



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Budget for the Kansas Board of Regents

February 27, 2025

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President and CEO, Kansas Board of Regents

Good morning, Chair Billinger, and Members of the Committee. I am pleased to appear before you to discuss the FY 2026 budget request from the Kansas Board of Regents.

Public Institutions of Higher Education

The Higher Education Coordination Act provides that the Kansas Board of Regents shall “serve as the representative of the public postsecondary educational system before the Governor and the Kansas Legislature” (K.S.A. 74-3202c(b)(1)). This statute provides the foundation for a system-wide focus on state investment in public postsecondary education, which includes the 32 public institutions of higher education governed or coordinated by the Board, as well as 20 adult education providers across 60 sites, and the 22 student financial aid programs administered by the Board of Regents on behalf of the Legislature.

The Board of Regents presents its FY 2026 budget request on behalf of the System’s 221,000 students, highlighted below. We support the budget requests advanced by the universities and colleges and as approved by the Board. In the context of the Board’s budget request and the House adopted budget, I will focus on our System’s top priorities: state employee pay plan shortfall, facilities funding, student success playbook initiatives, IT infrastructure and cybersecurity, and the Kansas Blueprint for Literacy.

1. State Employee Pay Plan Shortfall - \$27,038,448

We appreciate the House’s budget to include the Board of Regents and state universities in the pay plan for the upcoming year, providing a 2.5% increase. During FY 2023 and FY 2024, state employees at the state universities and Board Office received only one-half of the merit pool given to other state employees. The Board of Regents requests additional recurring state investment for the Board Office and the state universities to make up the shortfall in state funding for our employees’ pay adjustments from the past two years, ensuring the state

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universities and Board Office can recruit and retain top faculty and staff with pay rates that more closely align with market rates.

	Legislature's Pay Plan for State Employees	Funding of Salary Adjustments to Other State Employees	Funding of Salary Adjustments to KBOR System Employees	Inflation as Measured by CPI-U
FY 2021	No overall pay plan (2020 Legislative Session ended abruptly at the start of the global COVID-19 pandemic).	0.00%	0.00%	5.39%
FY 2022	No overall pay plan; Judicial Branch and specified agencies in Executive Branch received some targeted adjustments.	0.00%	0.00%	9.06%
FY 2023	Salary adjustments for most state employees was 5.0 percent with additional funding provided to agencies to be used for "salary inequities" as identified by the Director of Personnel Services - which did not include the Board of Regents or State Universities.	5.00%	5.00%	2.97%
FY 2024	Market-based adjustments made to some positions in Executive Branch according to studies done by OPS; overall pay plan for most of state government was 5% except Board of Regents and State Universities were provided a 2.5% merit pool.	5.00%	2.50%	2.97%
FY 2025	Market-based adjustments made to some positions in Executive Branch according to studies done by OPS; overall pay plan for most of state government was 5% except Board of Regents and State Universities were provided a 2.5% merit pool.	5.00%	2.50%	2.50%
	Cumulative Adjustments	15.00%	10.00%	22.89%

* Reported average salary adjustment given to continuing faculty and staff across the state universities for FY 2018.

Sources: [Kansas Legislative Research Department Briefing Book Article "State Employee Issues" 2021](#)
[2018 State University Data Book, Tables on Faculty and Staff Salary Increases](#)
[Bureau of Labor Statistics Data on Consumer Price Index](#)
[Consensus Revenue Estimate Long Memo, Fall 2024](#)

The breakdown of the shortfall by agency is as follows:

- Emporia State University: \$ 1,510,889
- Fort Hays State University: \$ 1,707,921
- Kansas State University: \$ 7,355,971
- Pittsburg State University: \$ 1,776,081
- University of Kansas: \$11,191,187
- Wichita State University: \$ 3,298,097
- KBOR: \$ 198,302

Total Shortfall: \$27,038,448

2. Kansas Campus Restoration Act Facilities Funding - \$32,700,000

The House deleted \$32.7 million for FY 2026 under the Kansas Campus Restoration Act. The Restoration Act was approved by the Legislature in 2024 to support the Board of Regents' facilities capital renewal initiative at the state universities, and for improvements at the campuses of the public coordinated institutions of higher education. The state universities are developing their multi-year plans for the six years of funding now. The Board requests this critical funding be kept in place for FY 2026, so we do not lose our momentum on campus improvements and rightsizing.

