



Kansas Educators for Public Schools

Standing Up for the Future of Our Students, Schools, and Communities

Kansas has a rich and robust history of public education with the goal of educating ALL students. Recent policy has been introduced in the state of Kansas that will divert millions of dollars from public schools and award them as vouchers for private schools and homeschools that have no oversight or accountability.

We believe a well-educated citizenry is needed for our democracy at a state and national level to function at its highest level. We believe public education is a public good.

Public schools educate all students; they do not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, sex, religion, or ability. Every child in Kansas has a right to a high-quality education from a nearby public school.

We believe that accredited private schools and homeschools have an important role in the education of children; however, we do not support using public funds for private education.

We have signed this letter because a scholarship system is not in the best interest for students in Kansas. It will create further inequities in our communities. We should be working collectively to build the strongest public schools in the nation - a goal that public educators work towards each day.

We ask you to support your public schools and work alongside educational leaders and local schools for the future of Kansas.

As highly-trained, award-winning Kansas teachers, we are deeply concerned for the future of education in our state should these policies be enacted.

Together in support of Kansas public schools,

Susanne Stevenson

USD #443 Dodge City Public Schools
2022 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2019 Masters of Curriculum and Instruction;
ESOL Concentration

Whitney Morgan

USD #500 Kansas City Kansas Public Schools
2016 Stanford University Hollyhock Fellow
2019 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2020, 2022 Middlebury Bread Loaf School of
English Teacher Network Fellow

Tabatha Rosproy

2020 National Teacher of the Year
2020 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2020 Friends of Education ABC Award Recipient

Samantha Neill

USD #313 Buhler Schools
2008 Masters of Curriculum and Instruction
2018 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2021 Lowell Milken Fellow

Jason Sickel

USD #232 Olathe Schools
USD #229 Blue Valley Schools
2017 Kansas Teacher of the Year

Dr. Shannon Ralph

USD #443 Dodge City Public Schools
USD # 231 Gardner Edgerton
(retired May 2022)
2008 Kansas Master Teacher
2014 Wolfe Teaching Excellence Award,
University of Kansas
2015 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2016 Lowell Milken Fellow
2020 Friends of Education ABC Award
Recipient
2020 Ph.D. Curriculum and Instruction

Jeri Powers

USD #232 DeSoto Schools
Kansas Dyslexia Task Force
2008 Kansas Teacher of the Year

Josh Anderson

USD # 233 Olathe Schools
2007 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2007 National Teacher of the Year Finalist
2014 Ed.D Educational Leadership

Karen Tritt

USD #229 Blue Valley Schools (*retired May 2022*)
USD #512 Shawnee Mission Schools
2010 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2003, 2010 Kansas World Language Teacher
of the Year
2003, 2013 National Board Certified

Sue Rippe

USD #233 Olathe Public Schools (retired)
Adjunct Instructor, Wichita State University
2000 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2001 Leadership Kansas
Air Force Association National Teacher of the
Year
2015 National Teacher Hall of Fame

Judy Beedles Miller

USD #443 Dodge City Public Schools (retired)
1989 Kansas Teacher of the Year
Excellence in Educational Leadership Award

Jeff Baxter

USD # 292 Blue Valley Schools
2014 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2015 NEA Global Education Fellow
2018 National Teachers Hall of Fame

Cindy Couchman, Superintendent

USD #313 Buhler Schools
2009 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2006, 2016 National Board Certified Teacher, AYA
Math
2009 National Finalist Presidential Award for
Excellence in Math and Science Teaching
2010 Kansas State University Alumni Fellow
2010 KNEA Teaching Excellence Award
2010 Horace Mann Excellence in Education
National Finalist
2012 Lowell Milken Fellow
2014 National Teachers Hall of Fame
2021 Kansas Confidence in Education Award

