



**KANSAS ASSOCIATION  
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

Serving Educational Leaders, Inspiring Student Success

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**Oral Opposition Testimony before the**

**Senate Committee on Education**

**on**

**SB 93-** relating to the allocation of school district moneys for improvement of student academic performance.

**by**

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**Kansas Association of School Boards**

**February 19, 2021**

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on **SB 93**. The bill directs school boards to use data to work “to ensure improvement in student academic performance,” and to “allocate sufficient moneys in a manner reasonably calculated such that all students may achieve the goal” set forth in state law; the so-called “Rose capacities.” Those capacities were identified by the Kansas Supreme Court as the measures of an adequately funded school system and adopted by the Kansas Legislature as state education goals. (Listed at the end of this testimony.)

First, KASB supports those goals. In fact, our member school boards put in our permanent policies the following statement:

*“KASB supports an accreditation and accountability system based on meeting or exceeding the Rose capacities as identified by the Kansas Supreme Court.”*

We believe local boards, guided by state law and the State Board of Education and supported by their communities, are already working to use their resources to help students succeed, within the limits of those resources and the limit of what schools can do for students who are influenced by many other factors.

Second, as we read this bill, it does not tell local boards how to allocate those resources. It would continue to be up to local boards to decide the most appropriate way to help students achieve those goals, accountable to both the voters in each community and the State Board of Education’s accreditation and accountability systems. Our membership has adopted this statement:

*Support local decision making. To meet the different needs of students, families and communities, school districts should have flexibility in using resources, setting curriculum*

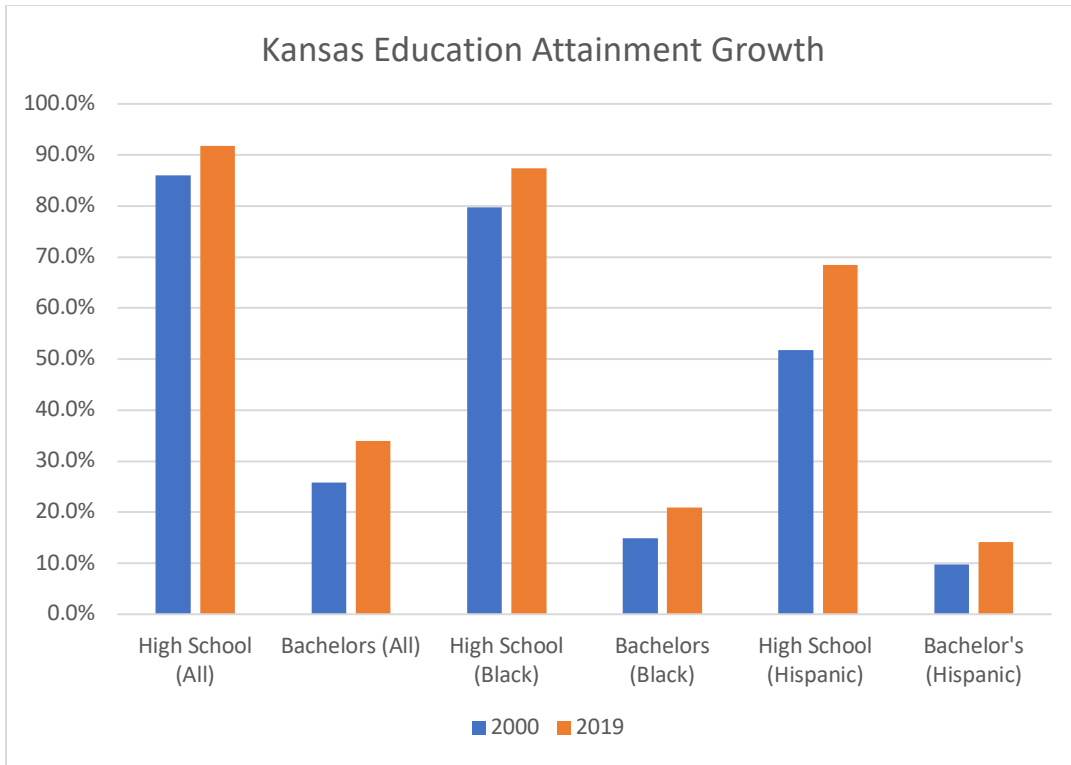
*and operating programs unless they do not meet standards and there is clear evidence state mandates will provide better results.*

