

K12 ACADEMICS — STATE EDUCATION SERIES



Kansas

Education Guide

A complete profile — schools, testing, graduation, accountability, school choice, teacher certification & financial aid, each in depth.



Find Your Community
2026 EDITION

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Everything about school in Kansas.

This guide profiles **Kansas**'s education system in seven parts, each a two-page deep dive with the key facts, plain-English explanations, and a link to the full, regularly-updated guide online. From K12 Academics, the world's largest education resource, online since 2004.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Education Overview · State Testing · Graduation Requirements · Accountability & Report Cards · School Choice · Teacher Certification · Financial Aid

SEARCH 200+ DIRECTORIES

K-12 Schools · Colleges & Universities · Vendors · Summer Programs · International Programs · Performers

Education Overview

EDUCATION IN KANSAS

Kansas educates roughly 475,000 public K–12 students across about 286 Unified School Districts (USDs) , overseen by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and the elected State Board of Education. Kansas is comparatively cautious on private-school choice — it has a limited tax-credit scholarship but no ESA or voucher — while...

WHO MUST ATTEND SCHOOL

- ✓ **Start age** — 7
- ✓ **End of compulsory age** — 18 (exit at 16/17 with consent)
- ✓ **Districts** — ~286 Unified School Districts (USDs)
- ✓ **Satisfying it** — Public, accredited private, or registered homeschool

PRE-K IN KANSAS

Kansas does not offer a universal pre-K program. State-funded early education is targeted through the State Prekindergarten (At-Risk 4-Year-Old) program and the Kansas Preschool Pilot , along with Parents as Teachers (a home-visiting/parent-support program), Head Start , and child-care assistance for eligible families. Because state...



AT A GLANCE

Compulsory	Ages 7–18
Districts	~286 USDs
Testing	KAP · ACT
Diploma	21 credits
Choice	Limited

DISTRICTS & CHARTERS

Kansas's largest districts include Wichita (USD 259) — the state's largest — Olathe , Shawnee Mission , Blue Valley , and Kansas City, Kansas . A notable feature: Kansas has a very limited charter-school sector — its charter law is weak, charters must operate within a district's accreditation, and only a handful exist. More significantly...

PRIVATE & INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN KANSAS

- ✓ **Catholic & parochial schools** — A large network across the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas and dioceses statewide — notably the Diocese of Wichita, known for offering...
- ✓ **Independent schools** — Nonprofit, board-governed schools such as The Independent School (Wichita) and Bishop Seabury Academy (Lawrence)
- ✓ **Other religious schools** — Lutheran, Christian, and other faith-based schools
- ✓ **Specialty schools** — Montessori and schools for specific learning needs

READ KANSAS'S FULL EDUCATION OVERVIEW GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



State Testing

WHAT YOUR STATE TESTS

Kansas uses the KAP (Kansas Assessment Program) in ELA and math for grades 3–8 and grade 10, plus science at designated grades. Run by the Kansas State Department of Education. There's no exit-exam gate.

WHICH TESTS, WHICH GRADES

- ✓ **KAP ELA & Math** — Grades 3–8 and grade 10
- ✓ **KAP Science** — Grades 5, 8, and 11
- ✓ **DLM** — Alternate assessment for eligible students

FORMAT & SUBJECTS

KAP is online with varied item types.

IS PASSING REQUIRED TO GRADUATE?

No exit-exam gate. Kansas doesn't require passing a state test to graduate; districts set course and credit requirements. Kansas also has a civics test requirement in some pathways.

HOW IT'S SCORED

KAP reports performance levels (1–4), with Level 2+ meeting grade-level expectations toward college and career readiness.

AT A GLANCE

System	KAP
Grades	3–8 and 10
Subjects	ELA, Math; Science 5, 8, 11
Grad requirement?	No exit-exam gate
Format	Online
Standards	Kansas Standards

TESTING WINDOWS

KAP is given in a spring window set by each district.

HOW TO PREPARE

- ✓ **Practice forms** — KSDE and its partner (KAP/ATLAS) provide practice tests matching the online format
- ✓ **Everyday classwork** — KAP is aligned to the Kansas standards

PARTICIPATION & OPTING OUT

Students in tested grades participate. Ask your district about make-up windows and any questions.

ACCOMMODATIONS & MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

Accommodations follow a student's IEP or 504 plan ; eligible students take the state's alternate assessment. Multilingual learners take an English proficiency test (WIDA ACCESS or the state equivalent) and may receive designated supports.

READ KANSAS'S FULL STATE TESTING GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Graduation Requirements

AT A GLANCE

Kansas requires a state minimum of 21 credits with no exit exam . Districts commonly require more, and every student develops an Individual Plan of Study.

CREDIT & COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Kansas' 21-credit minimum includes 4 English, 3 math, 3 science, 3 social studies, 1 PE/health, 1 fine arts, and electives. Districts set the total and often require more.