Dyane Smokowski

USD #259 Wichita Public Schools
USD #259 Wichita Public Schools
2009 National School Boards Top 20 to Watch
2013 Andover USD385 Secondary Teacher of the
Year
2013 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2014 Lowell Milken Fellow
2015 Dolly Parton Chasing Rainbows Award
Winner
2019 National Teachers Hall of Fame Inductee
2020 ISTE Making IT Happen Award Winner

Tracy Taylor Callard

USD #259 Wichita Public Schools
2002 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2002 National Teachers of the Year Finalist
2004 Leadership Kansas

Norm Conard

1992 Milken Award Winner
1993 Kansas Teacher of the Year
National Secondary Social Studies Outstanding
Teacher
USA Today All-American teacher
Nationally Board Certified educator
2012 Kansan of the Year

Carol Strickland

USD# 253 Emporia Public Schools (retired)
1998 Kansas Master Teacher
1999 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2001 Leadership Kansas
2003 National Teachers Hall of Fame inductee
2013 - 2022 NTHF Executive Director

Angie Powers

USD #233 Olathe Schools
2018 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist
National Board Certified Teacher

Carla Goertzen

USD #313 Buhler Schools
2012 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist

Gary Wilkerson

USD #260 Derby (Retired)
2005 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist
2004 Kansas Teacher Hall of Fame
1989 Kansas Master Teacher

Megan Nagel

USD #373 Newton Schools
2018 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist

Signe Cook

USD #428 Great Bend
2019 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist

Carly Bowden

USD #232 DeSoto Schools
2019 Kansas Milken Educator
2021 Lowell Milken Fellow
VOYA STEM Fellow

Sharon Kuchinski

USD #453
2019 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist

Nicole Corn

USD #497 Lawrence Public Schools
2019 Lawrence Teacher of the Year
2019 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist

Melissa Molteni

USD # 512 Shawnee Mission School Dist.
2020 Region 3 Elem. Teacher of the Year

Jennifer Farr

USD # 475
2017 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist
Teaching2023 Lowell Milken Fellow

Greg Froese

USD #313 Buhler Schools
2022 Kansas Teacher of the Year Nominee

Erica Shook

USD #313 Buhler Schools
Adjunct Professor
2009 Kansas Teacher of Promise
2010 Who's Who Among American Colleges and Universities
2017 USD 418 Secondary Educator of the Year
2018 Kansas Teacher of the Year Nominee
2019 Dayton Rothrock Alumni Fellow, McPherson College
2019-22 Kansas Association of Teachers of English Vice-President
2020 LEGO Master Educator
2021 Google Applied Digital Skills Ambassador
2022 LaunchLearning Fellow

Katie Perez

ESSDACK, Neuro-Informed Consultant
2014 USD 308 Elem Teacher of the Year
2014 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist
Youth Mental Health Specialist

Jennifer Brown

USD #475 Geary County Public Schools
2019 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist

Jennifer Donovan

USD #232 DeSoto Schools
2009 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist
2018 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist

Kristin Salazar

USD #265
2022 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist

Jennifer Sinsel

USD #259
2002 Kansas Aerospace Educator of the Year
2006 Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching (PAEMST)

Sherri Schwanz

USD #469 Lansing School District
2009 Lansing Teacher of the Year
2007 NE District Middle Level Choral Teacher of the Year
2021-2024 Kansas NEA President
2023 Cornell University - NEA Labor Leadership Initiative Cadre

Charles B. Jenney

USD# 259 Wichita Public Schools
2003 Milken Family Foundation National Educator
Kansas Association of Teachers of Science Region IV Outstanding Science Teacher
Sarah VenJohn
USD #465 Winfield Public Schools
2017 Masters of Curriculum and Instruction
2018 Winfield Teacher of the Year
2018 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist

Megan Clark

USD #232
2019 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist
2019 Lowell Milken Fellow

