

KANSAS

OVERALL RANK: 32ND¹
TIER 4 (WEAK)

STRONGER
←
→
 WEAKER

OVERALL				32	
1. RESOURCES AND MEMBERSHIP				33	
2. INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS		18			
3. SCOPE OF BARGAINING				31	
4. STATE POLICIES		14			
5. PERCEIVED INFLUENCE				30	

**AREA 1: RESOURCES AND MEMBERSHIP
TIED FOR 33RD**

Kansas’s state teacher unions do not receive substantial resources from their members, but spending on education in the state is high. With just 54.7 percent of its teachers unionized, the Sunflower State’s membership rate is only 42nd of 51 states. The state’s NEA and AFT affiliates bring in \$336 annually per teacher in the state (32nd). On the other hand, Kansas directs 26.0 percent of its expenditures towards K-12 education—only five states allocate a higher percentage. Further, annual per-pupil expenditures total \$12,056 (20th), with 55.6 percent of that going to teacher salaries and benefits (17th).

**AREA 2: INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS²
TIED FOR 18TH**

Kansas’s teacher unions are reasonably active participants in state politics. Over the past ten years, 0.92 percent of the total donations received by candidates for state office came from the unions (19th). Those contributions amounted to 6.9 percent of donations to candidates from the ten highest-giving sectors in the state (20th). In addition, teacher unions contributed 0.49 percent of the money received by state political parties (37th). Finally, 13.1 percent of all Kansas delegates to the Democratic and Republican national conventions were teacher union members (26th).³

AREA 3: SCOPE OF BARGAINING
31ST

While Kansas law requires collective bargaining, it does not allow unions to automatically collect agency fees from non-members. The law also forbids teacher strikes, but it does include a wide scope of provisions in collective bargaining: Of twenty-one items examined in this metric, Kansas mandates ten be subjects of bargaining: wages, hours, terms and conditions of employment, grievance procedures, dismissal, insurance benefits, pension/retirement benefits, fringe benefits, leave, and class load. Only one item (length of the teacher school year) is explicitly outside the scope of bargaining; the state is silent on the remaining ten items, implicitly permitting them all.

AREA 4: STATE POLICIES
14TH

Compared to other states, policies in Kansas are generally aligned with traditional union interests. The state does not require that student achievement data factor into teacher evaluations, and it does not outline consequences for unsatisfactory evaluations. Teachers earn tenure after three years (the national norm), and student achievement data are not a factor here, either. The state does not support performance pay, nor does it require that districts consider teacher performance when determining layoffs. Further, state law does not exempt charter schools from teacher certification requirements, and it requires charters to participate in district collective bargaining agreements (though individual schools may seek waivers).

AREA 5: PERCEIVED INFLUENCE
30TH

According to Kansas stakeholders, teacher unions are a moderately powerful force in state politics but may not face much of a challenge, noting that state education leaders often align with the union position. Survey respondents rank unions as the second- or third-most influential entity on education policy, behind the state school board and alongside the association of school administrators. While they note that outcomes of the latest legislative session were only somewhat in line with teacher union priorities, they agree that teacher unions are generally effective in protecting dollars for education and warding off education reform proposals with which they disagree.⁴

OVERALL
32ND

Kansas teacher unions are strong in a handful of key areas—state spending on education and the general policy environment—but relatively weak in others, including financial and membership resources, and the scope of bargaining. While close to the middle of the pack nationwide, they are among the least-powerful unions in states in which bargaining is mandatory (South Dakota, Tennessee, New Mexico, and Florida rank below them, while 27 other mandatory-bargaining states rank higher).

The past few years have seen a massive budgetary battle waged in the Jayhawk State—with education on the front lines. In 2011, the Kansas National Education Association (KNEA) teamed up with school board members, superintendents, and liberal lawmakers to fight against funding cuts that would, according to them, set spending levels back twenty years and severely impact students.⁵ While conservative legislators argued that education spending should rise and fall with tax revenues (and Kansas had certainly seen its revenues fall with the recession), the KNEA countered that the legislature should follow the advice of its own Kansas Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations, which recommended raising revenue by discontinuing a \$196 million sales tax exemption for industry. Despite concerns about the economic impact of removing the exemption, KNEA President Blake West declared that the state must end the “decade of continuous tax cuts that have crippled the state’s ability to provide essential services to its citizens.”⁶ KNEA director of governmental affairs Mark Desetti went a step further: “If this Legislature can’t support our schools, maybe we should find one that will.”⁷ But in May 2012, to the chagrin of the union (but with the approval of pro-business groups), Governor Sam Brownback signed into law yet more breaks; the new law included reductions in individual income tax rates and the exemption of most small business income from any state taxes.⁸

In the summer of 2012, the KNEA set about making its threat to the legislature a reality. The month before the August primaries, the union released its list of recommended legislative candidates. Of the 131 incumbent House and Senate members running for re-election, it endorsed only 60.⁹ “Do not allow a candidate to say, ‘I believe in public schools.’ Hold their feet to the fire,” said Desetti.¹⁰ Predictably, the KNEA did not have a single endorsement in common with those of the Kansas Chamber of Commerce, the union’s foe during the push to remove tax breaks for industry. Jeff Glendening, the Chamber’s vice president of political affairs, proclaimed that the teacher union is “wholly about money. How much money is going into the system.”¹¹ The Kansas primary, and 2012 general election, will see the voters decide where the money should go.

