

January 22, 2025

Written Only, Testimony to House Tax Committee
Honorable Chair, Rep. Adam Smith
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Room 185-N, State Capitol Building

Cautiously Neutral House Bill 2011 – Decreasing the rate of ad valorem tax imposed by a school district, reducing 20 mills to 18.5 mills and potential further reductions via a cap.
Wednesday, January 22, 2025, 3:30 pm Room 346-S

Chairman Smith and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to share written testimony, with **cautious neutrality of HB 2011**. While Kansas PTA is sensitive to the challenges of balancing property tax levels, we are cautious about any tax policy that makes it harder to ensure constitutional levels of funding for K-12 public education.

[Kansas PTA Legislative Priority 2](#) is focused on the importance of investing in quality public education. Kansas PTA supports constitutionally adequate and equitable funding of the state school finance formulas, both for general education and special education services. Towards this end, Kansas PTA supports a balanced tax policy to ensure that our state has fair and reliable revenue streams to deliver this critical investment in the future viability of our great state.

The purpose of a public school finance system is to provide all 500,000 Kansas children equal opportunity to achieve the learning goals and objectives defined by the Kansans Can Vision. As noted in the [Kansas constitution, under Article 6](#), the Kansas legislature is obligated with the duty of *suitable finance*, while the State Board of Education is charged with defining this vision of what Kansas students should know and be able to do upon graduation.

The Kansans Can Vision [definition of success](#): 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

Our Kansas public schools stand as the only K-12 system that welcomes all youth, regardless of need and without other special admissions requirement (e.g., specific religious affiliation or family configuration). Public schools comprise the only system that is committed to supporting students regardless of their academic performance. Failing grades do not result in a student being transitioned out but rather initiate more individualized instructional supports, to the extent

funding allows. The Kansas public school system is the only K-12 educational institution with public oversight for use of public dollars, by way of a multitude of requirements for reporting, licensure and safety, as well as the free election of local school board members to oversee governance.

Kansas public school educators continue to rise to the challenges of learning disruptions caused by the global pandemic. Our educators, students and families patiently await full funding of special education, serving students enrolled in public and private schools. Yet, concern is growing as this special education shortfall erodes the restoration of deep cuts to general education funding levels, that just reached pre-2009 recession purchasing power this past school year.

Let's recognize the new 2023 the baseline ([KASB, 2024](#)), monitor progress, and ensure all Kansas kids have equal opportunity to achieve. Note the following:

- The number of college credits earned by high school students reached an all-time high in 2024.
- The number of students taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses and receiving a passing score reached a new high in 2024 ([KSDE, 2024](#)).
- The statewide high school graduation rate increased between the school years ending 2023 to 2024, including Kansas youth eligible for free/reduced lunch, students with disabilities, students in foster care, for those unhoused, in the military, and among black and Hispanic students.
- Kansas students continue to perform at or above the national average on multiple standardized metrics ([NAEP, 2022](#); [NCES 2024](#)).
- And we know that the return on investment results in a more robust pipeline for the Kansas economy as well as protective factor against cycles of recession, where “increased educational outcomes leads to increased annual income among Kansans” ([KASB, 2023](#)).

Kansas PTA advocates for tax policy that is fair, balanced and generates a reliable funding stream that meets the actual costs of providing an adequate and equitable public education for all Kansas youth. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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THE PTA POSITION

Kansas PTA is a nonpartisan association that promotes the welfare of children and youth. The PTA does not endorse any candidate or political party. Rather, we advocate for policies and legislation that affect Kansas youth in alignment with our legislative platform and priorities. [PTA mission and purpose](#) have remained the same since our inception over 100 years ago, focused on facilitating every child's potential and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.