3. Continue Student Success Playbook Initiatives

We appreciate that the House added \$5,827,300 for the public universities and \$10,500,000 at the two-year colleges for student success playbook initiatives. This funding level is slightly less than the Board's request. The Board of Regents engaged the National Institute for Student Success to identify university-specific improvements for student retention and graduation rates. The Board had

requested the state investment continue but reduced the amount by 30% from the prior years' levels. The House's budget reduced these appropriations by approximately 40% for FY 2026.

4. **Continue IT Infrastructure and Cybersecurity Improvements - \$20,000,000**

The public universities and two-year colleges have benefitted from state investment in information technology and cybersecurity improvements in previous years, but funding for IT was removed from the FY 2026 allocation. The next year of state funding would be used to materially reduce security and operating risks facing the institutions from legacy technologies, to maintain business continuity, and to monitor and respond to cybersecurity attacks.

The Board of Regents has directed the universities to collaborate on systemwide projects to make best use of the state support. The FY 2025 funding will be devoted to efforts across all public universities, including a cybersecurity assessment to assess the universities' maturity against the NIST 2.0 framework, perform third-party penetration testing exercise, and to address known cybersecurity and operating risks.

5. **Continue Kansas Blueprint for Literacy - \$10,000,000**

For FY 2026, the House included \$2 million in one-time ARPA interest monies for the Blueprint for Literacy, which I understand this Committee has stricken from the House budget. In FY 2025, \$10 million in SGF was appropriated to the Board. We request this funding be retained for FY 2026 and add carryover language from the current year as we launch this initiative critical to the state's workforce.

The Blueprint for Literacy was approved by the 2024 Legislature, elevating literacy as an economic imperative in Kansas. The Blueprint is focused on postsecondary education, outlining a series of practical approaches higher education must take to ensure educators have the tools needed for student success in the classroom.

