

Johnson County Public Policy Council
2018 Kansas State Representative Candidate Questionnaire

Name: David Benson

Phone: 319-573-9700

Political Affiliation: Democrat

Email: davidbensonphd@yahoo.com

District: 48

Campaign Website: BensonforKansas

Address/City/State/Zip:

Campaign Video Link: N/A

13901 Hemlock Street
Overland Park, KS 66223

Occupation/Work History (last five years – 25 words or less):

44 year career in education with 33 years as a Superintendent of Schools in KS, MO, and IA. 11 in Blue Valley as Superintendent.

If you are or have been affiliated with a chamber of commerce or other business organization please list which organization(s) and any leadership positions you have held:

Current member - OP Chamber Past Board member - OP Chamber, Chairman of the Board - Creve Coeur/Olivette Chamber Past Board member - Greater KC Chamber OP Chamber Leadership Class and Leadership Kansas

Other recent political/community experience (25 words or less):

Mainstream Coalition, United Way of Eastern Iowa and Metro KC, President of United Community Services of Johnson County, Pittsburg State Alumni Association Board Member.

As a candidate, what are your top three policy issues? (10 words or less per issue)

Advocate for Local Control, Supporter of Quality Pre-K through University education and Supporter of Infrastructure investments

What are your views on state tax policy, being as specific as you can? (100 words or less)

State tax policy needs to provide adequate revenue to fund necessary state governmental functions. I believe in a balance of taxes between the various sources. No one source should be overly relied upon. I support a "lean but adequate" approach to state tax policy. Lean means no wasteful expenditures and adequate means state obligations are met.

With record low unemployment rates, what would you do to grow and develop the state's workforce? (75 words or less)

Education is important to meet the needs of the state's workforce. Training and re-training should be a priority for our Community Colleges in coordination with business needs. Further, a quality of life that attracts persons to move or stay in Kansas is essential to stabilize and grow the workforce.

What are your views on funding K-12 education? (75 words or less)

The current Supreme Court order needs to be funded not just at an minimum level but a level to reach 21st century standards. Further, I would support giving more tools to local district and citizens to support education at the local level.

What would your priorities be in any new statewide transportation plan? (50 words or less)

A top priority would be to have a robust community engagement process. Local business leaders know what investments will lead to good results. Infrastructure investments allow for business growth and development. Moving of freight by various means is a business requirement.

Do you support maintaining the current dedicated sales tax transfer to the State Highway Fund for the purpose of funding transportation infrastructure, or should transportation be subject to the appropriations process where legislators determine funding levels entirely? (50 words or less)

Yes, I support the current dedicated sales tax transfer system. Transportation should not be subject to the annual appropriations process.

What types of economic development policies will you support to encourage job growth and business expansion in Kansas? (50 words or less)

I support state economic development tools that encourage employment, grow the economy, and partner with private investment. Current tools should be supported like STAR bonds, Investor Credits, PEAK and HPIP. The Job Creation Program Funding is important and should be fully funded.

What are your views on the state's role regarding immigration and do you support employment-based immigration reforms to assist with workforce shortages in specified industries? (50 words or less)

I would support employment-based immigration reforms for specific industries. In Blue Valley, we hired Spanish speakers from South America to start our Elementary Spanish program. The state has a limited role in the current immigration debate, but not a silent role. We need to speak out to our Federal Representatives.

What are your views on the state's role with respect to access and affordability of public higher education? (50 words or less)

Kansas Universities, Community Colleges, Technical Schools and Vocational Training Schools need more state funding to hold tuition down for the students. Further, I would support specific waivers of tuition for critical training for workers in short supply.

What are your views on healthcare policy and Medicaid expansion? (50 words or less)

I support Medicaid expansion. Kansas hospitals and other delivery points need to be paid in full and in a timely manner.

What role should state government have in determining workplace employment practices and benefits offered to employees? (50 words or less)

State Government has an important role in promoting a safe workplace environment for workers and the general public. I would oppose benefit mandates beyond those coming from the federal government.

What do you believe is the most pressing issue or challenge facing Kansas today and how would you address it? (50 words or less)

Creating a positive climate for our citizens and businesses. We need to change the current negative tone in Topeka. A bipartisan mindset is necessary to accomplish better results. I know that working with all legislators and the governors office will be necessary for success.

What project have you been most proud to work on? (50 words or less)

As a career educator, I am most proud of the student's accomplishments. Many students have been successful, however, we must assure more students are successful in the future. We need the type of clear thinking about issues that I demonstrated as a School Superintendent.

What do you believe most distinguishes you from your opponent(s) in this race? (75 words or less)

My opponent has a record of support the negative and non-business friendly policies of the past governor. He voted to support the governor veto of the tax over hall and while voting for the final school finance bill, he voted against the measures on development of the bill. I have a positive record of community involvement and a deep understanding of my native state having lived in various communities.