TESTING TO GRADUATE

No exit exam. Kansas students take state assessments, but a passing score is not required to graduate.

DIPLOMA TYPES & HONORS

Kansas issues a standard diploma, with the Kansas Scholars Curriculum (a recommended college-prep course of study), honors, and the Seal of Biliteracy available.

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Every student develops an Individual Plan of Study ; dual credit, AP, and CTE offer accelerated pathways.



AT A GLANCE

Credits	21 (state minimum)
Exit exam?	No
Districts	Often require more
Also	Individual Plan of Study
Confirm with	Your district

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **How many credits does Kansas require?** — The state sets a minimum, but your district may require more — confirm locally.
- ✓ **Does Kansas require a test to graduate?** — No — Kansas has no exit exam; a passing test score is not required to graduate.
- ✓ **Are there different diploma types?** — Yes — plus honors designations and seals; see the diplomas section.
- ✓ **What if my student is behind on credits?** — Talk to the counselor about credit recovery and alternative pathways.
- ✓ **Where do I confirm the exact requirements?** — Your school counselor, district, and the state department of education.

READ KANSAS'S FULL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Accountability & Report Cards

AT A GLANCE

Kansas does not assign a single summary grade or star rating. Instead it publishes the Kansas Building Report Card (data) and accredits schools through the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) process.

HOW THIS STATE RATES SCHOOLS

The Building Report Card shows performance data (assessment results, graduation, attendance, and more), and KESA is a continuous-improvement accreditation process (rather than a rating). Kansas also identifies schools for support under ESSA. Read the data and accreditation status together.

WHAT GETS MEASURED

- ✓ **Academic achievement** — How students score on state tests (proficiency in reading/ELA and math)
- ✓ **Academic growth / progress** — How much students improve year to year — not just where they land
- ✓ **Graduation rate** — For high schools (the 4-year cohort rate)
- ✓ **English-learner progress** — How English learners are progressing toward proficiency
- ✓ **School quality / student success** — An extra indicator — often attendance/chronic absenteeism, college/career readiness, or similar

FINDING & READING THE REPORT CARD

Look up any school on the Kansas Building Report Card (ksreportcard.ksde.org) . Read across the data (assessment, graduation, attendance) and note the trend.

AT A GLANCE

Format	Report card data + KESA accredit...
No	Single grade or stars
Accreditation	Kansas Education Systems Accredi...
Tool	Kansas Building Report Card
Look up at	ksreportcard.ksde.org

HOW FAMILIES SHOULD USE RATINGS

- ✓ **Read it in context** — A school's score reflects its students' circumstances too, not only its quality
- ✓ **Look at growth, not just scores** — Growth shows how much a school moves students — often more telling than raw proficiency
- ✓ **Check the trend** — Is the school improving over time?
- ✓ **Look past the summary** — Dig into the underlying data (subgroups, attendance, readiness)
- ✓ **Then visit** — Data raises questions; a visit answers them (see our guide on evaluating a school)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **How does Kansas rate schools?** — Kansas uses the Building Report Card plus KESA accreditation — not a single grade or stars.
- ✓ **What do the ratings measure?** — Test scores, growth, graduation rate, English-learner progress, and a school-quality indicator.
- ✓ **Where do I look up my school?** — On the state's official report-card portal (see below).
- ✓ **Should I choose a school by its rating alone?** — No — use it as a starting point, weigh growth and context, and visit.
- ✓ **What are CSI and TSI?** — Federal labels for schools flagged for Comprehensive or Targeted Support and Improvement.

READ KANSAS'S FULL ACCOUNTABILITY & REPORT CARDS GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



School Choice

AT A GLANCE

Kansas has the Tax Credit for Low Income Students Scholarship Program — a tax-credit scholarship for lower-income students — plus public open enrollment. It does not currently have an ESA or voucher (broader proposals have been debated but not enacted).

THIS STATE'S CHOICE PROGRAMS

Under the Low Income Students Scholarship Program , donors receive a tax credit for giving to scholarship-granting organizations, which fund private-school scholarships for income-eligible students . The program is capped , so scholarships are limited by available funds.

ELIGIBILITY

Scholarships are for lower-income students (with income thresholds), subject to the program cap. Confirm current income limits.

APPLYING

Apply through a participating scholarship-granting organization . Confirm the list and requirements with the Kansas Department of Revenue / Education.



AT A GLANCE

Program	Low Income Students Scholarship...
Type	Tax-credit scholarship (income-l...
No	ESA or voucher
Plus	Public open enrollment
Confirm with	A scholarship organization

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE, TOO

- ✓ **Open enrollment / transfers** — Attend a public school outside your zone, where allowed (see our finding-your-school guide)
- ✓ **Charter schools** — Tuition-free public schools of choice (where available)
- ✓ **Magnet schools** — Tuition-free public schools with a specialized focus
- ✓ **Homeschooling** — Legal in all 50 states (rules vary)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **Does Kansas have a private-school-choice program?** — Yes (limited) — Kansas has a tax-credit scholarship for lower-income students (no ESA or voucher).
- ✓ **What's the difference between an ESA and a voucher?** — A voucher pays a private school directly; an ESA is a flexible parent-managed account for many approved expenses.
- ✓ **What is a tax-credit scholarship?** — Donors get a tax credit for giving to organizations that fund private-school scholarships.
- ✓ **Is there public school choice too?** — Yes — open enrollment, charters, and magnets (plus homeschooling).
- ✓ **Where do I confirm the details?** — On the official state program site (see below).

