2025 Kansas Teacher Retention Initiative (KTRI) Reveals Perspectives of Over 20,000 Educators

Launched by EPIC in 2021 and now in its third iteration, the 2025 KTRI delivers longitudinal insights to support Kansas teacher engagement and retention.

Educator Perceptions & Insights Center (EPIC)

NEWTON, KS, UNITED STATES, January 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Educator Perceptions & Insights Center (EPIC) announced today the successful completion of the 2025 Kansas Teacher Retention Initiative (KTRI), marking the third statewide administration of the study since its launch in 2021. The KTRI is a statewide, research-based study designed to understand the factors that most strongly influence teacher engagement, satisfaction, and long-term retention. With more than 21,000 teacher responses in 2025 and over 60,000 total responses across three survey cycles (2021, 2023, 2025), KTRI now represents one of the most comprehensive and longitudinal educator engagement and retention datasets in the nation.

Work was performed by researchers from the Educator Perceptions & Insights Center (EPIC), with active collaboration from the Kansas National Education Association (KNEA), the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB), United School Administrators of Kansas (USA-Kansas), and Emporia State University.

Participation in the 2025 KTRI remained strong across urban, suburban, and rural districts throughout Kansas, reinforcing the value teachers place on having a trusted, third-party mechanism to share honest feedback about their professional experience.

“Kansas educators continue to show up and speak candidly about what is working, what is challenging, and what needs to change,” said Dr. Luke Simmering, Co-Founder of EPIC. “That level of participation reflects both trust in the KTRI process and a deep commitment to the future of education in Kansas.”

The study integrates:

- A validated Engagement Index
- Multiple retention indicators beyond a single “intent to stay” measure
- Over 30,000 open-ended teacher comments in 2025 alone
- Predictive analytics identifying the conditions that most strongly influence whether teachers remain engaged and stay in the profession

The 2025 results show encouraging progress alongside persistent challenges:

- Teacher engagement increased by 3% statewide since 2023
- Teacher disengagement decreased by 6%
- Overall retention risk declined by 4%
- Improvements noted in communication, collaboration time, access to resources, and substitute availability

The research also confirms ongoing systemic pressure points:

- Student behavior and safety challenges
- Teacher workload and planning time constraints
- Mental and emotional exhaustion and burnout
- Compensation and salary growth concerns
- Declining societal respect for the teaching profession

The highest retention risk remains concentrated among mid-career teachers (4–11 years of experience), teachers working second jobs, and educators in highly specialized roles.

From Statewide Insight to District-Level Action

In addition to releasing a comprehensive state-level KTRI report, EPIC is preparing to deliver more than 138 district-specific reports to superintendents across Kansas in early 2026. These district reports translate statewide findings into localized insight on teacher engagement, retention risk, and educator experience. Many districts are also partnering with EPIC to access deeper analytics, customized reporting, and advisory support through EPIC’s 'Inform' service. EPIC will further expand its research efforts by continuing its Classified Staff Engagement and Retention Study, focused on better understanding and supporting this critical segment of the education workforce.

“Statewide data tells an important story, but sustainable improvement happens when districts can clearly see and act on their own patterns,” said Dr. Bret Church, Co-Founder of EPIC.

Looking Ahead

The 2025 KTRI findings reinforce a consistent message from Kansas educators:

Teachers remain deeply committed to students and their communities—but the long-term sustainability of the profession depends on intentional investment in the conditions that shape their daily experience.

Through continued partnership, transparent reporting, and district-level support, EPIC remains committed to helping Kansas lead the nation in understanding—and strengthening—the educator workforce.

About EPIC

The Educator Perceptions & Insights Center (EPIC) is a research and analytics organization dedicated to elevating educator voice and delivering actionable, data-driven insight to improve engagement, retention, and organizational health in education systems. EPIC is led by Dr. Luke Simmering and Dr. Bret Church and partners with districts, state agencies, and education organizations to translate data into meaningful action.

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