However, we have three major concerns about this bill. First, it may suggest that locally elected school boards are **not** committed to achieving these capacities simply because we have not reached them. Second, it may imply schools are not reaching these goals because boards are misallocating dollars due to either indifference or ignorance, or perhaps some other reasons. And third, it may imply that the one-size fits all solution is simply spending more on a single budget function and less on everything else.

Therefore, we want to share the following information with the committee.

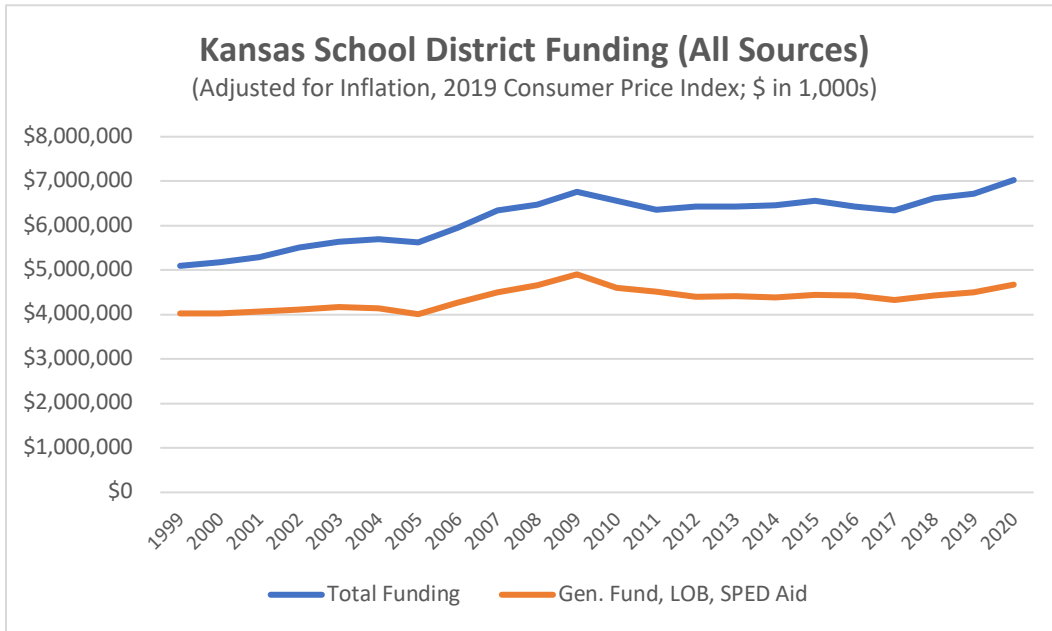
- 1. The allocation of resources by local school boards has supported increased educational attainment, which directly aligns to goals of sufficient basic skills, sufficient training for academic and vocational fields and sufficient academic or vocational skills to compete with other states in academics or in the job market.**

Educational attainment by Kansans over age 24 is at an all-time high. Kansas high school graduation rates are also the highest ever, despite an increase in high needs students. All major racial and ethnic groups saw improvement. Kansas ranks 16<sup>th</sup> in high school completion, 12<sup>th</sup> in percent of population with any college, and 17<sup>th</sup> in four-year degree completion.

