

Protecting students; empowering parents and families

Guaranteeing opportunity for all Kansas children

KNEA believes that issues of poverty, health care, and child abuse can and should be addressed by the Legislature. It is in the power of the Legislature to provide children and families with a helping hand in order to make the future brighter for all Kansans. We also believe that the Kansas Legislature should work with the Kansas Congressional Delegation to promote adequate federal funding for programs that support children and families.

KNEA supports:

- Appropriate funding for student support services in public schools including counseling and nursing services, social workers, and physical and occupational therapists.
- Funding for post secondary education – including community colleges and technical colleges – that keeps opportunities for further learning affordable for all Kansans.
- Expansion of post-secondary scholarship programs for high achieving Kansas students from low-income families.
- Expansion of the Medicaid program under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act so that no Kansas child is without adequate health care.
- The protection of child nutrition programs including but not limited to school breakfast/lunch programs, WIC, and SNAP.

Securing the rights of citizenship for all Kansans

KNEA believes that those rights defined in the first amendment to the United States Constitution are sacred to our nation and citizenry. KNEA further believes that the right to vote must never be limited or compromised.

KNEA supports:

- The right of all citizens of voting age to freely register to vote in local, state, and federal elections.
- The right of all citizens in need to access public benefits whenever necessary without conditions.

KNEA opposes:

- Any legislation aimed at limiting or suppressing the right to freely register and vote in any election.
- Legislation that would require citizens in need to submit to invasions of privacy other than that necessary to verify income eligibility for benefits.

Defending the voice of public school educators

KNEA believes that after parents, the classroom teacher is the greatest advocate for the individual children in his/her care. The voice of the public school teacher and other employees must be valued and protected if Kansas is to maintain its standing among the states when it comes to school quality and student achievement. The high status of Kansas schools relative to other states indicates that the teacher rights provisions of Kansas law have served Kansas public schools well.

KNEA views proposals that weaken the voice of school employees as advocates for public education as attacks on the teaching profession.

KNEA supports:

- The current Professional Negotiations Act which ensures that teachers have a voice in the policies impacting their professional lives and their students' learning.
- A requirement that bonuses and/or incentive pay including any form of "merit pay" be a mandatorily negotiable topic given that such plans would have the impact of reducing the earning potential of other teachers.
- The restoration of the right to a due process hearing before an impartial third party. KNEA further supports provisions in current law that allow for an extension of the probationary period under certain circumstances.
- High standards for entry into the profession of teaching including comprehensive training and licensure upon recommendation of an accredited degree-granting institution of higher education.
- The establishment of collective bargaining rights for education support personnel.
- Returning professional status to retirees who have returned to work.

KNEA opposes:

- Any legislation which removes any aspect of teacher compensation from the professional negotiations process.
- Any legislation which weakens or limits a teacher's right to a due process hearing in non-renewals or terminations.
- Any legislation which singles out a particular group of teachers for either preferential treatment or restricted rights.
- Any legislation that restricts the right of employees to choose payroll deduction for contributions of any kind.
- Any legislation that lowers the standards for licensure and entry into the profession of teaching.

Ensuring adequate and equitable public education funding pre-school through graduate school

KNEA believes that the Legislature must increase school funding to meet the requirements of both the Montoy and Gannon school finance decisions.

While the CPI-U is not the appropriate measure of inflation for an institution that purchases primarily services as opposed to goods, the use of an inflation factor is an appropriate concept.

KNEA supports:

- The restoration of funds lost due to the recession and legislatively-enacted tax cuts.
- The adoption of an inflation measure appropriate to public education on which to base annual increases in funding.
- Annual adjustments in funding levels to reflect changes in educational costs over time, and allow all districts to recruit and retain competent, caring and qualified teachers and school leaders and meet operating costs.
- Public transparency in the movement of funds by local school districts from one budget category to another.
- Funding increases that allow school districts to increase teacher compensation to the national average over a period of not more than five years.
- The distribution of funds to provide flexibility to use funding increases to meet the needs of local school districts through local budget development and collective bargaining.
- Full funding of the excess costs of special education.
- Full funding of early childhood and all-day kindergarten programs.

KNEA opposes:

- The diversion of funds from public schools to private and parochial schools through vouchers, tuition tax credits, or charter schools established outside of the control of the locally elected school board or not held accountable under the state's accreditation system.

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Advocating a bright future for all Kansans

A caring, qualified teacher in every classroom

KNEA believes that the teacher shortage is real and must be addressed systemically.

KNEA supports:

- Tuition forgiveness programs to attract candidates into particularly hard to fill positions or content shortage areas.
- Funding levels that allow salaries to be competitive with other states AND other career options.
- Health insurance coverage for ALL public school employees in Kansas.
- Full funding for mentoring and induction support for new teachers and professional development support for career teachers.

KNEA believes that the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards are critical to maintaining our high standing among the states and attracting new business and industry to Kansas.

KNEA supports:

- Funding for the ongoing work of the State Department of Education in cooperation with businesses and professional education organizations in promoting the Kansas College and Career Ready Standards and their infusion into the core curriculum.
- Full funding for professional development that allows teachers to implement the Kansas College and Career Ready standards into their daily work.

KNEA opposes:

- Efforts to define a “suitable education” in ways that diminish curriculum offerings and co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for Kansas students.

A secure retirement for career educators

KNEA believes that retirement security for working men and women is essential to the well-being of the state and nation. KPERS retirees and other retirees in defined benefit programs have income security. That security means they can continue to spend in the local economy, supporting local businesses and spurring job growth.

KNEA further believes that KPERS retirees need and deserve a
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Advocating a bright future for all Kansans (cont.)

regular cost of living adjustment and that it is incumbent upon the Kansas Legislature to find a solution to the problem of “ad hoc” adjustments. Any such solution to this problem must not have a negative impact on the system’s unfunded actuarial liability.

KNEA supports:

- Keeping KPERS a Defined Benefit plan.
- The establishment of a regular cost of living adjustment for current retirees and for those active KPERS employees hired prior to July 2009.
- Returning professional status to retirees who have returned to work.

KNEA opposes:

- Separating subgroups of KPERS participants as a way of addressing the unfunded actuarial liability.
- Changing from a defined benefit pension system to a defined contribution system.

A balanced tax system that builds strong communities, supports quality services, and encourages economic development

KNEA believes that the Legislature must establish a Kansas tax system that is fair to both businesses and individuals and provide for the needs of the state through good and bad economic times.

KNEA supports:

- A moratorium on additional tax cuts or changes to the tax system that would result in lower revenue to the state.
- The establishment of a task force on tax modernization that would include representatives of business, local units of government, non-profits, and legislators charged with making recommendations on tax policy to the 2015 Legislature.
- A progressive income tax structure as part of the “three-legged stool” of a stable tax system.

KNEA opposes:

- Tax and expenditure limits such as the so-called Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) that limit the ability of the Legislature or local units of government to enact measures to ensure that state and local services meet the needs of the citizens of Kansas.
- The elimination or further reductions in the income tax.



Legislative
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