State Support for Kansas Postsecondary Education

	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2026
	Appropriations	KBOR Request	Legislative Budget ¹
Multi-Campus/Systemwide Items			
Student Affordability	--	90,108,553	--
Blueprint for Literacy	10,000,000	10,000,000	--
Nursing Initiative	4,787,193	3,787,193	3,787,193
Need Based Aid for Public University Students	24,284,260	24,284,260	24,284,260
University Student Success Playbooks	9,537,700	6,361,600	5,827,300
University IT Infrastructure & Cybersecurity	7,500,000	10,000,000	--
State University Capital Renewal Initiative	20,000,000	--	--
Public University Facility Demolition	5,000,000	--	--
Campus Restoration Act ²	--	32,700,000	--
Subtotal - Multi-Campus/Systemwide Items	\$81,109,153	\$177,241,606	\$33,898,753
State Universities			
Research Excellence "One Health"	--	51,000,000	--
Regional Growth & Development	--	21,000,000	--
University of Kansas	183,639,890	194,706,797	184,706,797
KU Medical Center	202,614,428	136,320,538	125,776,303
Kansas State University	177,088,380	148,651,345	145,552,019
KSU Veterinary Medical Center	18,197,431	25,809,008	20,309,008
KSU Extension/Ag Research	61,872,405	67,240,180	62,240,180
Wichita State University	113,591,338	114,151,342	106,651,342
Emporia State University	60,782,517	44,070,053	46,270,053
Pittsburg State University	53,154,029	51,004,510	51,004,510
Fort Hays State University	61,972,683	46,505,486	47,755,486
Subtotal - State Universities	\$932,913,101	\$900,459,259	\$790,265,698
State Aid to Public Institutions Coordinated by KBOR			
Washburn University Grant	14,270,000	17,570,000	17,570,000
Washburn Manufacturing Training Center	3,000,000	--	--
Washburn University Science Lab Expansion	--	5,000,000	--
Tiered Course State Aid	62,497,184	66,453,525	66,453,525
Non-Tiered Course State Aid	89,190,371	88,361,538	88,367,371
Excel in CTE State Aid ⁴	43,150,000	47,050,000	47,050,000
GED Accelerator ⁴	--	100,000	--
Tech Equipment CC/Washburn	398,475	398,475	-
Two-Year College Student Success Initiatives	17,500,000	11,672,700	10,500,000
Two-Year College IT/Cybersecurity	6,500,000	10,000,000	--
College Apprenticeships/Business Partnerships	14,300,000	--	14,300,000
Tech College Operating Grants	10,500,000	10,500,000	7,000,000
Tech College "HIRED" Fund Pilot	--	10,500,000	--
CTE Capital Outlay (SGF Portion) ⁵	4,871,585	4,871,585	9,871,585
Other Comm. Colleges' Capital Outlay	5,000,000	5,000,000	--
Subtotal - Aid to Coordinated Institutions	\$271,177,615	\$277,477,823	\$261,112,481
Student Financial Aid Administered by KBOR			
Kansas Comprehensive Grant	40,258,338	40,258,338	40,258,338
State Scholarship ⁶	1,035,919	1,035,919	1,010,919
Distinguished Scholar Program ⁶	--	--	25,000
Kansas Education Opportunity Grant	1,996,498	1,996,498	1,996,498
Career Tech Ed Workforce	114,075	114,075	--
Adult Learner Grant ³	1,000,000	1,000,000	--
Promise Act Service Scholarship	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000
Tuition Waivers (Hero's Scholarship)	2,200,000	4,450,000	2,950,000
National Guard Tuition Assistance	5,400,000	5,400,000	5,400,000
National Guard EMERGE Scholarship	1,100,000	2,200,000	2,200,000
ROTC Service Scholarship	175,335	175,335	175,335
Military Service Scholarship	500,314	500,314	500,314
Teacher Service Scholarship	3,094,046	3,094,046	3,094,046
Nursing Service Scholarship	1,417,255	417,255	1,417,255
Computer Science Preservice Ed Grants	1,000,000	1,000,000	--
Nurse Educator Grant	188,126	188,126	188,126
Osteopathic Service Scholarship	2,200,000	--	1,000,000
Optometry Education Program	107,089	107,089	107,089
Work-Study Program	546,813	546,813	546,813
Governor's Scholarship	20,000	20,000	20,000
Subtotal - KBOR Student Financial Aid	\$72,353,808	\$72,503,808	\$70,889,733
KBOR Agency Operations/Other Programs			
Agency Operations	5,220,857	5,256,170	5,247,947
Midwest Higher Ed Compact Dues	115,000	115,000	115,000
Adult Basic Education	1,567,031	2,567,031	1,567,031
Salina Rural Family Physician Expansion Grant	10,000,000	--	--
Subtotal - KBOR Operations/Others	16,902,888	\$7,938,201	\$6,929,978
Postsecondary Ed System Total - SGF	\$1,374,456,565	\$1,435,620,697	\$1,163,096,643
Non SGF Funding			
University of Kansas - SWPF	40,000	40,000	1,740,000
KSU Extension/Ag Research - EDIF	336,064	336,064	3,836,064
EPSCoR - EDIF	993,265	993,265	993,265
Technology Innovation/Internships - EDIF	179,284	179,284	--
Community & Technical College Competitive Grants - EDIF	500,000	500,000	--
Career Technical Education Capital Outlay Aid - EDIF	2,547,726	2,547,726	2,547,726
Blueprint for Literacy-ARPA	-	--	2,000,000
Postsecondary Ed System Total - Non SGF	4,596,339	4,596,339	11,117,055
Postsecondary Ed System Grand Total	\$1,379,052,904	\$1,440,217,036	\$1,174,213,698

¹ Includes FY 2026 appropriations from 2024 SB 28, 2024 HB 2551 as well as 2025 HB 2007.

² Financed by an SGF transfer rather than appropriation.

³ Governor Kelly recommends switching the funding source from EDIF to SGF starting in FY 2026.

⁴ Sub for HB 2007 has \$371,328 for Excel in CTE State Aid and \$96,440 for GED Accelerator for FY 2025 Enhancement

⁵ Sub for HB 2007 combines the other Community College Capital Outlay and the SGF CTE Capital Outlay

⁶ Sub for HB 2007 separates Distinguished Scholar Program from the State Scholarship Program