

**February 14, 2023**

Written Testimony to House K-12 Education Budget Committee  
Honorable Chair, Representative Kristey Williams  
Room 352-S, State Capitol Building  
[Garret.Belknap@house.ks.gov](mailto:Garret.Belknap@house.ks.gov), Committee Assistant

**Proponent** of **HB 2271** – Educator Retention  
Hearing: Tuesday, February 14, 2023, 3:30 PM Room 546-S

Honorable Chairman Williams and Committee Members,

Kansas PTA encourages members of the House K-12 Budget Committee to support HB 2271 to authorize any nonresident student whose parent or guardian is employed by a school district to enroll in and attend such school district. Policies to recruit and retain educators and public school staff are critical, particularly given this new economic market of staff shortages.

Measures to promote the recruitment and retention of educators and school staff is in alignment with the [Kansas PTA legislative priorities and standing positions](#). Kansas PTA recognizes that the State Board of Education is granted the constitutional authority, under [Article 6](#), for the general supervision of public schools, educational institutions and all the educational interests of the state resides to the state board of education, which shall be maintained, developed and operated by locally elected school board members. Yet in the context of the new Open Enrollment legislation, clarification by state statute is welcomed.

As of the end of December 2022, the Kansas Department of Education reported over 1,600 teacher vacancies in fall 2022 ([Carpenter, 2022](#)). The global pandemic has coincided with a spike in retirements across business and industry. A federal report indicated that 53% of public schools across the country were understaffed in the current academic year. Similar to the recent declines in post-secondary enrollment nationwide, teacher education enrollment has declined by 7.5% since 2015. In Kansas, this has coincided with both a population decline and a significant decrease in state aid for higher education following the 2009 recession – aside from the Kansas Promise Scholarship Act.

Kansas PTA advocates for multiple efforts to support the recruitment and retention of educators, including support for mentoring programs, professional development opportunities

and affordable post-secondary education along with competitive wages. “One calculation of the ‘teacher wage penalty’ indicated a Kansas educator could expect to earn 23% less than a college graduate in another field with comparable job experience. The starting salary for a public school teacher in Kansas is about \$40,000, which is below the national average” ([Carpenter, 2022](#)).

Superintendents and district administrators in Kansas and across the country also continue to retire at notably higher rates. In the fall of 2021, districts reported a total of 1,253 vacancies, which grew to 1,381 vacancies by spring 2022 ([KSDE, 2022](#)). About 500 of the spring 2022 job openings had no applicants, and another 640 vacancies were left unfilled because the applicants were not fully qualified on the teaching endorsement area. The 2021-2022 school year was also noted for 63 superintendent changes from the previous school year. This means that 20% of Kansas public school districts were under new leadership during an incredibly challenging time for pre-K-12 education systems.

These are challenging times. Short of allowing local school boards to determine their out-of-district enrollment policies, Kansas PTA urges this committee to support HB 2271.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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Cc: Brooke Burkett, VP of Advocacy;  
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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.*