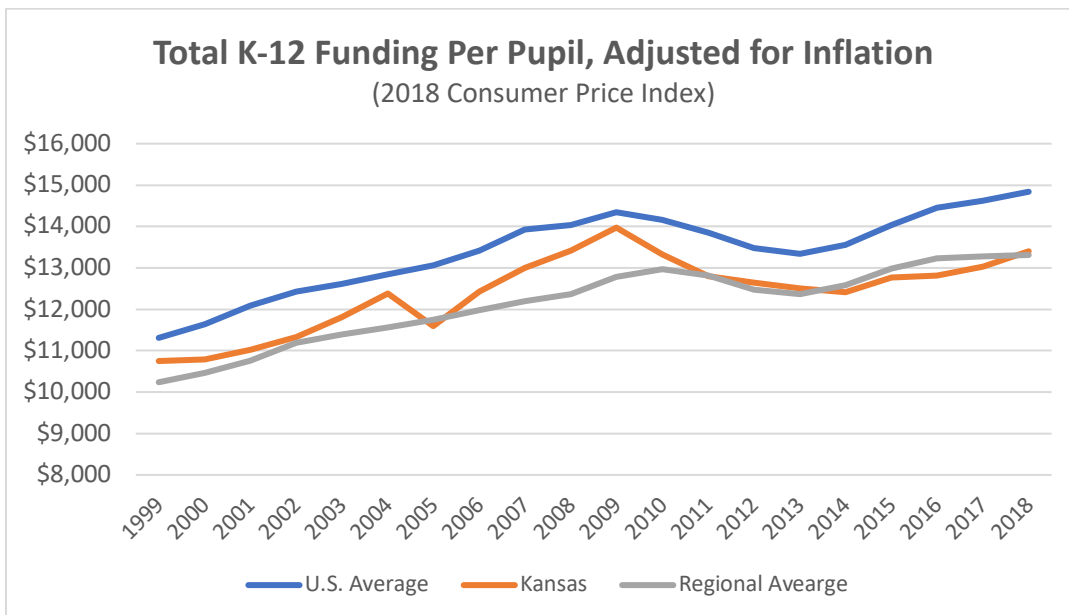


- 2. Some short-term education measures have fallen as Kansas schools experienced 8 years of below-inflation funding, that also fell behind average national and regional funding. Current achievement measures reflect less than two years of increased funding.**

After increased funding during the 2000's (and before), "real" funding declined from 2009 to 2017, especially in the school district general fund, local option budgets and special education state aid, which pay for most general operating costs for education services.



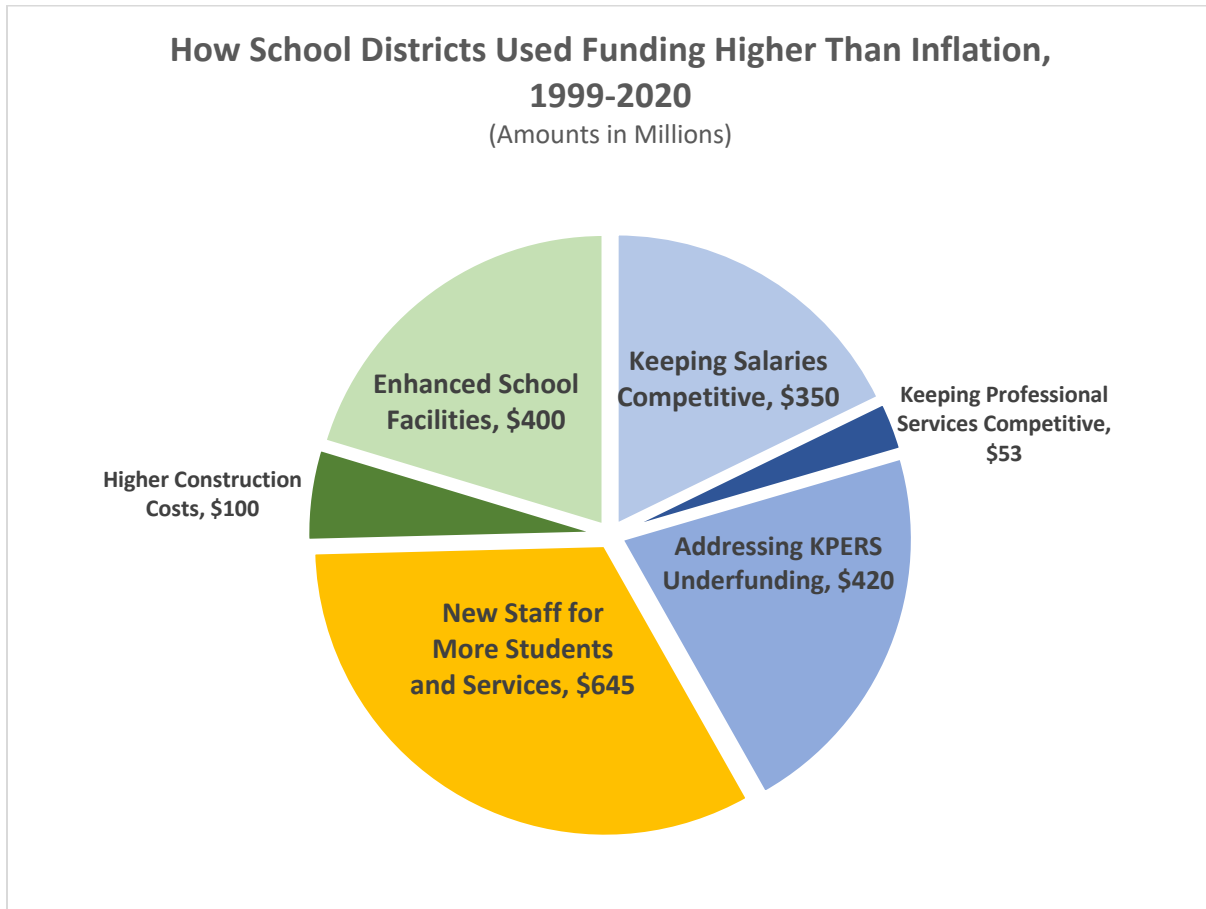
Measures such as state and national test results and the ACT test are generally given in the Spring, which means students had only about 3.5 semesters when real increased funding was being phased in, after 16 semesters of when funding was flat or declining.



