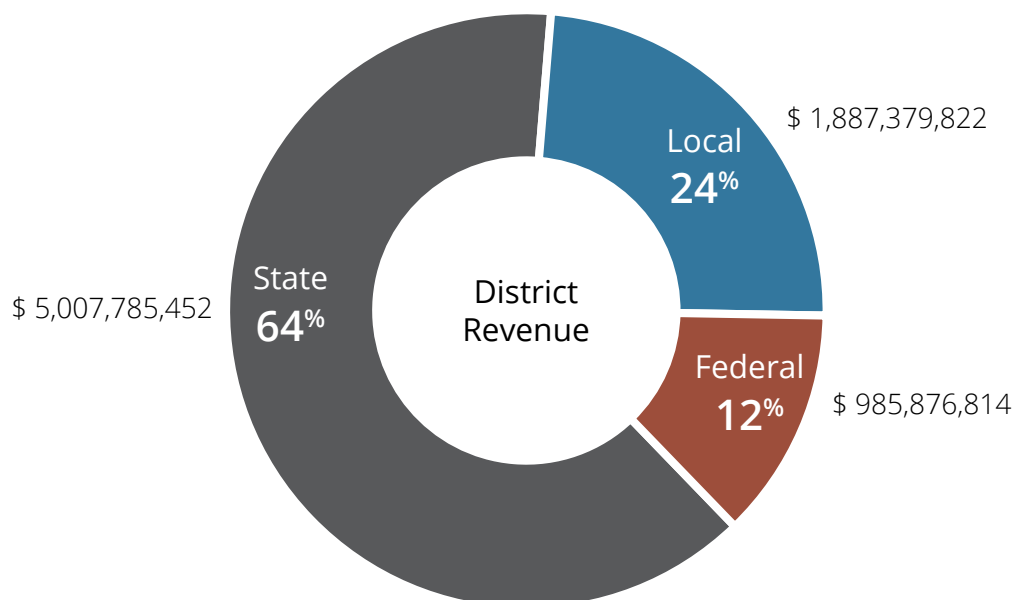
Expenditures



Current operating expenditures	\$	6,721,162,160
Current operating expenditures per pupil*	\$	14,496
Total nonoperating expenditures**	\$	1,158,076,334
Total expenditures	\$	7,879,238,494
Total expenditures per pupil	\$	16,993

* Based on FTE of 463,662.4

** Bond, interest, capital outlay



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