



# 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 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

**Dr. Craig Correll**

USD # 445 Coffeyville Public Schools  
2022 Kansas Superintendent of the Year  
2021 Kansas State Superintendent Association President-Elect  
2020 Governor's Council on Education - Governor's Appointee  
2017 Coffeyville Citizen of the Year

**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

**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";  
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



**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

**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