READ KANSAS'S FULL SCHOOL CHOICE GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Teacher Certification

HOW LICENSURE WORKS HERE

Kansas licenses teachers through the Kansas State Department of Education . You complete an approved program, pass the required Praxis exams, and earn an Initial License , later a Professional License .

WHICH TESTS THIS STATE USES

- ✓ **Praxis Subject Assessments** — Content test(s) for your endorsement area
- ✓ **Praxis PLT** — Principles of Learning and Teaching (pedagogy) for your grade band
- ✓ **Note** — Requirements vary by endorsement — confirm your specific tests

WHAT YOU NEED TO GET LICENSED

- ✓ **A bachelor's degree** — From an accredited college or university
- ✓ **A state-approved teacher-preparation program** — Completed at a college or through an approved alternative route
- ✓ **Student teaching / clinical practice** — Supervised classroom experience
- ✓ **Pass the required exams** — See the exams section above
- ✓ **A background check** — Fingerprint-based criminal background check
- ✓ **Apply to the state** — Submit your application and documents to the licensing agency



AT A GLANCE

Agency	Kansas State Dept. of Education
Content	Praxis Subject Assessments
Pedagogy	Praxis PLT
License	Initial — then Professional

OTHER PATHS INTO TEACHING

Most states offer alternative routes for career-changers and those with a degree in another field. In Kansas, these typically let you start teaching while completing licensure requirements — through district or university alternative-certification programs, residencies, or emergency/provisional permits. Requirements (and the exams) are...

RECIPROCITY & OUT-OF-STATE LICENSES

- ✓ **Interstate agreements** — Most states participate in the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement, which eases (but doesn't guarantee) recognition of an out-of-state license
- ✓ **You may still owe exams** — States often require you to meet their own testing (or coursework) requirements, sometimes within a grace period
- ✓ **Check both states** — Confirm the specific steps with Kansas agency and your current state

READ KANSAS'S FULL TEACHER CERTIFICATION GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



Financial Aid

THE STATE AID PICTURE

Kansas administers state aid through the Kansas Board of Regents , with a need-based grant and a promise scholarship for high-demand fields.

NEED-BASED STATE GRANTS

- ✓ **Kansas Comprehensive Grant** — Need-based aid for Kansas residents at eligible public and private in-state colleges — file early, as funds are limited.
- ✓ **Career Technical Workforce Grant** — For students in eligible technical programs.

MERIT & LOTTERY SCHOLARSHIPS

- ✓ **Kansas State Scholarship** — A merit award for top Kansas high-school graduates who complete a rigorous curriculum.
- ✓ **Kansas Promise Scholarship** — Covers tuition/fees for students in eligible high-demand programs at community and technical colleges (with an in-state work commitment).

COLLEGE SAVINGS (529 PLAN)

Kansas's Learning Quest 529 plan offers a state income tax deduction for contributions.

DEADLINES & TIMING

State deadlines are typically much earlier than the federal FAFSA deadline , and some aid is first-come, first-served until funds run out. File the FAFSA as soon as it opens (in the fall) and confirm the state's specific priority date.

AT A GLANCE

Need-based	Kansas Comprehensive Grant
High-demand fields	Kansas Promise Scholarship
Merit	Kansas State Scholarship
529 plan	Learning Quest
Agency	Kansas Board of Regents

APPLYING & THE STATE AGENCY

- ✓ **File the FAFSA early** — It's the trigger for state grants and many scholarships
- ✓ **Register with Kansas Board of Regents** — Create the state agency's student account to track and claim awards
- ✓ **Confirm your details** — Verify residency, GPA, and enrollment as required
- ✓ **Meet any extra requirements** — Some programs need a separate form, GPA, or service commitment
- ✓ **Reapply every year** — State aid is awarded annually

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ **How do I get Kansas state aid?** — File the FAFSA (and any state form) by the deadline; Kansas Board of Regents administers the programs.
- ✓ **Is it need-based or merit?** — Both — Kansas offers need-based grants and merit scholarships.
- ✓ **Are the deadlines earlier than federal?** — Usually yes — file early, as some aid is first-come.
- ✓ **Can I use it out of state?** — Most Kansas aid is for in-state schools; check each program.
- ✓ **Does this list private scholarships?** — No — this guide covers official state programs only.

READ KANSAS'S FULL FINANCIAL AID GUIDE
tools.k12academics.com



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