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**Oral, Opponent Testimony before the  
Senate Education Committee**

**on**

**SB 528 – requiring school districts to reimburse teachers for classroom supplies**

**by**

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**And United School Administrators of Kansas**

**March 10, 2022**

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 528. We are aware that teachers and others are concerned about out-of-pocket teacher expenses. We appear in opposition to this bill because we do not think it will actually address concerns. We would like to share some information with the committee.

SB 528 would require each local school district to provide a reimbursement to teachers for classroom supplies in an amount not to exceed \$250 for each teacher employed by the school district from the general fund of the school district.

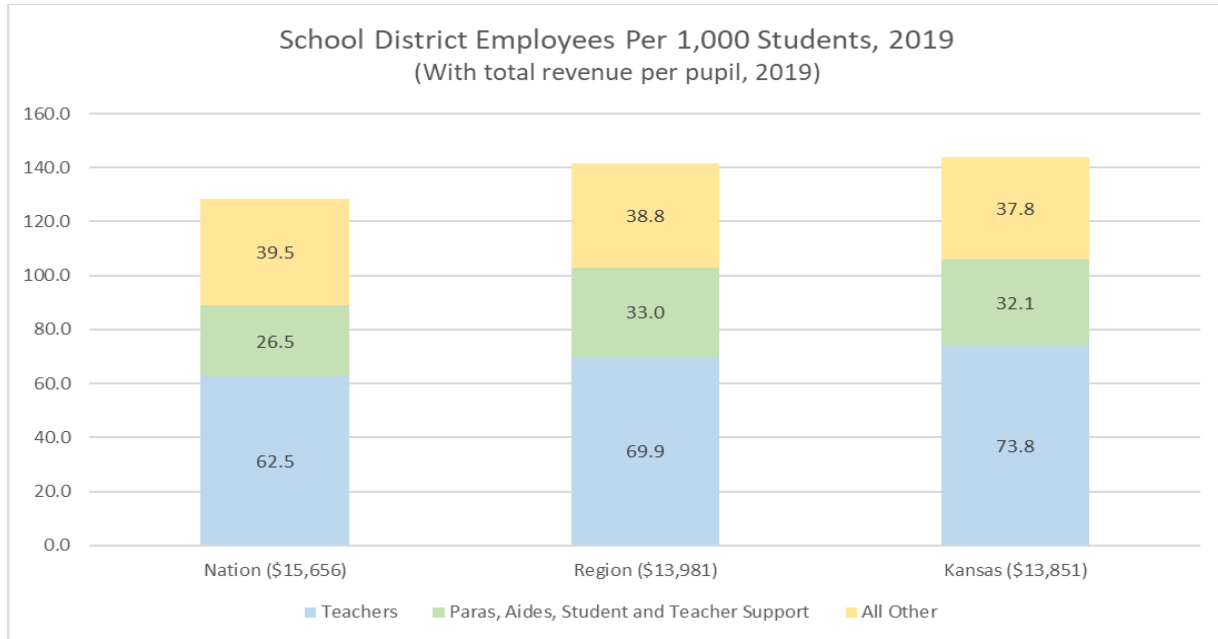
In discussing this issue with a number of school leaders, we understand that the most common practice across the state is for school districts to budget funds for teacher supplies at the school building level, and we have heard examples of at least \$250 as being a common amount. Therefore, this bill would essentially require what most districts are already doing. However, districts may ask teachers to get materials from the school's own supply purchases, or ask teachers to make purchases from particular vendors, follow certain procedures or meet certain deadlines.

If this is the case, why is it common to hear about how much teachers spend out of their own pocket? Probably the biggest reason is that teachers tend to be very generous and creative. They may want to spend more than their building allotment or make purchases at their own preferred outlets. And, as other testimony has indicated, they may spend their own money to meet the needs of children. But those costs would not be covered by this bill.

This bill would, however, require districts to spend up to a maximum amount of funding on teacher classroom supplies, regardless of budget circumstances, and districts would have less oversight over how those funds are spent.

District spending on classroom supplies is part of school district budgeting, so we would like to provide information on how Kansas compares to other states.

First, Kansas school districts employ more teachers based on its student population than most states, while spending less per pupil than the national average and slightly below the regional average (2019, most recent data available).



Kansas provided total funding per pupil of \$13,852 per headcount enrollment, just under the regional average of \$13,981 and well below the national average of \$15,656.

