



Testimony on the Kansas State Department of Education Budget

For the Senate Education Committee

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Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide neutral testimony on the Kansas State Department of Education budget on behalf of Kansas Action for Children:

As the Committee considers the budget for KSDE, **we encourage the Committee to continue funding the Kansas Preschool Pilot Program (KPP) with State General Funds (SGF) rather than CIF.**

The Children's Initiatives Fund

In 1999, Kansas legislators dedicated earnings from the Master Tobacco Settlement (MTS) to an endowment fund called the Kansas Endowment for Youth (KEY). Each year, earnings from the KEY Fund transfer to the Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF) to support programs serving our littlest Kansans. Unfortunately, due to sweeps to the State General Fund, the tobacco earnings have not had time to accrue the expected interest.

Now, with decreasing MTS payments and multiple sweeps to the SGF, **the KEY Fund is \$10.6 million short of being able to fund its current slate of programs in FY 2027.** This puts Kansas communities at risk of losing important programs that help kids thrive in their earliest years and arrive at school ready to learn.

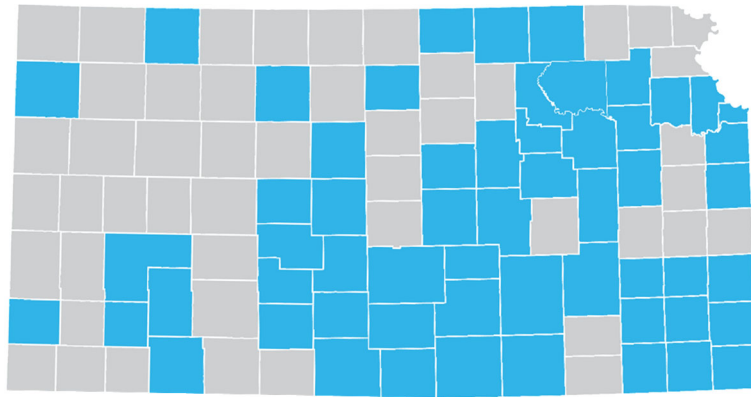
The current budget, as introduced by the Special Committee on State Budget, includes \$4.2 million CIF to fund KPP. We ask the Legislature to swap funding streams for the KPP by adding \$4.2 million from the SGF and delete \$4.2 million from the CIF. By making this change, the Legislature will be taking steps to correct the \$10.6 million shortfall in the KEY Fund by reducing CIF expenditures while still supporting these important programs.

The Kansas Preschool Pilot Program

The Kansas Preschool Pilot Program (KPP) is a grant program that funds school districts and community partners to offer high quality preschool programming for children ages 3 to 5. The program focuses on children experiencing risk factors that require extra support to be kindergarten-ready. The program

implements evidence-based curricula, instruction, and assessment practices shown to prevent later academic and behavioral challenges.

In FY 2025, KPP served 4,157 children and 744 professionals. From the beginning of the program year to the end, 95% of preschoolers showed improvements in literacy, 96% of preschoolers showed improvements in mathematics, and 96% of preschoolers showed improvement in life skills development.



**Counties in bright blue are served by the Kansas Preschool Pilot Program in FY 2024*

We understand the Legislature’s desire to minimize budget enhancements and instead identify cuts in the state budget this year. Yet, we believe the best investments of state resources are those made on behalf of children and families. For these reasons, we ask that you prioritize the needs of the youngest Kansans during your budget deliberations, even if it requires additional funding.

While KAC does not receive any funding from local, state, or federal government sources, we have a keen interest in the state budget because of its impact on children and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on several key items in the budgets for the Kansas State Department of Education and the Children’s Initiatives Fund. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me at megan@kac.org.

About Kansas Action for Children

Kansas Action for Children is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to make Kansas a place where every child has the opportunity to grow up healthy and thrive. We work across the political spectrum to improve the lives of Kansas children through bipartisan advocacy, partnership, and information-sharing on key issues, including early learning and education, health, and economic security for families.