Kansas consistently provides less total funding than the U.S. average, and fell further behind after 2009. Kansas was previously above the regional average but has dropped to that average since 2009. As a result, boards are allocating fewer dollars in comparison to other states.

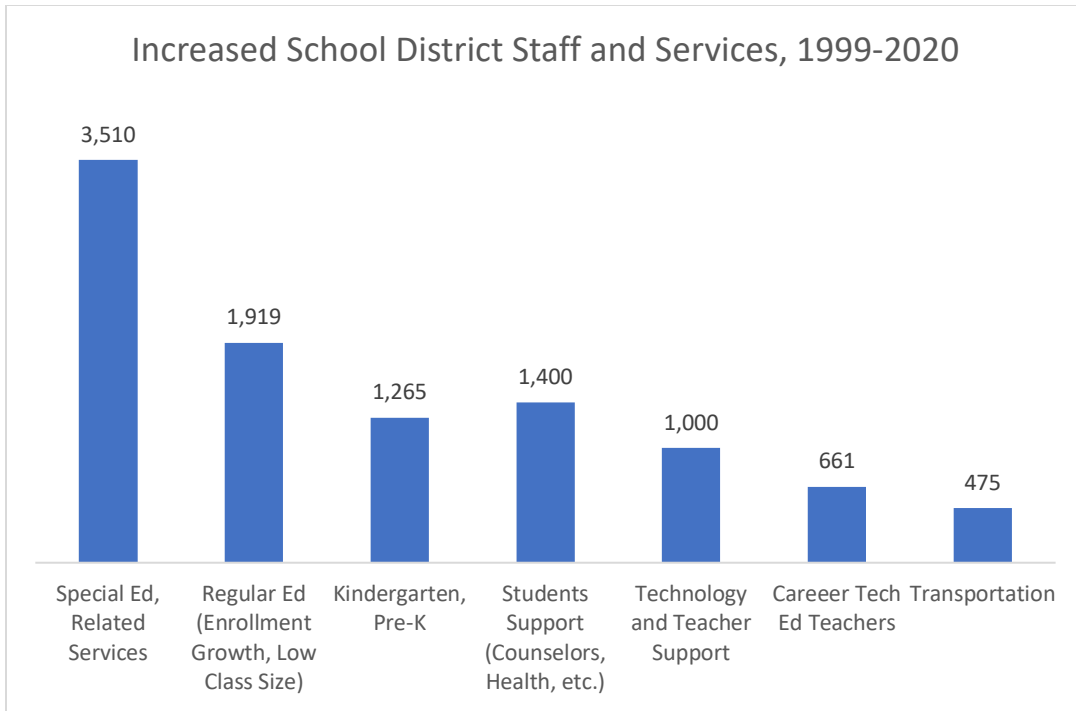
**3. Education funding has gone to new positions and programs, keep up with rising employee and building costs, enhancing facilities and shoring up the KPERS system.**

