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[HB 2637](#). At-Risk CEP Mandating Reporting Requirement.

Opposed. Written Only Testimony. House Education Committee
Hearing. **Thursday, February 12, 1:30 pm**, Room 218-N

Michelle Sims, Committee Assistant
785-296-7388, h.Education@house.ks.gov
Room 286-N, State Capitol Building

Honorable Chair Estes and Committee Members,

Kansas PTA opposes this mandate, directing how local school boards provide oversight and governance of their district budgets, including reporting to district patrons ([KS PTA Legislative Priority 1](#)). The purpose of this bill is unclear and appears to just add unnecessary reporting requirements and regulations to school administrators already challenged with full workloads, whose time could be better spent focused on supporting student learning.

Note that school districts manage about 40 sources of revenue, each that have unique payment cadences, restrictions on use, and reporting requirements. District leadership works to maximize the value each of the funding sources to the benefit of student and their educational progress. The CEP program is just one example and the superintendents of eligible districts and their local boards know that:

- \$2 million reduction in state budget for reduced lunch copay is not a tradeoff for losing \$40 million to districts in funding for at-risk programs and services.

What problem is this bill trying to solve: How to feed more students? How to better estimate the budgetary needs for at-risk learners? Please consider the following:

Underestimated Need: Of the 270,000 Kansas public school students who meet the [criteria for at-risk services](#), state aid is provided for only 200,000. The impact is an **increased pressure on local property taxes** as reflected in statewide use of the Local Option Budget to fill the funding shortfall not covered by state aid.

- Whether the state uses Free Lunch Program status, Census, or some other mechanism **to estimate the budget for at-risk programs and services**, the current approach is **underestimating** the need by 70,000 students. Neither budget estimating metric is error free and both under-identify student need.
 - Given that Free Lunch is a budget proxy and is un-related to who receives at-risk services, it is unclear why the LPA Free Lunch Audit has garnered attention or generated bills (e.g., SB 387). This is of particular question when the key Audit finding is only generalizable to less than 10% of all Free Lunch program participants

(so less 20,000 in Kansas) and uses a verification process that is not sensitive enough to affirm qualification, and with no definitive evidence to contradict eligibility.

- If we are concerned about the metric used to estimate that at-risk budget and the clear tendency to under-count need, should the focus be on finding a stronger predictor?
- One potential solution is to borrow from the Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program for private school tuition. This program uses the at-risk poverty threshold of 250% for eligibility, rather than the 130% poverty threshold used to fund public school at-risk programs.

Improvement Since 2023 Baseline. Note that 2023 is the first year since the total Gannon general education remedy was reached for adequacy and came level to the 2009 Montoy base aid funding levels, adjusted for inflation. Setting aside the erosion of general education by the \$200 million shortfall in special education state aid and recovery from the COVID disruptions, Kansas is beginning to see improvements. Kansas public school educators and staff continue to rise to the challenge and beat the odds

- **NAEP.** Kansas consistently performs at or above the national average on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests, dating back to 2003 ([NAEP Issue Brief, 2025](#)). This pattern of student outcomes is seen across mathematics and reading, in grades 4 and 8, assessing performance at both the NAEP Basic and Proficient levels of achievement. Kansas also consistently outperforms Florida and Arizona — states that some say should be used as models for education policy in Kansas. The use of multiple data points over time provides a more accurate and reliable measure of performance than comparing any one single metric. These data are straight from the NAEP website, all based on statistical comparisons of significant differences reported by NAEP ([see NAEP State Profiles at The Nation’s Report Card](#)).
- **Kansas Metrics.** Note the performance among the Kansas public school students for whom half live in poverty, 17% students receiving special education services, 10% are English language learners and the current class of kindergartners were born when no COVID vaccine was available for infants (KSDE, 2025):
 - Record percentage of students graduating high school, over 90%.
 - Record number students taking post-secondary courses (40,709) and earning record number of post-secondary credits (333,007).
 - Record number AP exams taken (16,652) and passing with score of 3 or above (12,240)
 - Over 70% of 3rd graders can not only read, but can identify themes in different texts, differentiate facts from opinion, with supporting evidence ([Kansas Assessment Program](#)).
 - Over 70% of 8th graders can not only do math, but can solve multi-step linear equations ([Kansas Assessment Program](#)).

Also note, the [Kansas Constitution, Article VI](#), Sections 2 and 5, grants the following authority to boards of education:

- **State board of education ...** shall have general supervision of public schools, educational institutions and all the educational interests of the state, except educational functions delegated by law to the state board of regents.
- **Local public schools** under the general supervision of the state board of education shall be maintained, developed and operated by locally elected boards.

When state or federal legislative bodies / entities, other than the State Board of Education, seek to mandate the operations of local school districts, unfunded or funded, these policies likely overstep the authority of locally elected school board members as defined in the state constitution.

Local control refers to this authority, autonomy, and legal power vested in local entities (such as city governments and school boards) to make decisions, enact regulations, and manage operations. Like all democratically elected bodies at the federal, state and local levels, decisions are made by majority rule determined at 50% or more of the body's vote, or some higher threshold.

Our public schools are the heart of Kansas communities, serving 90% of school age youth. Our teachers and administrators are committed to preparing all kids to thrive in work and in life. Creating opportunities for every child to engage and be successful serves to strengthen the viability of a thriving Kansas future.

Thank you for your consideration. I urge committee members, on behalf of the Kansas PTA, to vote no on HB 2637. Respect the authority that Kansas voters place in their locally elected school board members.

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Cc: Angie Gunion, VP of Advocacy
 Devin Wilson, Legislative Liaison
 Mary Sinclair, PhD, Advocacy Team

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.