



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

House Committee on Appropriations

Testimony in Support of HB 2626

March 17, 2022

Blake Flanders, Ph.D.
President & CEO, Kansas Board of Regents

Good morning, Chairman Waymaster and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 2626, an appropriations bill that would double state funding for teachers' service scholarships.

The Kansas Teacher Service Scholarship was enacted to support the need for licensed and fully endorsed teachers in the hard-to-fill disciplines and underserved geographic areas in the State of Kansas. The scholarship provides financial assistance to students pursuing bachelor's or master's degree programs, as well as currently licensed teachers pursuing new endorsements in hard-to-fill disciplines or master's degrees in hard-to-fill disciplines or either group planning to teach (K-12) in an underserved geographic area in Kansas. Applicants must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). To complete the service obligation, recipients must complete one year of teaching for each year of scholarship funding. Teaching service is not counted until the recipient has completed the degree program for which fund were awarded.

Priority in awarding goes to junior and senior level college students and currently licensed teachers who meet the outlined criteria. Funds are rarely available for freshman or sophomore students. This is a merit-based scholarship and the cumulative college grade point average (GPA) factors largely into the awarding decision. The average GPA of past recipients has been 3.50.

Recipients may be enrolled either full-time or part-time at a minimum of three credit hours per semester. Recipients are eligible to receive funding for up to ten semesters, which may include a combination of both undergraduate and graduate work and must continue to maintain satisfactory academic progress each year. The number of recipients awarded is dependent on state funding levels.

★ LEADING HIGHER EDUCATION ★

A snapshot of last year's recipients is as follows:

AY 2020-2021 Kansas Teacher Service Scholarship Awards

Total # of Applicants	716	(464 complete
Total # of Recipients	324	applications)
Total Funding Awarded	\$1,392,742	

Enrollment at Public Universities

Emporia State University	63	\$272,548
Fort Hays State University	73	\$258,104
Kansas State University	50	\$225,399
Pittsburg State University	29	\$115,712
University of Kansas	4	\$14,396
Wichita State University	35	\$164,433
Washburn University	5	\$22,144
Total Recipients at Public Universities	259	\$1,072,736

Enrollment at Independent Institutions:

Baker University	9	\$35,994
Benedictine College	4	\$23,251
Bethany College	1	\$5,536
Bethel College	2	\$11,072
Central Christian College	2	\$11,072
Friends University	7	\$29,900
Kansas Wesleyan University	3	\$16,608
McPherson College	1	\$2,214
MidAmerica Nazarene University	1	\$5,536
Newman University	27	\$132,866
Ottawa University	2	\$7,197
Southwestern College	1	\$5,539
Sterling College	1	\$5,536
Tabor College	2	\$16,057
University of St. Mary	1	\$5,536
Total Recipients at Independents:	64	\$313,914

Enrollment at Community Colleges

Seward County Community College	1	\$6,092
Total Recipients at Community Colleges:	1	\$6,092

Kansas Teacher Service Scholarship recipients sign an agreement/promissory note with the State of Kansas in which they agree to:

- Complete the required course of instruction leading to licensure and full endorsement in a field of education as a teacher in the selected hard-to-fill teaching discipline or in an underserved geographic area in the State of Kansas (i.e., graduate from the student's education degree program);
- Obtain and maintain necessary licensure and endorsement as specified in the teaching agreement;
- Engage in teaching in the hard-to-fill discipline or in an underserved geographic area in the State of Kansas within six months of licensure in a state-accredited public or private school (K-12) on a full-time basis for a period equal to the time scholarship was awarded or commence teaching on a part-time basis for a period that is equivalent to full-time, multiplied by the length of the course of instruction for which the scholarship was awarded.

If a recipient is unable to fulfill the service obligation, either by failing to graduate from the degree program or by not teaching in the chosen discipline in the State of Kansas, the recipient will be subject to repaying the amount of the scholarship plus accrued interest. The interest rate is equivalent to the interest rate applicable to loans made under the federal PLUS program at the time the agreement was first entered into plus five percentage points.

Additionally, the Board of Regents uses the appropriation for the Kansas Teacher Education Competitive Grant Program (KTECGP), which was established through 2007 House Bill 2185 to increase the number of licensed teachers in hard-to-fill disciplines and/or underserved geographic areas of the state.

The Kansas Board of Regents administers this grant in which the six state universities and Washburn University are eligible to apply for funds. Institutions may use grant funds to create a new teacher education program or expand an existing program and must match grant funds on the basis of \$1 from the institution to every \$2 received from the grant. In the 2021 round, applicants were asked to create this program in partnership with at least one Kansas community college to develop new transfer pathways for future educators.

This initiative, which provides resources to institutions, is contingent upon funds available in the Teacher Service Scholarship Program, which provides financial support for students pursuing teaching careers in Kansas. The chart below outlines the projects and funds awarded.

Grant programs are reviewed each January and funds are reallocated based on each program's success & areas of growth.

INSTITUTION	PROJECT-Target areas & Community College Partners	Amount Awarded for AY2021-22
Emporia State University	Fellowship for Acceleration to Student Teaching (FAST) -Elementary Education Butler Community College & Johnson County Community College	\$86,000
Fort Hays State University	Classroom to Classroom (C2C) -Elementary & Special Education. Recruiting & placing teachers in underserved areas Barton Community College & Dodge City Community College	\$144,264
Kansas State University	Project TRUST (Training for Rural & Urban Teachers) -Elementary Education in Rural & Urban school districts Kansas City Kansas Community College & Seward County Community College	\$160,135
Pittsburg State University	Elementary Education Unified Para-to-Teach Project (EEU Para2Teach) -Special Education, Elementary Education Fort Scott Community College, Independence Community College & Neosho Community College (pathways in development)	\$35,854
Washburn University	Paraprofessionals to Teachers Program (PTP) -Special Education & STEM (Community College Partnerships in development)	\$35,854
	Total:	\$464,107

We believe in our efforts to supply teachers for our state, and also provide you with the attached report on public university enrollments and completions in our programs that lead to teacher certification. Combined with our new Promise Act that can assist students' first two years, ramping up this service scholarship program would be impactful for our students.

As we do have more applicants than funding for this financial aid program, it would benefit our students and our state if the Legislature were to increase the program's appropriation. Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Board of Regents' Teacher Service Scholarship Program.