KASB studied how districts used increased funding from 1999 to 2020. About 75 percent went to “personnel” costs – new positions, keeping salaries competitive and KPERS contributions. The remaining 25 percent for was building costs. But school boards can’t use most building funds (capital outlay and construction bonds) for anything else, and the Legislature determines the KPERS contribution.

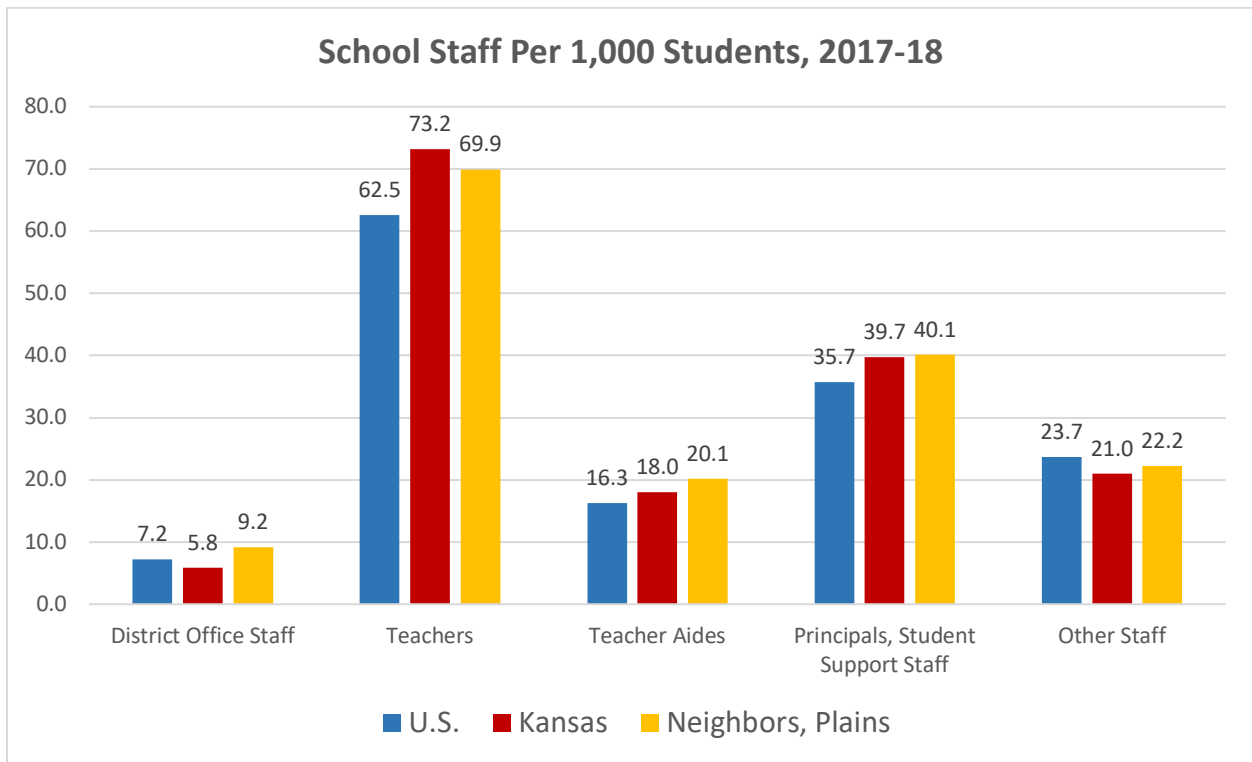


“Keeping Salaries Competitive” means the increase necessary to keep up with U.S. employer cost index for all employees, which has increased faster than inflation.

