

# RESEARCH REPORTS



PUBLISHED BY THE KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS • 1420 SW ARROWHEAD RD, TOPEKA, KS 66604-4024 • 800.432.2471 • WWW.KASB.ORG

## Long-Term Growth in Instructional and Student Support Employees

### Introduction

Nearly all of the positions added by Kansas districts since 1998 involved direct instruction of students (teaching) or supporting teachers and students. Districts have added over 9,600 employee positions since 1998, an increase of more than 16 percent. Over this same period, general administration positions were reduced by almost 17 percent.

Statewide school enrollment increased by 3.5 percent between 1998 and 2015. Employees in other school district function areas increased at about the same rate as student increases, with the exception of transportation, which increased about 21 percent.

The number of school employees increased between 1998 and 2002, declined in 2003 and 2004 when school funding was limited by economic recession; rose from 2005 to 2009 with significantly increased funding following the *Montoy* school finance decision; dropped in 2010 and 2011 after school funding was reduced during the Great Recession; and has partially recovered to pre-recession levels.

These changes are reported in an analysis of staff and students from 1998 to 2015 statewide and for each district using data from Kansas State Department of Education. Student Full Time Equivalent enrollments (FTEs) were taken from KSDE’s Comparative Performance and Fiscal System (CPFS), and Staff FTEs were taken from KSDE’s Certified and Noncertified Personnel Reports. Student

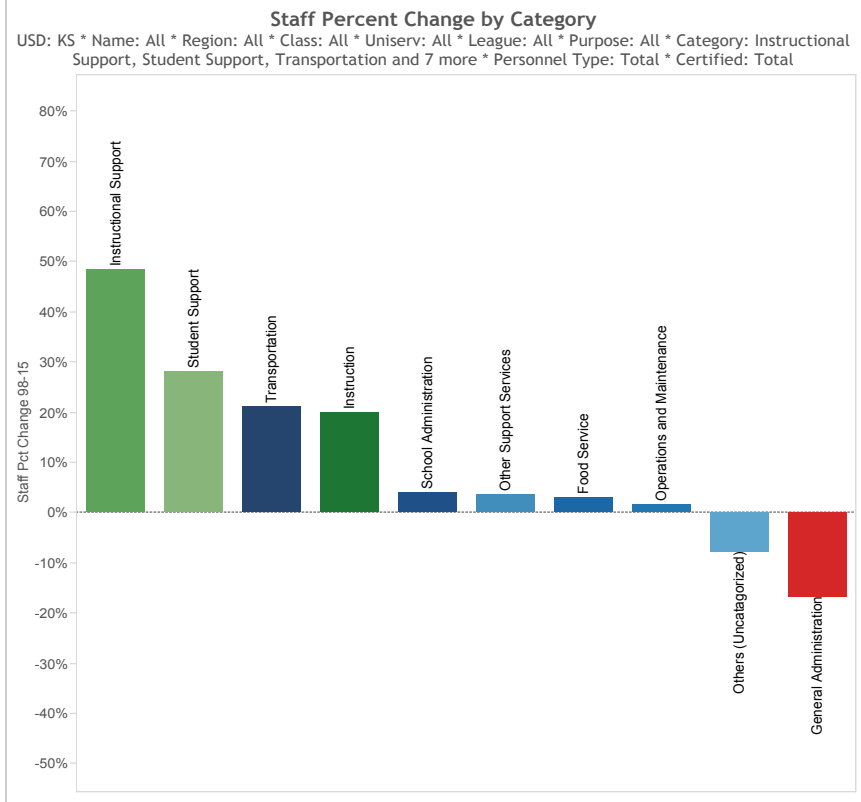
FTEs in CPFS are only available back to the 1997-98 school year, which is why this starting point was selected.

### Staffing Changes by Function

**Instruction.** Of the 9,600 school district positions added since 1998, 7,375 are “instructional.” Of this total, 3,275 are certified or licensed teachers; including regular teachers, special education,

kindergarten, and practical arts/career and technical education teachers. The remaining positions are primarily special education paraprofessionals; accounting for 2,869 out of over 4,000 “noncertified” positions added. “Noncertified” means these jobs do not require a license from the state. Instructional positions account for 64 percent of total school district employee FTEs, up from 62 percent in 1998.

Chart 1: Change in Staff Percents (1998 to 2015)



**Teacher and Student Support.** The second major area of employment growth since 1998 has been in positions supporting and directing instruction in the classroom and assisting students. Instructional support, which includes library and media center staff and technology, added almost 1,000 positions; mostly in technology. Student support, which includes counselors, social workers, school resource officers, attendance staff, nurses and health aides, psychologists, audiologists and speech pathologists, added almost 900 positions. These areas make up 10 percent of total school employees.

