

Kansas

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FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR P-12 AND/OR HIGHER EDUCATION

Governor Kelly initially proposed a 2.5% raise for all Kansas state employees. The 2.5% raise was intended to reward state employees who continued to serve the state during the pandemic and is long overdue as the last pay increase was awarded in 2018. The proposed plan would have cost the state \$14.5 million but was ultimately rejected to avoid disappointing taxpayers who may have suffered job losses¹.

CHANGES TO THE FUNDING FORMULA FOR P-12 AND/OR HIGHER EDUCATION

Governor Kelly's budget plans to increase school funding by \$388.1 million through fiscal year 2023². In line with Kelly's budget, the senate proposed a plan to shoehorn \$236 million from the CARES Act money into the k-12 budget for the upcoming 2021-2022 fiscal year with another \$332 million earmarked for the 2022-2023 fiscal year³. The proposal is intended to free up state tax dollars and hopefully lead to tax cuts within the state of Kansas. However, many fear creating large tax cuts and incorporating one-time payments into the fiscal year budget will lead to an unsustainable budget and create larger problems in the future. Governor Kelly is skeptical of the proposal as she does not wish to repeat the failures of Governor Brownback who imposed aggressive tax cuts after the recession which led to a decline in school funding and forced the supreme court to intervene³.

Effects of Covid on the Kansas Budget

Due to Covid-19 closures, the April 2020 financial forecast predicted that Kansas would see a \$653 million shortfall in the upcoming budget. However, the state

1. Bahl, A. (2021, May 8). *Kansas lawmakers approve vaccine passport ban, judicial branch pay raise in final budget bill*. The Topeka Capital-Journal. Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <https://www.cjonline.com/story/news/state/2021/05/07/kansas-lawmakers-approve-covid-19-vaccine-passport-ban-judicial-branch-raises-governor-laura-kelly/4987958001/>.

2. Motter, S. (2021, January 13). *Gov. Kelly announces FY 2022 budget to PROTECT fiscal FOUNDATION, Kickstart recovery*. <https://www.wibw.com>. Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <https://www.wibw.com/2021/01/13/gov-kelly-announces-fy-2022-budget-to-protect-fiscal-foundation-kickstart-recovery/>.

3. Carpenter, T. (2021, March 18). *Kelly denounces Senate's budget plan AS 'sabotage' of K-12 system*. Hays Post. Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <https://hayspost.com/posts/0c3d0c66-ca7e-403a-9966-2e2249555ddf>.

of Kansas outperformed and collected 9.3% more tax revenue than expected. The state of Kansas generated \$8.9 billion in general revenue during the 2021 fiscal year which surpassed their expectations of \$778 million. It is expected that the state will use \$600 million from reserves to cover extra spending and public schools⁴. Additionally, republicans continue to pursue tax cuts, citing the increase in revenue as justification.

PRESSING STATE ISSUES AFFECTING P-12 AND/OR HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

Kansas State universities face a proposed fund reduction of \$37.4 million from Governor Kelly but expect to receive a \$10.3 million allocation that may be distributed at the discretion of the Kansas Board of Regents. The \$10.3 million allocation was calculated as the 2.5% salary increase that state employees would have received under her proposed state employee wage raise, but instead the Kansas Board of Regents has elected to commit the fund to maintenance and upgrades for university facilities⁵.

Refund for online learning

In response to virtual learning and covid restrictions, a committee of the Kansas House of Representatives backed an amendment to the state's higher education budget which would require colleges to provide a 50% tuition refund to students who participated in online courses during the 2020 Fall and Spring semesters⁶.

K-12 Covid-19 concerns

Senate bill 40, which was enacted on March 25th, 2021, allows students, parents, or staff to request hearings to challenge Covid-19 regulations. Any request must be met with a hearing within 72 hours and a ruling must be delivered within seven days⁷. If a hearing is not made within 72 hours or if a decision is not

4.Kelly, M. (2021, July 6). *Kansas outperforms grim budget expectations, has highest ending balance on record*. Kansas.com. Retrieved September 15, 2021, from <https://www.kansas.com/news/state/article252603643.html>.