Bradley Weaver

USD #409 Atchison Public Schools
2017 USD 409 District Teacher of the Year
2017 NEA Teacher Leadership Inst. Fellow
2018 KNEA Teaching Excellence Award
2018 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist
2019 NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence
2020 NEA Foundation Global Fellow - Peru

Becca Burnfin

USD# 457
2016 Crystal Apple Teacher
2017 Horizon Award Winner

Sarah Richard

USD #327 Ellsworth Public Schools
2018 Kansas Teacher of the Year Semi-Finalist

Trissa McCabe

USD #309 Nickerson/South Hutchinson
2015 National Finalist Presidential Award of Excellence in Math and Science Teaching

Jerald Braun**Lucinda Crenshaw**

USD #290 Ottawa Public Schools
National Board Certified Teacher (since 1998)
2020 State of Kansas Navigating Change and Continuous Learning Task Forces member
2019 LJW Readers' Choice - Best of Lawrence Middle School Teacher
2017 The NEA Foundation Global Learning Fellow
2017 The NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence KNEA
2016 Kansas NEA Teaching Excellence Award
2016 Region 2 Kansas Secondary Teacher of the Year
2015 USD 497 Lawrence Secondary Teacher of the Year

Erin Williams

USD #400 Smoky Valley School District
2021 Kansas Horizon Award Winner

Heather Newkirk

USD #461
2017 Outstanding Conservation Teaching Award
2018 Kansas Teacher of the Year Semi-Finalist
2021 KNEA Leadership Award

Casey Meier

USD #261 Haysville Public Schools
2020 Gilder-Lehrman KS History Teacher of the Year

Kim Schneweis

USD #489 Hays Public Schools
2018 Kansas Master Teacher
2019 Kansas NEA Teaching Excellence Award

Nathan Whitman

USD #260 Derby Public Schools
2014 Horizon Award Recipient
2014 Founder and Co-Editor of Voices of Kansas digital student literary journal
2018 - Present, Kansas Association of Teachers of English President
2018 Master of Arts in English
2019 Teacher of Excellence (USD 369)

Kimberly Davis

USD #233 Olathe Public Schools
2021 Elementary Teacher of the Year

USD #489 Hays Public Schools
2003 Kansas Medical Society Award of
Excellence in Middle School Math Education
2008-12 Kansas Association of Teachers of
Mathematics President
2009 Presidential Award of Excellence in Math
and Science Teaching Finalist
2020 Kansas Special Education Provider of the
Year
2023 Kansas Master Teacher

Jane Culver

USD #443 Dodge City Public Schools
Consultant SWPRSC
2019 Kansas Teacher of Year Nominee

Nicolette Schafer

USD # 313 Buhler
2020 Kansas Teacher of the Year District
Nominee

Mallory Keefe

USD #268 Cheney Public Schools
2017 Kansas Horizon Award Winner
2020 Emporia State University Early Childhood
Unified Outstanding Graduate Award
2023 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist

Jamie Manhart

CTE Coordinator - Greenbush ESC
2018 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist
Two-time National Board Certified Educator

Casey Wright

USD #348 Baldwin City
2013 Master's Degree in Education
2022 USD #348 Teacher of the Year
2024 Kansas Teacher of the Year nominee
National Board Certification Teacher Candidate

Marilyn Fox

USD # 383, Manhattan-Ogden (retired 2018)
2009 -10 Teacher of the Year District 2
PAEMST Finalist
Masters plus 30 hours
STEM National Fellowship
Fermi Lab National Teacher Workshop
Quarknet National Group
NSTA Presenter

Phillip Wrigley

USD #501 Topeka Public Schools
2012 Rockhurst University Ignatian Outstanding
Student Teacher Award
2018, 2022 National Board Certified Teacher