**Transportation.** The only other major growth area was transportation, which accounts for 3 percent of school employees, an increase by 345 FTEs, almost all of them bus drivers.

**General Administration.** Although the total number of school district staff members increased between 1998 and 2015, the number of general administration staff decreased by 234, or 16 percent. This includes staff who work in the district office: superintendents, assistant and associate superintendents, administrative assistants and clerical staff. General administration positions make up 2 percent of total school employees.

**Other.** All other functional areas increased at about the same rate as student enrollment. These include school administration (principals, assistant principals and school office staff), food service, operations and maintenance, other support services (primarily business functions) and other uncategorized positions.

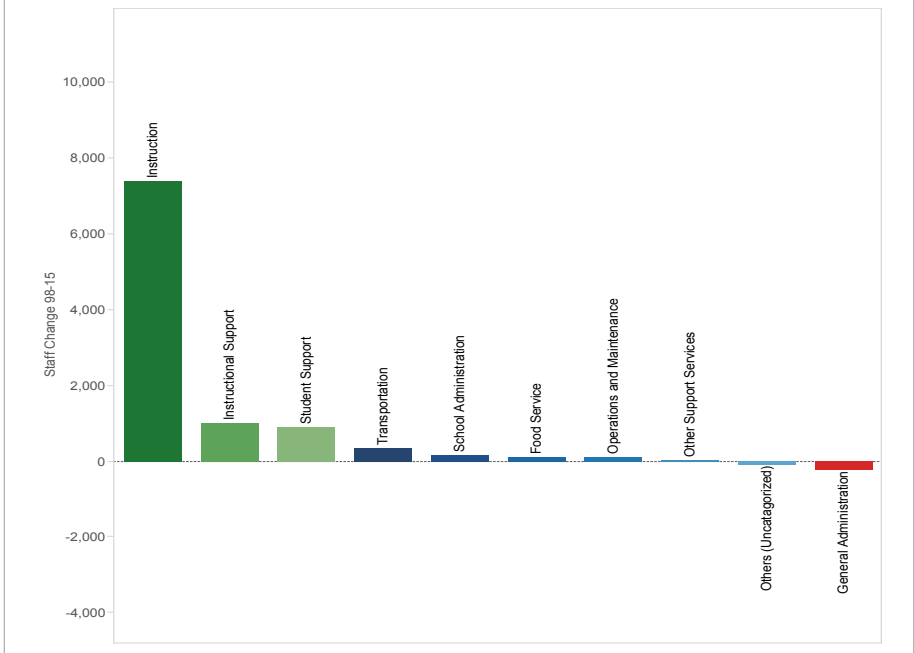
### Changes in Student-to-Staff Ratios

The ratio of students to instructional staff decreased from approximately 10.6 students per staff member in 1998 to 9.0 students per staff member in 2015, meaning more staff is now available to work with students directly.

