



Developing and uniting educational leaders to support and advocate for the success of every Kansas student.

Meeting the expanding educational needs of students, families, and communities did not stop when COVID-19 interrupted the world; our schools are continuing to invest, innovate, and provide high-quality programs to support Kansas kids, enabling them to achieve personal and career aspirations. Now is not the time to change the pattern of investing in Kansas kids.

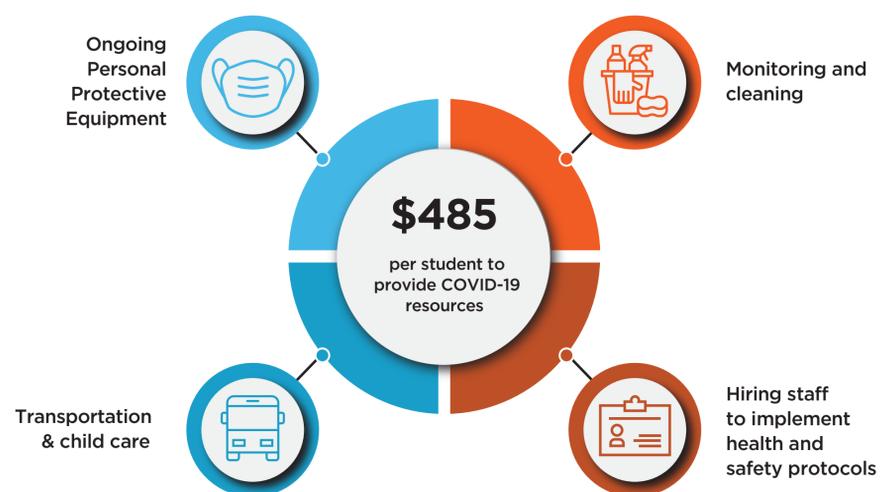
## Public Schools Need Our Support Now More Than Ever

After a long uphill battle, the 2018 and 2019 Kansas Legislature worked on an equitable funding formula which will raise the state's per-pupil allocation to \$4,846 per student by 2022. This funding increase will positively affect our teachers, students, and economy for years to come. COVID-19, however, has changed the education landscape. Academic and funding impacts on our schools are yet to be determined.

### Policy Recommendations:

- The current school finance formula provides adequate and equitable funding for public schools.
- Ensure federal stimulus dollars will go to the growing educational needs developing due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

## COVID Will Cost Schools More Money, Not Less



Sources: Association of School Business Officials International and AASA, The School Superintendents Association

## Public Dollars Must Remain in Public Schools

As Kansas continues to respond to the impacts of COVID-19, the Kansas Legislature should refrain from investing state resources into programs that fail to support our neediest students or fail to create equitable access to educational opportunities. These changes would include any forms of voucher programs, including increasing tax credit scholarships that divert public tax dollars to schools/programs allowed to turn away students.

### Policy Recommendations:

- Use public dollars and tax credits to fund public schools and oppose any public funding to private schools.
- Oppose public dollars supporting schools or programs that are not governed by a publicly elected board of education.

## Strengthen the Teaching Pipeline

To meet the growing needs of our student population, Kansas must recruit diverse and high-achieving students into quality teacher preparation programs. Effective recruitment requires transparent and accessible data that identifies quality within the more than 24 teacher preparation programs in Kansas.

### Policy Recommendations:

- Establish statewide financial incentives to encourage teachers to enter the profession.
- Changes to KPERS (Tier 3) to improve the quality of benefits in order to support recruitment and retention of new and out-of-state educators.

## Kansas Families Deserve Access to High-Quality Internet

Kansas had limited access to high-quality internet before the pandemic, but when Kansas schools attempted to support student learning needs during the pandemic, it became an equity issue. Kansas must ensure that all Kansas families can access affordable high-speed internet to provide a high-quality educational experience for all students. Many students in Kansas are disadvantaged due to a lack of quality internet.

Governor Kelly has introduced a new program to provide high-quality internet to rural Kansas Communities. Over the next ten years, the program seeks to invest \$85 million toward bridging the digital divide in Kansas thanks to funding provided by the KDOT Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program.

“Large portions of rural America, including here in Kansas, currently lack broadband access at a time when many of our critical needs are being fulfilled online,” Schmidt said. “It’s essential that Congress take action to prevent government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic from worsening the existing digital divide and ensure access to work, school and healthcare for all Americans.” - Kansas Attorney General, Derek Schmidt

### Policy Recommendations:

- Increase in affordable access to broadband services for all students and families across the state.

## What Schools are Providing for Communities During the Pandemic

Despite the negative rhetoric regarding Kansas Schools, Kansas students are receiving educational services, Kansas educators are teaching, supporting, and encouraging students in various learning environments. Our school districts are working under the guidance of the CDC, KDHE, and county health departments. School employees are surpassing expectations to make schools a safe and engaging environment. In addition to the educational needs, Kansas schools have provided millions of meals for students. Schools have gone above and beyond delivering food to homes during the summer, weekends, and holiday breaks.

### Policy Recommendations:

- Resources may be needed to provide after-school and summer literacy and math programs for students affected by the pandemic.
- Schools will need short-term flexibility for school districts regarding Funding to apply to acute needs related to the pandemic.
- Continue to maintain equity with special education; and External support & resources.

### Issues Schools are Working Around:

- Managing a continually changing learning environment
- Educators prioritizing students over their own needs
- Shortage of available substitutes
- Educating students while adhering to COVID protocols
- Innovating, teaching, and learning in an unconventional class setting
- Meeting the increased social-emotional needs of students amplified by the pandemic
- Teachers testing their own limits to meet the needs of their students
- Balancing the community expectations and needs during this national crisis

