



From the desk of,
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January 29th 2025

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Public Comment on KSDE Budget

House K-12 Education Budget Committee

Dear Chair Goetz and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to express my strong support for the additional \$10 million allocation for the Child Care Capacity Accelerator Grant, specifically aimed at expanding and building early childhood education facilities and programs across Kansas.

As you may already know, there is a significant unmet demand for quality child care options in our state. In fact, previous grant rounds have already revealed a staggering \$60 million in unfunded projects, underscoring the urgent need for expanded capacity. This funding is not just a matter of supporting new physical infrastructure, but of investing in the well-being and future of our children, families, and communities.

As the District Early Childhood Coordinator, I've seen the critical need for expanded child care services in our schools. In our district, we offer child care options to support working families, but the demand far exceeds our capacity. We are often forced to turn families away due to limited space and resources, which impacts parents' ability to return to work and children's early development. With over \$60 million in unfunded child care projects across the state, the additional \$10 million would be instrumental in covering updates and operational costs to expand child care facilities, helping to meet the growing demand and providing much-needed slots for families in our community. This investment would not only support working parents but also lay a strong foundation for the children's future success.

For families in Kansas, access to affordable, quality child care is a critical need that directly impacts their ability to work, pursue education, and contribute to the local economy. In my own community, I have witnessed firsthand how difficult it can be for parents to find child care slots, especially in rural or underserved areas. Expanding early childhood education facilities would give families the opportunity to participate fully in the workforce and improve their quality of life.

Beyond the immediate relief this funding would provide to struggling families, the long-term benefits are immense. High-quality early childhood education lays the foundation for a child's success in school and later in life. Investing in these programs means investing in the future of our workforce, ensuring that children from all backgrounds have the opportunity to thrive from an early age.

The \$10 million allocation would be essential for covering critical construction and operational costs in fiscal year 2026, enabling providers to increase their capacity and meet the growing demand for child care services. More importantly, it would create lasting change by adding much-needed child care slots to communities throughout Kansas, allowing more families to access quality care close to home.

I strongly encourage you to consider this funding request, as it would have a far-reaching and positive impact on the children and families who rely on these vital services. The return on investment in early childhood education is profound, benefiting not only the individual children served but also their families, their communities, and the state as a whole.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to testify on the KSDE budget and Children's Cabinet recommendations. I look forward to the opportunity to see this critical investment in Kansas's future become a reality. Please reach out with any questions at levins@usd252.org.

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