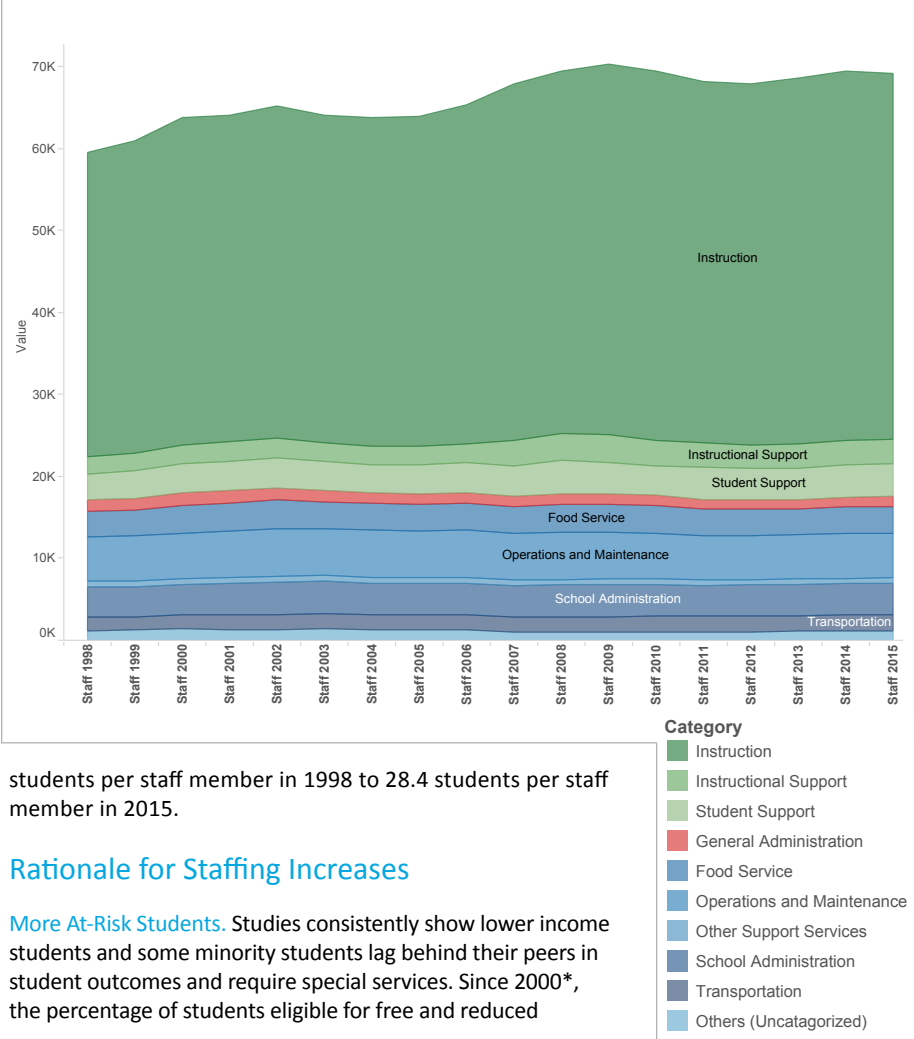
The ratio of students to general administration staff increased from approximately 319 students per central office administrator in 1998 to almost 400 students per administrator in 2015, meaning fewer staff are being employed that do not directly interact with students.

The ratio of students to all other staff was essentially unchanged, from 28.5

**Chart 2: Change in Staff Numbers (1998 to 2015)**



**Chart 3: Staff Changes by Category**



students per staff member in 1998 to 28.4 students per staff member in 2015.

### Rationale for Staffing Increases

**More At-Risk Students.** Studies consistently show lower income students and some minority students lag behind their peers in student outcomes and require special services. Since 2000\*, the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced

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meals has increased from 32 percent to nearly 50 percent of all students in 2015. The percentage of Hispanic students has increased from 7 percent to 19 percent. In response, districts have added early childhood programs and tried to reduce class size to provide more individualized attention to struggling students.

**Special Education.** Changes in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have required inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms; de-institutionalization and medical advances have placed more students with profound disabilities in schools, and teachers report more students with severe emotional and behavioral problems. These factors require more special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and related support services staff.

**Academic Requirements.** The Kansas Legislature, Kansas State Board of Education, and Kansas Board of Regents have raised graduation requirements in core subject areas and standards for admission to state universities. Vocational education classes have shifted to career technical education pathways. These

changes required additional teaching staff and support for media and technology.

**Safety.** Schools have added resource officers, counselors and social workers, and modified bus routes to address concerns about school violence, bullying and other safety issues.

*\*2000 was the first year free and reduced-price lunch was reported consistently by KSDE.*

## Changes in Student Outcomes Coinciding with Staffing Increase

**Reading and Math Proficiency.** The percent of all Kansas students scoring at proficient on the National Assessment of Educational Progress fourth and eighth grade reading and math tests increased from 35.8 percent in 2003\* to 40.4 percent in 2013. For low income students, proficiency increased from 20.6 to 25.3 percent. (The NAEP tests a small sample of Kansas students every two years. "Proficient" is an indicator that a student is on track for college readiness.)

**Graduation Rate.** Despite a significant increase in at-risk students, Kansas'

Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate increased from 76.9 percent in 2003\* to 89.0 percent in 2013.

**Preparation for College.** Since 2006,\* the percentage of students tested by the ACT scoring at the college-ready benchmark level in all four areas (English, Reading, Math and Science) increased from 25 to 31 percent. The percentages for African-Americans increased from 4 to 7 percent, and for Hispanics from 11 to 14 percent.

*\*Earliest dates information was available.*

## Additional Resources

Interactive tools that show this data for the state and for individual districts can be found at the following links:

- Summary: [https://public.tableau.com/views/Student\\_Staff\\_Ratios\\_Summary/Overview](https://public.tableau.com/views/Student_Staff_Ratios_Summary/Overview)
- Detail: [https://public.tableau.com/views/Student\\_Staff\\_Ratios/Overview](https://public.tableau.com/views/Student_Staff_Ratios/Overview)

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