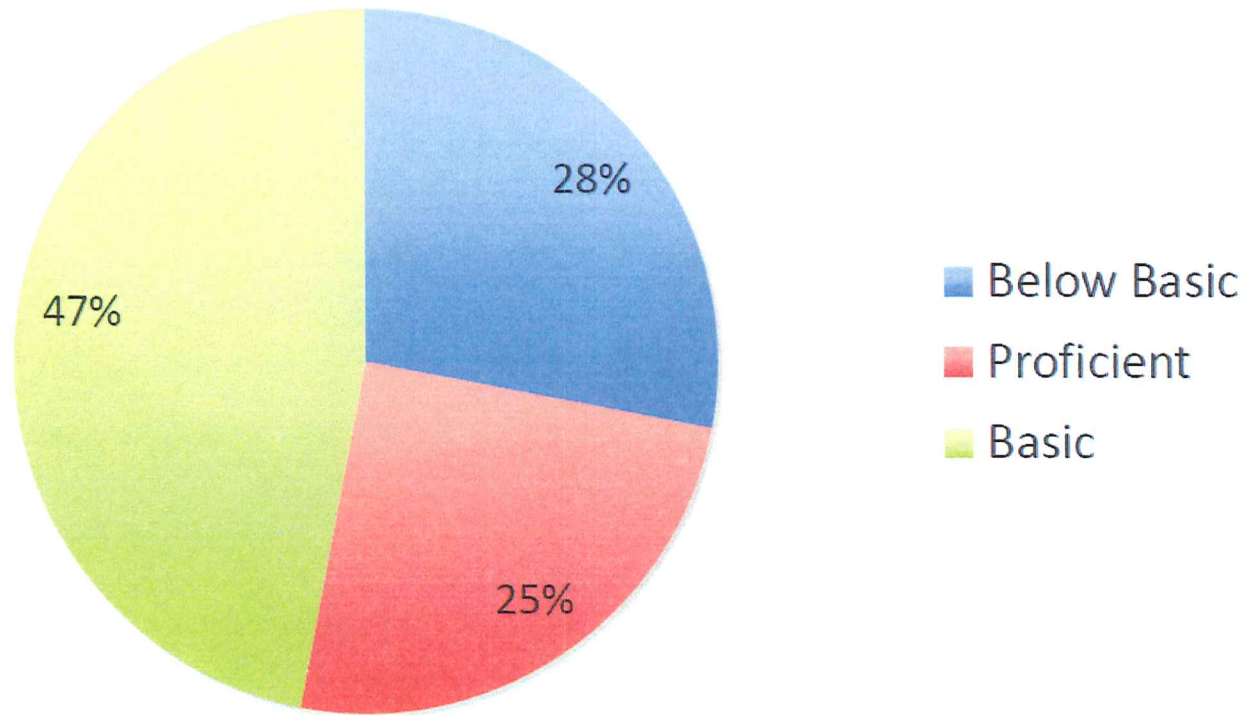
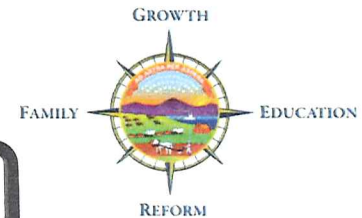


Reading Proficiency of Kansas Students (2009)



Source: NAEP



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I support Sam...

Sam Brownback has the experience we need to take the Kansas baton from our current governor and move forward for an efficient and rapid return to prosperity.

Albert Rettenmaier, Prairie Village

Road Map for Kansas Speech

Delivered by U.S. Senator Sam Brownback, August 9, 2010

Kansas is a great state. We want it to be even better. That's what the road map project is all about - making Kansas a better state.

To do so – we need to know not only what state government does – but what it accomplishes. Dr. Colyer and I are committed to five measurable goals that we believe will make our state better:

1. Increasing net personal income.
2. Increasing private sector employment.
3. Increasing the percentage of 4th graders reading at grade level.
4. Increasing the percentage of high school graduates who are college or career ready.

5. Decreasing the percentage of Kansas' children who live in poverty.

These are the dials that a Brownback Administration is going to work to move in the right direction:

National and global forces will certainly bear on Kansas over the next decade, all of which we have little control over. But without goals and a focus, we will simply wave in the wind looking for the weather to change.

While there are many perspectives as to what areas of public policy focus are most important to the future of our great state, it is our belief that these five points of focus are of most critical importance. These five points will have the greatest influence on growing the economy, reforming state government, enhancing the impact of our children's educational experience, and ultimately protecting the well-being of Kansas families.

So where are we starting from?