KANSAS RANKINGS BY AREA AND INDICATOR

OVERALL RANK: 32ND			
Area and Rank ^a	General Indicator	Sub-Indicator	Sub-Indicator Rank/Status ^b
AREA 1: RESOURCES & MEMBERSHIP 33*	Membership	By rank, what percentage of public-school teachers in the state are union members?	42nd
	Revenue	By rank, what is the total yearly revenue (per teacher in the state) of the state-level NEA and/or AFT affiliate(s)?	32nd
	Spending on education	By rank, what percentage of state expenditures (of state general funds, state restricted funds, state bonds, and federal "pass-through" funds) is directed to K-12 education?	6th
		By rank, what is the total annual per-pupil expenditure (of funds from federal, state, and local sources) in the state?	20th
		By rank, what percentage of total annual per-pupil expenditures is directed to teacher salaries and benefits?	17th
AREA 2: INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS 18*	Contributions to candidates and political parties	By rank, what percentage of the total contributions to state candidates was donated by teacher unions?	19th
		By rank, what percentage of the total contributions to state-level political parties was donated by teacher unions?	37th
	Industry influence	By rank, what percent of the contributions to state candidates from the ten highest-giving sectors was donated by teacher unions?	20th
	Status of delegates	By rank, what percentage of the state's delegates to the Democratic and Republican conventions were members of teacher unions?	26th
AREA 3: SCOPE OF BARGAINING 31	Legal scope of bargaining	What is the legal status of collective bargaining?	Mandatory
		By rank, how broad is the scope of collective bargaining?	3rd
	Automatic revenue streams	What is the unions' legal right to automatically collect agency fees from non-members and/or collect member dues via automatic payroll deductions?	Agency fees prohibited
	Right to strike	What is the legal status of teacher strikes?	Prohibited
AREA 4: STATE POLICIES 14	Performance pay	Does the state support performance pay for teachers?	State does not support
	Retirement	By rank, what is the employer- versus employee-contribution rate to the teacher pension system?	28th
	Evaluations	What is the maximum potential consequence for veteran teachers who receive unsatisfactory evaluation(s)?	No consequences articulated
		Is classroom effectiveness included in teacher evaluations? If so, how is it weighted?	Not required
	Terms of employment	How long before a teacher earns tenure?	Three years
		Is student/teacher performance considered in tenure decisions? If so, how is it weighted?	Not included
		Is seniority considered in teacher layoff decisions? If so, how is it weighted?	Optional; Weighted at district discretion
		Is teacher performance included in teacher layoff decisions? If so, how is it weighted?	Not required
		By rank, what percentage of the teaching workforce was dismissed due to poor performance?	24th
Class size	Is class size restricted for grades 1-3? If so, is the restriction higher or lower than the national average (20)?	No restriction	

Area and Rank	General Indicator	Sub-Indicator	Sub-Indicator Rank/Status
AREA 4: STATE POLICIES 14 (cont.)	Charter school structural limitations	Is there a cap (limit) placed on the number of charter schools that can operate in the state (or other jurisdiction) and/or on the number of students who can attend charter schools?	No state cap
		Does the state allow a variety of charter schools: start-ups, conversions, and virtual schools?	Yes
		How many charter authorizing options exist? How active are those authorizers?	Single option; Some activity
	Charter school exemptions	Are all charter schools automatically exempt from state laws and state/district regulations (except those that safeguard students and fiscal accountability)? If not, are they eligible for exemptions?	No; Schools can apply for exemptions
		Are all charter schools automatically exempt from state teacher-certification requirements? If not, are they eligible for exemptions?	No; Schools cannot apply for exemptions
		Are all charter schools automatically exempt from collective bargaining agreements (CBAs)? If not, are they eligible for exemptions?	No; Schools can apply for exemptions