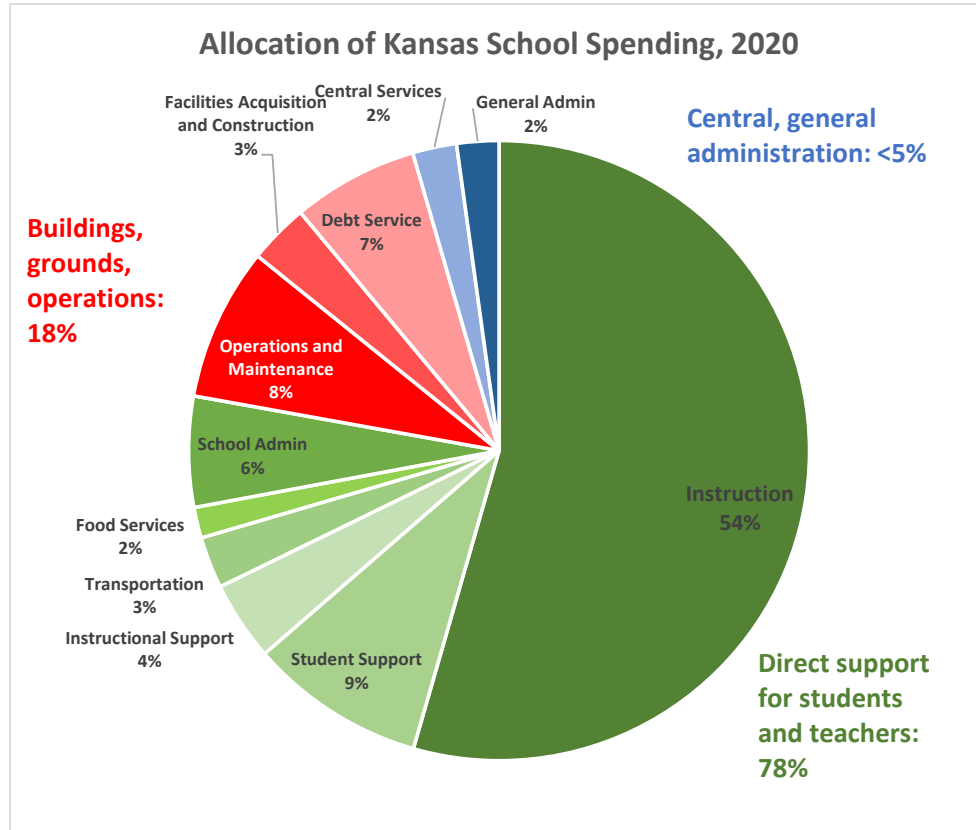
Virtually all increased staff since 1990 have been teachers or positions supporting students and teachers.



Kansas also has more teachers for its student population and fewer district and other support staff than the national and regional average of states.



4. Almost 80 percent of Kansas total spending is allocated to instruction and other direct support of students and to supporting instruction. About 18 percent is used for construction and operation of school facilities. Less than 5 percent is spent on general administration and central services.



The 18 percent on buildings, grounds and administration is what allows school districts to operate on site and provide for athletics and activities.

Here is the breakdown for selected districts represented by this committee. Not one is close to the 65 percent target. What would you cut to reach that goal?