Stan Bergkamp

USD #266 Maize Public Schools
2005 Milken Award Winner

Todd Flory

USD #385 Andover Public Schools
2018 Kansas Master Teacher
2018 Kansas Association of Teachers of
Mathematics President
2018 McPherson College Teacher Education
Alumni Fellow
2020 Presidential Award for Excellence in
Mathematics and Science Teaching finalist
2020 Bethel College Young Alumnus Award
winner
2022 Presidential Award for Excellence in
Mathematics and Science Teaching finalist

Stefanie Lane

USD #379 Clay County
2020 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist
2016 Horizon Award Winner

Leigh Anne Rogers

USD # 233 Olathe Public Schools
President, Olathe NEA
2008 semi finalist Kansas Teacher of the Year,
Olathe
National Board Certification

Jennifer Kesler

USD # 271 Stockton
2022 Kansas Teacher of the Year district nominee

Kathy Wagoner

USD #489 Hays Public Schools
Three times National Board Certified Teacher
2020 Kansas Master Teacher

Michael Berndt

USD # 233 Olathe Schools
2007 Educator of Schools of Distinction
2012 Milken Educators Award
2013 Lowell Milken Center Fellow

Melanie Falcon

USD # 400 Smoky Valley
2018 Kansas Association of Environmental
Education PK-12 Education Award Winter
2018 Presidential Innovation Award for
Environmental Educators Honorable Mention
2019 Kansas Association of Teachers of
Science Outstanding Educator Award Winner
2020 Smoky Valley IMPACT Teacher Award
Winner
2020 Kansas Teacher of the Year District
Nominee

Heidi Green

USD #266 Maize Public Schools
2016 National Finalist Presidential Award for
Excellence in Science and Mathematics

Arthur Commons

USD #508 Baxter Springs
2010 KS Region 2 Teacher of the Year
2011 Andy Tompkins Award Winner

Kelly Turcotte

ESSDACK and USD #448 Inman Schools
2005 National Board Certified Teacher
2007 Golden Star Teacher Award, Canby
School District, Canby, OR
2007 ESOL Certification
2008 Guided Language Acquisition Design
(GLAD) facilitator
2013 M. Ed. Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Amber Wheeler

USD #258 Humboldt
2004 Horizon Award Winner

Kristy Oborny

USD #489 Hays Public Schools
National Board Certified Teacher

Laura M. Miller

USD # 313 Buhler Public Schools
Kansas State Treasurer's 2022 Teacher
Appreciation Award

Cynthia L. Venard

USD #443 Dodge City Public Schools
2009 Region 1 Elementary Kansas Teacher of
the Year

Jennifer Robinson

USD # 259 Wichita
M.Ed, University of Central Oklahoma
Two-Time National Board Certified Teacher, World
Languages Other than English (2004, 2014)
Two-Time French Embassy Scholar (1997, 2010)
1999 National Endowment for the Humanities
Summer Institute to Francophone West Africa
2007-2008 Fulbright Exchange Teacher, France
2009-2010 Oklahoma City Public Schools
Teacher of the Year
2010 Finalist, Oklahoma State Teacher of the
Year
2018 Recipient, Lilly Teacher Creativity Grant

Lori Rice

USD # 383 Manhattan-Ogden
2022 Gilder Lehrman KS History Teacher of the
Year
2022 Emporia State University Outstanding
Graduate Student SPED/Gifted
2021 KS Society of Professional Engineers State
Teacher
2018 Judy Cromwell Excellence in Teaching
2018 KS Social Studies Teacher of the Year
2011 KS Teacher of the Year Semi-Finalist Region
Two
2010 USD 320 Elementary Teacher of the Year

Shawn Hornung

USD # 320 Wamego Schools
2020 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist
2011 James Madison Memorial Fellow

Brad LeDuc

USD # 437 Auburn-Washburn School District
2018-19 Kansas Art Education Association
Outstanding Secondary Art Educator of the Year
2014 Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes
Fellow
2013 National Milken Educator Award Recipient
2013 Distinguished Kansan of the Year for
Education
2004-05 USD 342 District Teacher of the Year