AREA 5: PERCEIVED INFLUENCE^c 30	Relative influence of teacher unions	How do you rank the influence of teacher unions on education policy compared with other influential entities?	Second- or third-most influential
	Influence over campaigns	On a scale from always to never, how often do Democratic candidates need teacher-union support to get elected?	Sometimes/Often
		On a scale from always to never, how often do Republican candidates need teacher-union support to get elected?	Sometimes
	Influence over spending	To what extent, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, do you agree that even in times of cutbacks, teacher unions are effective in protecting dollars for education?	Agree
		Given recent budgetary constraints, would you say that teacher unions generally make concessions to prevent reductions in pay and benefits or fight hard to prevent those reductions?	Generally concede
	Influence over policy	To what extent, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, do you agree that teacher unions ward off proposals in your state with which they disagree?	Agree
		On a scale from always to never, how often do existing state education policies reflect teacher-union priorities?	Sometimes/Often
		To what extent, from totally in line to not at all in line, were state education policies proposed by the governor during your state's latest legislative session in line with teacher-union priorities?	**
		To what extent, from totally in line to not at all in line, were legislative outcomes of your state's latest legislative session in line with teacher-union priorities?	Mostly not in line/ Somewhat in line
	Influence over key stakeholders	On a scale from always to never, how often have the priorities of state education leaders aligned with teacher-union positions in the past three years?	Often
		Would you say that teacher unions typically compromise with policymakers to ensure that their preferred policies are enacted, or typically need not make concessions?	Compromise

* Tied with another state

** Insufficient number of responses to this particular question

^a Area ranks are calculated using a weighted average of sub-indicators. For a more detailed description, see Appendix A.

^b Where possible, we report a state's rank as compared to other states on a given metric. For example, out of 51 states, Kansas has the 42nd-highest percentage of teachers who are union members. Otherwise, we report a status: Kansas has mandatory collective bargaining, and union agency fees are prohibited. For a more detailed description of our metrics and methodology, see Appendix A. To request the raw data for your state, send an email to uniondata@edexcellence.net.

^c For all survey questions, stakeholders were asked specifically about teacher unions, candidates, policies, and leaders in their state. In addition, we asked about unions and policies in the "current legislative session," but because legislative calendars vary from state to state, responses refer to policies proposed and enacted within the 2010-11 window.

ENDNOTES

¹ A state's overall rank is calculated as follows: First, we score it on multiple sub-indicators (sub-indicator data and scores for Kansas are shown in the table, *Kansas Rankings by Area and Indicator*). Second, we take a weighted average of the sub-indicators in each of five areas. In each area, we use that average to place the states in rank order: For example, in Area 1: Resources and Membership, Kansas is ranked 33rd of 51 based on the weighted average of its sub-indicators. To generate the state's overall rank, we average the five area ranks together, then re-order the states. For a more detailed description of data sources and methodology, see Appendix A.

² Readers should note that these figures include only direct donations from unions and union-connected PACs, but not their spending on electioneering/advertising, mobilizing the union's own membership, lobbying, or advocacy. A recent *Wall Street Journal* report found that donations and lobbying activities account for a small share of union political spending compared with their expenditures on member mobilization and advocacy. Even the AFT agreed, making the argument that since its mission is organizing and activism, it will naturally spend significant amounts on these activities. Thus, the percentages we report here are extremely conservative representations of what unions actually spend on politics. For more information, see Appendix A, Area 2; Tom McGinty and Brody Mullins, "Political Spending by Unions Far Exceeds Direct Donations," *Wall Street Journal*, July 10, 2012; and Jeff Hauser, "Wall Street Journal Compares Union Political Spending to Corporate Donations," AFL-CIO, July 10, 2012.

³ At the time of publication, the 2000 conventions were the most recent for which such detailed data were available in forms that met rigorous standards. However, 2008 data provided by the Democratic National Convention were highly correlated with the reliable figures from 2000.

⁴ We asked stakeholders about unions and policies in the "current legislative session," but because legislative calendars vary from state to state, responses refer to policies proposed and enacted within the 2010-11 window.

⁵ Angela Deines, "Education Advocates Rally Against Budget Cuts," *Capitol Journal*, July 30, 2011, <http://cjonline.com/news/2011-07-30/education-advocates-rally-against-budget-cuts#.TKVL4GF18oE>.

⁶ Blake West, "What's Important, What's Urgent," Kansas National Education Association, n.d., <http://www.knea.org/home/614.htm>.

⁷ Deines.

⁸ Emily Behlmann, "What Does The Kansas Tax Reform Plan Mean For You," *Wichita Business Journal*, May 11, 2012, <http://www.bizjournals.com/wichita/blog/2012/05/what-does-the-kansas-tax-reform-plan.html?page=all>.

⁹ Mark Desetti, "KNEA Makes Preliminary Candidate Recommendations For The August 7 Primary Election," Kansas National Education Association, August 7, 2012, <http://www.knea.org/home/1618.htm>.

¹⁰ Dawn Bormann, "Education Is Key In Kansas Primaries," *Kansas City Star*, July 26, 2012, <http://www.kansascity.com/2012/07/20/3724067/education-is-at-focus-of-kansas.html>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*