USDName	Direct Support of Students and Teachers						Buildings, Grounds, Operations			District Administration Other		
	Instruction	Support Services - Students	Support Services - Instructional Staff	Transportation	Operation of Non-Instructional Services (Food Service)	Support Services - School Admin	Operations and Maintenance of Plant	Debt Service	Facilities Acquisition and Construction	Central Services	Support Services - General Admin	Other Support Services
Auburn Washburn USD 437	54.3%	5.8%	2.1%	5.1%	4.2%	4.5%	7.2%	8.2%	4.5%	2.8%	1.4%	0.0%
Ellinwood USD 355	56.4%	0.8%	4.5%	2.5%	4.6%	6.6%	10.3%	7.8%	1.3%	0.9%	3.8%	0.5%
Eudora USD 491	51.7%	6.3%	3.7%	2.8%	3.4%	3.8%	5.0%	16.6%	3.5%	1.0%	2.0%	0.3%
Kansas City USD 500	45.3%	7.2%	5.8%	5.3%	5.5%	4.7%	10.4%	9.6%	2.3%	3.3%	0.5%	0.0%
Louisburg USD 416	46.7%	1.1%	0.7%	2.2%	3.2%	3.4%	10.7%	16.5%	11.1%	0.7%	3.4%	0.3%
Shawnee Heights USD 450	52.0%	5.5%	4.6%	4.1%	4.5%	4.3%	8.1%	7.7%	5.0%	2.4%	1.8%	0.0%
Shawnee Mission USD 512	49.9%	5.1%	3.2%	4.3%	3.3%	4.4%	8.0%	14.1%	3.4%	3.4%	0.9%	0.0%
Topeka USD 501	52.5%	8.7%	3.8%	3.2%	4.5%	6.4%	9.2%	4.3%	1.8%	4.2%	1.3%	0.0%
Wichita USD 259	48.6%	8.9%	5.1%	3.7%	4.2%	5.5%	8.6%	7.4%	2.8%	4.2%	0.9%	0.1%

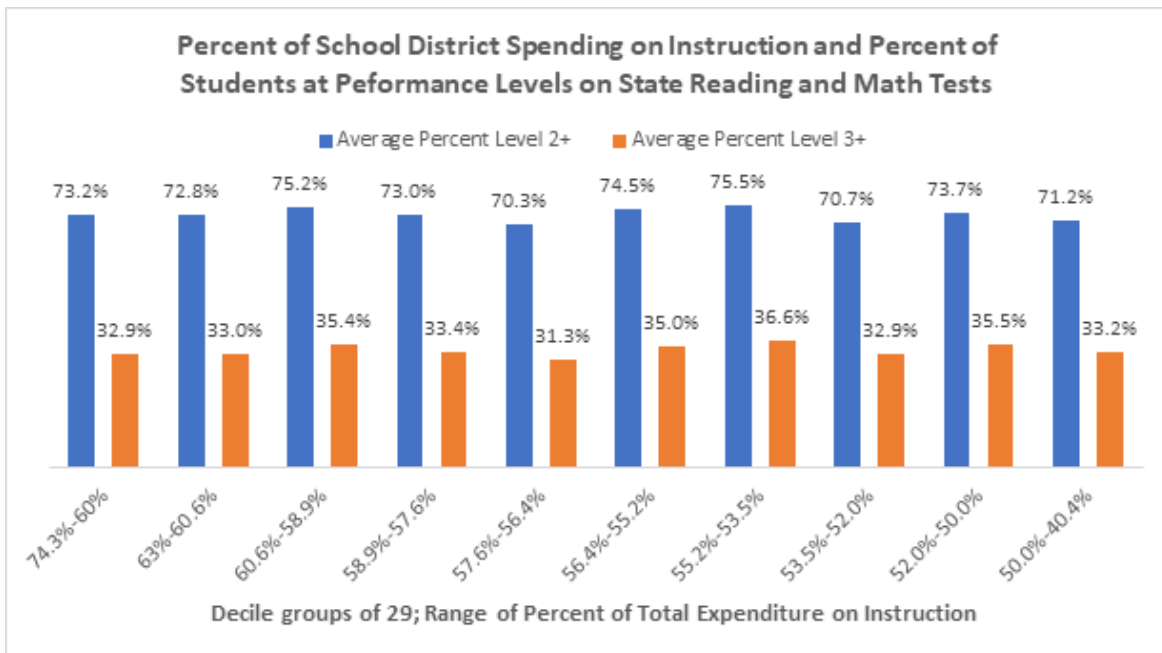
5. **Kansas is above the national average and regional average, based on the most recent data, for percent of current operating funds spent on instruction.**

Share of Current Operating Expenditures Spent on Instruction						
	2001	Rank	2011	Rank	2018	Rank
Kansas	55.6%	49	61.9%	11	61.3%	12
U.S. Average	60.7%		60.6%		59.7%	
Regional Average	59.2%	31.0	60.3%	23.0	60.1%	26.6