Gabriel Padilla

USD #259 Wichita Public Schools
2019 GLSEN Educator of the Year

Carmen Zeisler

ESSDACK
2018 Kansas Teacher of the Year Region 1
Semi-finalist

Susan M. Sittenauer

USD #345 Seaman School District
2014 Lowell Milken Fellow
2003 National Law Related Ed. Teacher of the year
1997 Kansas Teacher of the Year Regional Semi-Finalist
Kansas History Day Foundation Board
Carly Torres
USD # 308 Hutchinson Public Schools
2023 Hutchinson Teacher of the Year Finalist
2023 Region 1 Kansas Teacher of the Year
2022 Davis Foundation Teacher of the Year

Paul Erickson

USD #313 Buhler Public Schools
2014 Kansas National Distinguished Principal of the Year

Kristoffer Barikmo

USD 512, Shawnee Mission School District
2016 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist
2016 Region 1 Secondary Kansas Teacher of the Year
National Board Certified Teacher, Secondary Social Studies

Jason Kohls

USD #313 Buhler Schools
2016 KS Teacher of the Year Semi-finalist
2020 Teacher of Influence

Natalie Johnson-Berry

USD # 500 Kansas City Kansas Public Schools
Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist 2022

Jennifer Keys

USD # 259 Wichita Public Schools
United Teachers of Wichita Executive Board

Donna Cook-Lujano

USD #259 Wichita Public Schools
2007 National Board Certified Teacher
2017 National Board Certified Teacher

Rhyanna Reilly

USD # 308 Hutchinson Public Schools
2022 Hutchinson Teacher of the Year (Secondary)
2022 Kansas Teacher of the Semifinalist
2022 Davis Foundation Teacher of the Year
2019 M. Ed Curriculum and Instructional Design

Eric Malashchuk

USD #308 Hutchinson Public Schools
1999 Semi- Finalist for New Teacher of the Year in USD #259
2003, 2009 Nominee for Distinguished Classroom Teacher USD #259
2006,2012 Golden Apple Award in USD #259
2016-2020 Davis Foundation Teacher of the Year nominee, Semifinalist 2019
2020 Davis Foundation Teacher of the Year
2004 M. Ed Building Administration & Leadership Assistant Principal In USD #259 2013-2016

Kendal Norberg

USD # 416 Louisburg School District
2023 Kansas Teacher of the Year finalist Region 3

Amy Hillman

USD #233 Olathe Public Schools
2020 Region 3 Secondary Teacher of the Year

Jaimie Ann Swindler

USD # 290 Ottawa Public Schools
2023 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist
Region 2

Kristi Link

USD 308 Hutchinson Public Schools
2015 Hutchinson teacher of the year
2015 Kansas Teacher of the year nominee
2021 Davis Foundation Teacher of the Year

Pamela Munoz

USD # 501 Topeka Public Schools
2023 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist
Region 2

Mandi Hodo

USD #231 Gardner-Edgerton School District
2020 Region 3 Teacher of the Year Semifinalist

Elizabeth Lee

USD #497 Lawrence Public Schools
2015 Teacher of Promise

Erica Huggard

USD # 253 Emporia Public Schools
2023 Kansas Teacher of the Year Finalist
2022 NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence
2021 Kansas National Education Association Teaching Excellence Award
Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science, Finalist
2021 William A. Black Master Teacher in Residence
2020 Kansas Master Teacher
2019 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science, Finalist
2018 Emporia High Teacher of the Year
2016 Hopkins Foundation Outstanding Teaching recognition

Courtney Klassen

USD #313 Buhler Public Schools
2023 District Kansas Teacher of the Year Nominee

Patricia M. Lujan

USD #214 Ulysses Public Schools
2022-2023 USD 214 Elementary Teacher of the Year
2022 Master of Curriculum and Instruction
2022 Newman Education Outstanding Graduate Student