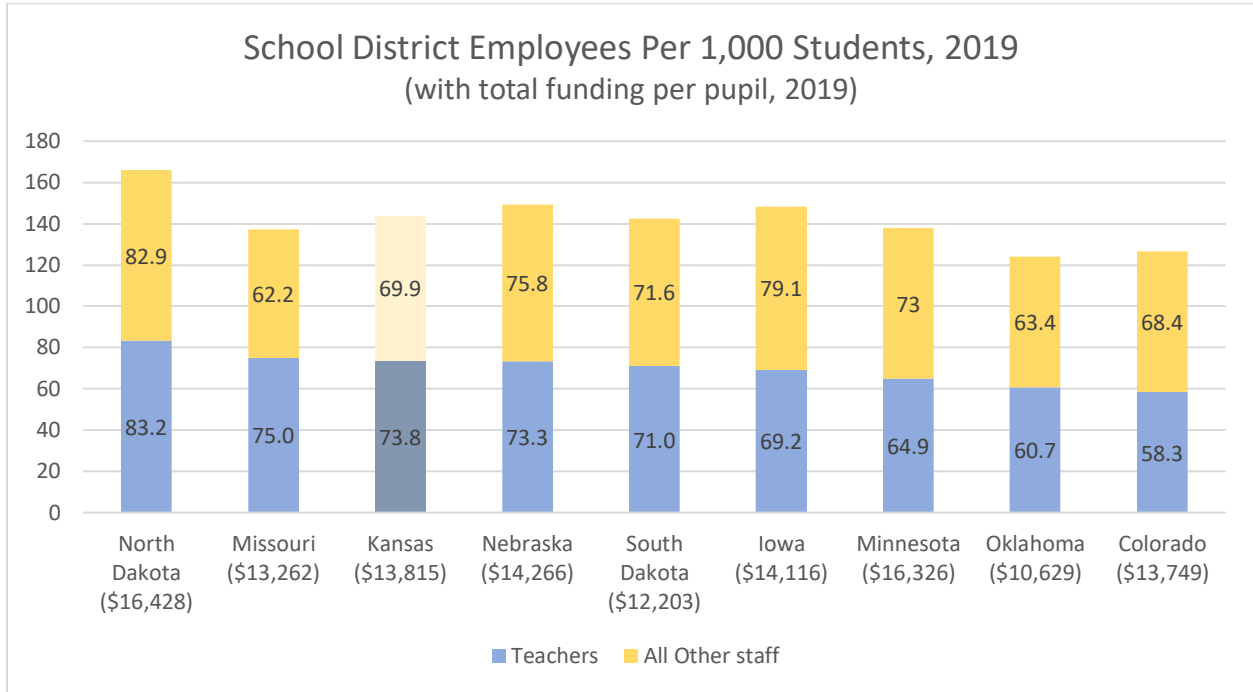
But Kansas school districts employed 143.7 staff positions per 1,000 students, two positions more than the regional average and 15.2 more than the national average.

		Nation	Region	Kansas
School district staff	Officials and administrators	1.5	2.5	0.9
	Administrative support staff	2.8	3.8	2.9
	Instruction coordinators	2.0	2.4	2.3
School staff	Principals and assistant principals	3.8	3.6	4.1
	School and library support staff	5.7	5.2	5.6
	Teachers	62.5	69.9	73.8
	Instructional aides	16.3	20.8	19.4
	Guidance counselors	2.3	2.6	2.3
	Librarians	0.8	1.1	1.2
Student support staff		7.4	8.7	9.2
Other support services staff		23.4	21.1	22.0
Total		128.5	141.7	143.7

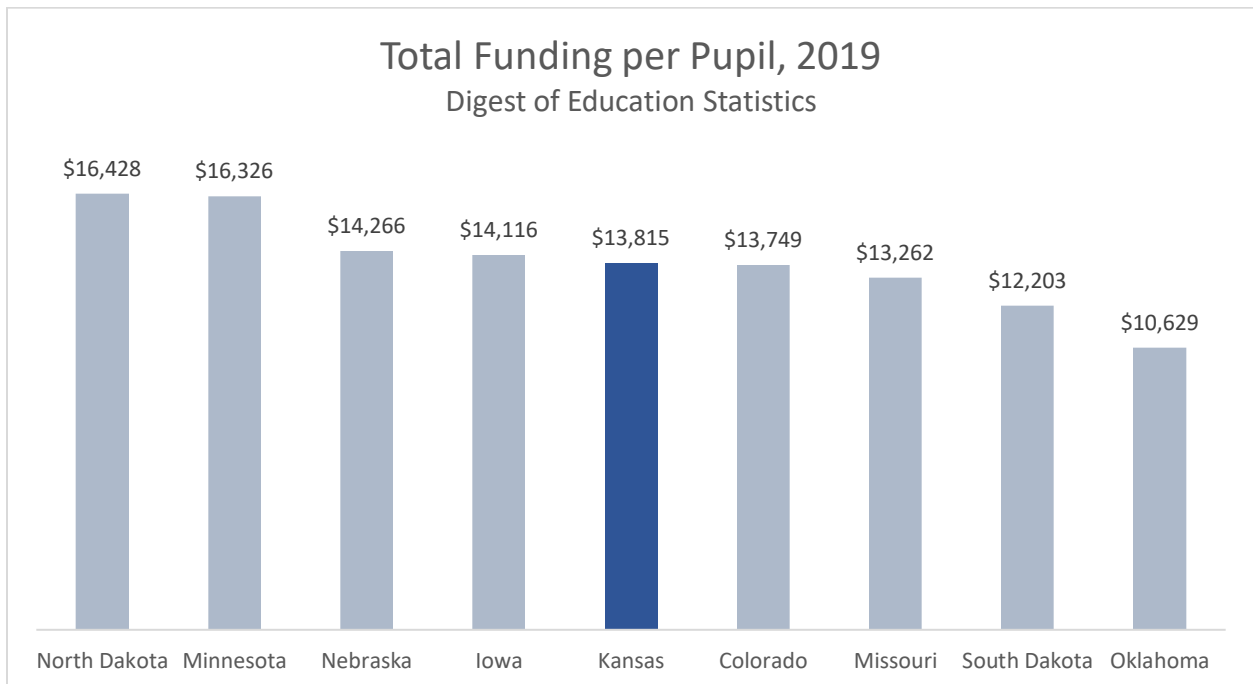
The difference is almost entirely because Kansas hires more teachers. Kansas districts have fewer administrative positions the regional and national average. Kansas has more teacher aides and paras and other student support positions than the national average, but slightly less than the regional