Net personal income has remained stagnant for over 2 years, hovering at around \$34,500. This number, of course, hasn't kept up with the rising costs families across our state are facing, so they are getting squeezed financially.

To make matters worse, our great state has actually experienced a loss in private sector jobs since the beginning of 2000. If you take a look at this chart, you'll see that we started the new millennium with about 1.1 million Kansans having private sector employment. But now, in the middle of 2010, we have almost 25,000 fewer private sector jobs in the state. Couple that with the fact that government jobs have grown steadily over the past decade, and you can see why we're facing such severe budget problems.

If you take a look at this second chart you can see the same troubling trend reflected in a different way. Over the past decade, private sector payrolls have decreased by 2.1% while government payrolls have increased by 8.6%. This is unsustainable, and one of our priorities will be to see to it that we turn this around and help the private sector fuel Kansas' future growth.

A Brownback administration will be hands-on and active from the very first day. Our actions will be part of an integrated strategy to achieve our stated goals. During our first month in office, we will fulfill the following commitments to reform our state government in a way that puts a premium on common-sense and sustainability.

- First, we will implement an Economic Development Strategic Plan that encourages free enterprise, helps small businesses, and builds on our areas of strength in agriculture, aviation, manufacturing, natural resources and energy development, the service sector, transportation, and bioscience. This plan will also focus on ensuring that Kansas workers remain competitive in the national and international marketplace.
- We will organize within our administration a Citizens Regulatory Review Board to review new regulations before implementation so that our regulations are effective and make sense to the public.
- Also, we will re-task existing resources to empower the Office of the Repealer who will make specific recommendations on statutes and regulations that have out-lived their original function, are in conflict with one another, or simply do not make sense.

- And in the name of fiscal responsibility, we will review revenue and spending estimates and take necessary steps to produce a balanced budget, including issuing appropriate Executive Reorganization Orders and enforcing a state general fund spending freeze.

Certainly these first actions taken will constitute only a start on the road of progress we will need to travel as a state. The challenges that we face in Kansas—and indeed in America—are not only very significant, they are of a depth and duration we have not seen for some time. Meeting those challenges will take effort, intensity, and purpose.

Another area of focus that is reflected in my Report Card is education. Growing the Kansas economy and keeping us economically competitive in the 21st century requires investment in our schools and universities. The education of our citizens is a critical function of Kansas government and we will work to craft an education system that prepares our residents to succeed. Education is to state governments as defense is to the federal government: it is its primary function and the lion's share of its budget – and that is as it should be.

The problems we face in our state education system are difficult ones. Our K-12 funding formula is broken as is evidenced by the recurring lawsuits filed against it. Our public universities have faced severe cuts. Real solutions to these problems are difficult. With regard to K-12 funding, we need to focus the state's dollars on classroom instruction, promote innovation, reform the school finance formula, and pursue unified accounting of school districts' use of state funds.

A focus of our time in office will be on 4th grade reading levels. If children don't learn to read early, they are likely to face a lifetime of difficulty in the classroom and the job market. This is why we have chosen to put this statistic on our Report Card. As you can see from this graph, 28% of our students are reading below basic levels according to National Assessment of Educational Progress scores. That number is far too high. Only 25% of our students are reading proficiently. That number is far too low. A Brownback Administration will focus on helping more of our 4th graders read and read well.

We also need to increase the percentage of high school graduates who are college or career ready. All of us know that the world is changing and high school graduates today not only need their degree, but also need skills to succeed in the global marketplace. I will work with the Kansas Department of Education and other interested public and private sector entities on programs to ensure that our students acquire in high school the tools they need to get good careers. Our high school graduates need to be ready to go to college, technical schools – or have the skills necessary to go to work.

All of these areas of focus will help lead us to building the nest and nest egg our families need to decrease the percentage of children living in poverty. This is the ultimate goal of any policymaker: to ensure access to opportunity for everyone. Unfortunately, we've not been hitting the mark on this over the past decade. As you can see on this chart, the percentage of Kansas Children who live in poverty has shot up by 25% since 2000. We need to help families save and earn more so that we can bring this number down.

During our time in office, we will work in full partnership with the legislature and others to create policies and initiatives that have a hard focus on moving the dial on the 5 aspects of the Kansas Report Card. We believe every person is a unique, special individual, and our guiding philosophy will reflect that belief. We all have something to offer so let's make the effort to see this in others no matter what their condition or need. We are all needed, all valued, and all a part of the hope and promise of Kansas.

This Road Map is only the beginning. Over the remainder of this campaign we will be rolling out action items to address the goals set out here today. We will do this all over Kansas in unique venues. It's going to be fun.

Thank you and God bless.

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