Brian J. White

USD #469 Lansing School District
2022-2023 USD 469 Teacher of the Year
2024 Kansas Teacher of the Year Nominee

Dr. Cory Gibson

USD #262 Valley Center
2020 Kansas Superintendent of the Year
2020 Friends of Education Confidence in Kansas Public Education Task Force ABC Award
Past President- Kansas School Superintendents' Association
Past Chair – Kansas Council of Superintendents

Dr. Craig Correll

USD # 445 Coffeyville Public Schools
2022 Kansas Superintendent of the Year
2021 Kansas State Superintendent Association

Laura Miller

USD #475 Geary County Schools
2020 Geary County Schools Teacher of the Year
2021 Kansas Teacher of the Year Regional Finalist
2021 ACTE Region V Teacher of the Year
2021 ACTE National Teacher of the Year Finalist
2023 KAAE Teacher of the Year

Chasmyn Lindeman-Thimesch

USD #259 Wichita Public Schools
2019 Distinguished Classroom Teacher Award Winner- First Year USD #259
2020 Kansas Horizon Award Winner

G.A. Buie

USA-Kansas
Topeka 2005 Kansas Secondary Principal of the Year

Dr. Justin B. Henry

265 Goddard Public Schools
2021 Kansas Superintendent of the Year
2018 President- Kansas School Superintendents' Association
2012 Chair – Kansas Council of Superintendents

Dr. Kelly Hoelting

USD #330 Mission Valley
2022 Ph.D. Curriculum and Instruction
2020 Mission Valley Schools Teacher of the Year
2021 Kansas Teacher of the Year Regional Finalist
2018 ACTE Region V Community Service Teacher of the Year
2018 ACTE National Community Service Teacher of the Year Finalist
2016 KAAE Teacher of the Year
2016 KACTE Teacher of the Year
2016 NAAE Region II Outstanding Program

Sue Givens

USD #490 El Dorado (Retired)
2001 Keys for Networking Principal of the Year
2002 Kansas Master Teacher & Black Endowed Chair
2008 USA-Kansas Distinguished Service Award
2012 Rotary International Paul Harris Award
2013 Leadership Kansas
2015 Ingram's "50 Kansans You Should Know";

President-Elect
2020 Governor's Council on Education -
Governor's Appointee
2017 Coffeyville Citizen of the Year

Kristin A. Jenkins

USD #501 Topeka Public Schools
Trauma-Responsive Breakout Session
Speaker
Trauma Informed Educators Network
Author, *Teamwork Makes the Dream Work*

Cody Kirkendoll

USD #261 Haysville Public Schools
2023 Horizon Award Winner

Christine Herald (retired)

USD #383 Manhattan-Ogden Public Schools
2017 NSTA/NCTM STEM Teacher Ambassador
2013 NSTA/Vernier Technology Award
2005 Presidential Award for Excellence in
Mathematics and Science
2002 Kansas Master Teacher
2000 Sigma Xi Excellence in Secondary
Education

Dr. Michael Albright

USD #252 Southern Lyon County
2023 Superintendent of the year
2019-2020 President, Kansas School
Superintendents Association
2016-2017 Chair, Kansas Council of
Superintendents

2017 Kansas Superintendent of the Year
2017 Emporia State University Distinguished
Alumni
2019 Kansas School Superintendents Association
Distinguished Service Award

Noel Lucero

USD #259 Wichita Public Schools
Distinguished classroom teacher of the year
nominee
Good Apple award
Golden Apple award

Michael Bumgarner

USD #465 Winfield Public Schools
2019 Winfield NEA Master Teacher
2024 Kansas Teacher of the Year Nominee

Jacob Ditton

USD #261 Haysville Public Schools
2022 Kansas Teacher of the Year Nominee

Nathan Gash

USD #260 Derby Public Schools
2022 Teacher of Excellence - Van Andel Institute
of Education

Darham Rogers

USD #259 Wichita Public Schools
2022 Kansas Teacher of the Year Nominee