5.Garcia, R. (2021, February 18). *Under pressure, KANSAS REGENTS commit Gov. Laura Kelly's extra \$10.3M to deferred maintenance over employee raises*. The Topeka Capital-Journal. Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <https://www.cjonline.com/story/news/education/2021/02/17/kansas-regents-laura-kelly-deferred-maintenance-backlog/6792938002/>.

6.Lederman, D. (2021, February 18). *Kansas lawmakers want 50% refund for virtual classes*. Inside Higher Ed. Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <https://www.insidehighered.com/quick-takes/2021/02/18/kansas-lawmakers-want-50-refund-virtual-classes>.

7.Wieland, B., & Smith, T. (2021, April 1). *New Kansas bill ALLOWING challenges To COVID-19 restrictions Forces district to adapt*. Mill Valley News. Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <https://www.mvnews.org/new-kansas-bill-allowing-challenges-to-covid-19-restrictions-forces-district-to-adapt/>.

made within seven days of the request, students, parents, and staff can file civil complaints regarding covid-19 restrictions and the request will automatically be granted.

ALTERNATIVES TO TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

In 2021, Kansas lawmakers proposed House Bill 2068 which would expand the use of tax-credit funded scholarships to help low-income students attend private schools⁸. Under this bill, all Kansas students who are eligible for federally subsidized free-and-reduced lunch would be eligible to participate. Kansas lawmakers also proposed House Bill 2119 which would allow high-poverty, under-achieving students access to state tax funded Education Savings Accounts of approximately \$4,500 per year to use to pay for private school tuition or other approved school costs, such as transportation to private schools, tutoring, textbooks, and online learning⁹. However, to pass the proposed budget, conservatives did not push for the savings-account plan and instead hope to revisit the subject next year.¹⁰

TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT FOR KANSAS' PER PUPIL STUDENT EXPENDITURE

The projected FTE per student in the state of Kansas for the 2021 school year is \$10,967, which is a 7.8% increase from 2020 of \$10,173 per student. Covid-19 will have an impact on the 2021 school year funding as it is estimated that there will be a 5% decline in enrollment. However, school districts have lobbied for changes in the funding formula so that money is based on the prior year's enrollment, meaning the 2020 school year funding could provide funding for close to 25,000 students who are no longer registered. At \$10,967 per student, taxpayers could be paying an extra \$250 million more than necessary¹¹.

8.Chung, R. (2021, January 29). *Proposed school 'VOUCHER' bills could be harmful to public education in Kansas, opponents say*. KSNT News. Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <https://www.ksnt.com/capitol-bureau/proposed-school-voucher-bills-could-be-harmful-to-public-education-in-kansas-opponents-say/>.

9.*Insight kansas: Education savings accounts could place students at risk*. Hays Post. (2021, April 2). Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <https://hayspost.com/posts/f72e9e23-a8b2-450f-9634-c91e5976c727>.

10. Hanna, J. (2021, May 7). *GOP drops 'CHOICE' plan in Kansas school funding debate*. AP NEWS. Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <https://apnews.com/article/kansas-business-government-and-politics-251ca62750f45a0f859377c61d1e3269>.

11.Trabert, D. (2020, October 30). *KSDE: Per-pupil FUNDING estimated AT \$16,216 this year*. Kansas Policy Institute. Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <https://kansaspolicy.org/ksde-per-pupil-funding-estimated-at-16216-this-year/>.

ALLOCATION OF STATE DOLLARS AND PERCENT OF THE STATE
BUDGET FOR P-12 AND HE

The 2022 Kansas state budget, which began on July 1st 2021, will approach \$21 billion with \$5.2 billion destined for public schools⁸. The \$5.2 billion will be a 5.3% increase from the 2021 budget and will constitute 25.2% of the total Kansas state budget¹².

12.Hanna, J. (2021, May 7). *Kansas lawmakers pass FUNDING hike, SCHOOL 'CHOICE' proposal*. AP NEWS. Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <https://apnews.com/article/ks-state-wire-kansas-business-education-health-ed116e5adac94ebffb2eebcda8d7c744>.
