

January 29, 2024

Remote Testimony to House K-12 Budget Committee

Honorable Chair, Representative Kristey Williams

Committee Assistant, K.12.Budget@house.ks.gov, 785-296-3971

Room 286-N, State Capitol Building

Neutral with reservations [House Bill 2594](#) – Establish an Education Funding Task Force.

Hearing: Monday, January 29, 2024, 3:30 PM Room 546-S

Honorable Chair Williams and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide remote testimony regarding HB 2594 – Establishing the education funding task force and abolishing the special education and related services funding task force. The Kansas PTA is neutral on this bill, with significant reservations.

In brief:

- **The Kansas PTA supports the continued work of the current Special Education Task Force and are opposed to dissolving this group before the Task Force recommendations are considered by the 2024 legislative body.** The brief but focused conversation of this committee’s pre-session meeting was productive and informative. The inclusion of multiple content experts, as voting members, on this school finance working group generated a level of inquiry that was noticeably more informative and efficient.
As we testified last session, Kansas PTA has been advocating for full funding of special education services since the Individuals with Disabilities Act was first passed in 1975 ([see Priorities 2, 3](#)). And again this session, we urge the Kansas legislature to fully fund their portion of mandated special education services without delay – at 92% of excess costs.
- **Kansas PTA welcomes routine review of the both the general and special education school finance formulas, by a working group of voting members inclusive of multiple content experts.** This could include the three currently listed as non-voting members (line 35 on p.1 and lines 1-3 on p. 2 of the bill). We recognize that about half of states’ budgets are allocated towards meeting the primary obligation for public education of children preK through post-secondary. This level of financial obligation warrants routine monitoring.
- **Kansas PTA questions the need for a sunset on the general education school finance formula.** In previous testimony regarding the Special Education Task Force, Kansas PTA included a list of citations from 13 LPA audits along with two Kansas legislative cost studies dating back to 1983 that examined a variety of questions regarding special education funding in Kansas. The number of audits and cost studies regarding general education school funding is well more than double that number

[\(KS LPA Audit Report Library\)](#). Decades of evidence from these studies were foundational to the Kansas Supreme Court ruling which declared our current school funding formula as structurally sound. Again, the Kansas PTA welcomes routine review, while encouraging the Kansas legislature to the 2027 sunset on school finance formula. Kansas K-12 public education formula has been found to be both equitable and adequately, when suitably funded by the state – as evidenced by routine cost studies of the educational goals required by the Kansas State Board of Education. Our 500,000 plus Kansas youth benefit immensely from a sound, reliable and predictable funding formula.

We urge the legislature to retain the current Special Education Task Force, to fully fund special education under current state law, and to structure a new task force on general and special education funding with content experts from across the fields of education. Thank you for your consideration. Please note that PTA has been actively calling on our federal legislators to keep their promise and fully fund their portion of special education costs, a financial responsibility being passed on to states and local districts.

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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.