*Rank: Lower rank = higher percent spent on instruction*

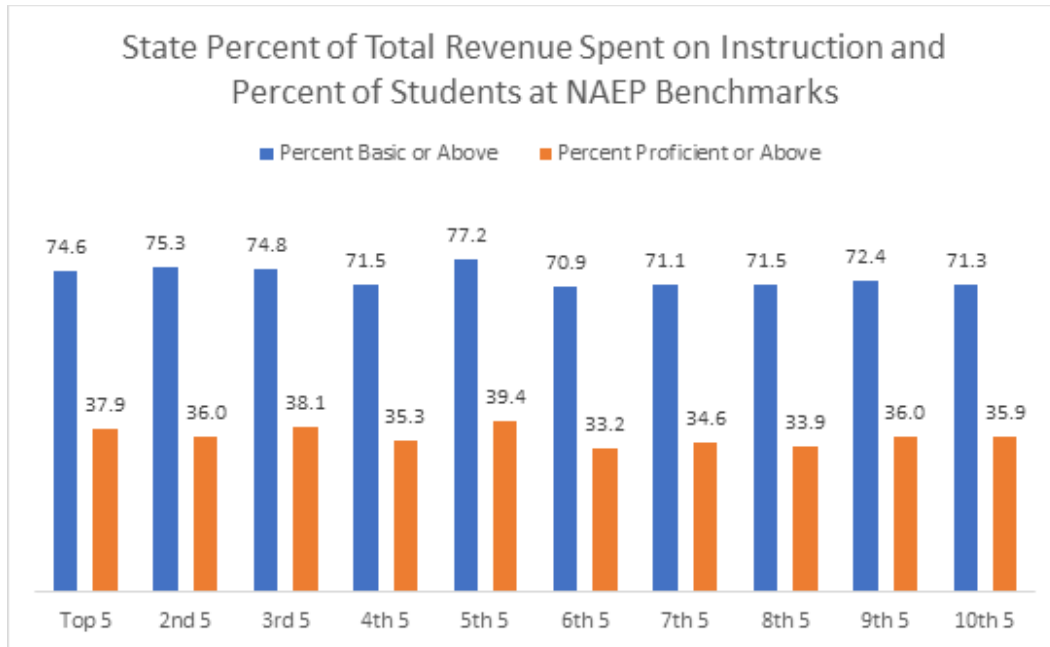
Current operating expenditures exclude capital costs and debt service, which with few exceptions, cannot be spent on instruction.

6. **Although Kansas ranks high nationally, there is no relationship between the percent of budget districts spend on instruction and academic performance on state assessments.**



The chart above divides districts into 10 groups of roughly 29 ranked by percent of total expenditures on instruction, and average state assessment results. Note the group spending the highest share on instruction s just two percent more students scoring at “grade level” – and one percent fewer students at “college ready” – than districts with the lowest share.

7. **There is also little relationship between percent of total spending on instruction at the state level and national reading and math scores.**



As the chart above shows, states spending the higher percent of total dollars on instruction are slightly more likely to have higher scores than the lowest – but states near the middle do the best.

### Conclusion

We believe **HB 2067** is unnecessary. Local school boards are already working to allocate resources to meet the education goals, accreditation standards, and Kansans Can outcomes. At worst, the bill could imply the state should try to direct how very different schools respond to very different student and community needs.

*The seven state education goals or “Rose” capacities:*

- (1) Sufficient oral and written communication skills to enable students to function in a complex and rapidly changing civilization.
- (2) Sufficient knowledge of economic, social, and political systems to enable the student to make informed choices.
- (3) Sufficient understanding of governmental processes to enable the student to understand the issues that affect his or her community, state, and nation.
- (4) Sufficient self-knowledge and knowledge of his or her mental and physical wellness.
- (5) Sufficient grounding in the arts to enable each student to appreciate his or her cultural and historical heritage.
- (6) Sufficient training or preparation for advanced training in either academic or vocational fields so as to enable each child to choose and pursue life work intelligently.
- (7) Sufficient levels of academic or vocational skills to enable public school students to compete favorably with their counterparts in surrounding states, in academics or in the job market.