average. Kansas has fewer “all other” positions, including bus drivers, food service, custodial, etc. than either the regional or national average.

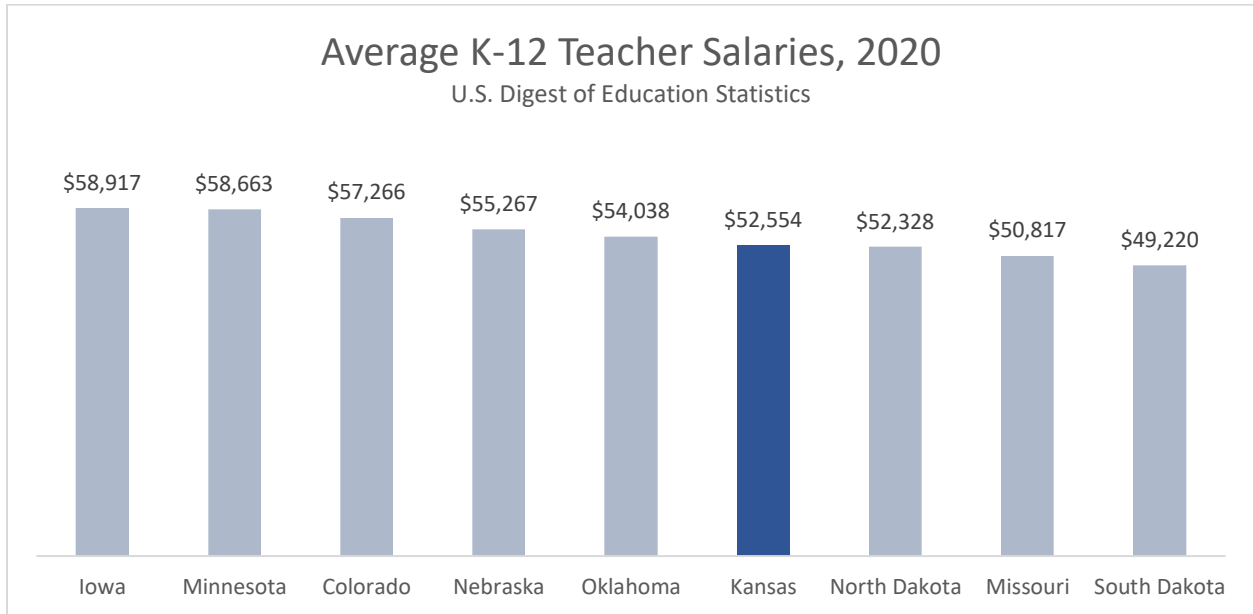
On a regional basis, Kansas has the third higher number of teachers per 1,000 students. It is about in the middle of the group for total staff, ranking fifth.



However, Kansas ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in total funding per pupil. That means an “average” amount of funding per pupil regionally is spread over more employees, especially more teachers. The same is true of classroom supplies.



As a result, Kansas teacher salaries are below the regional average, with Kansas ranking sixth in the region.



To summarize, Kansas ranks third in teachers per pupil, fifth in total staff per pupil, fifth in funding per pupil, and sixth in teacher salaries.

Oklahoma, by contrast, has moved ahead of Kansas in teacher salaries while ranking last in total funding – but also has far fewer teachers based on population. If Kansas had Oklahoma’s teachers per 1,000 students, Kansas districts would employ over 6,500 fewer teachers. If Kansas had Oklahoma’s ratio of all other staff to 1,000, districts would employ 2,800 fewer other staff. In other words, Kansas could spend less AND pay teachers more – but teachers would have many per students and less support from all other staff.

Finally, we wanted to share the percentage of operating funds Kansas spends on instruction, which is mostly teacher salaries, salaries for special education paras and aides, and instructional materials. Kansas ranks third in the region and slightly above the national average, which means a higher percentage of available dollars in Kansas goes to instruction, including teacher salaries and supplies, than most states.

These figures do not reflect changes since 2019 in funding or staffing under the *Gannon* funding Kansas school districts have received, or changes in funding in other states. We will update when available. Generally, however, school districts have been both increasing salaries and benefits for existing staff AND hiring additional staff to focus on particular areas to improve student outcomes.

Thank you for your consideration.

### Percent of Current Operating Expenditures on Instruction, 2019 (Digest of Education Statistics)

