



## Associated General Contractors of Kansas, Inc.

HEADQUARTERS  
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House Education Budget Committee  
Testimony opposing HB 2394  
March 3, 2015

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

I wanted to provide some feedback on the proposed legislation to amend the Kansas Career Technical Education Incentive Program. As every industry with skill trade can attest finding workers with the skills necessary is one of the highest priorities of every company.

Governor Brownback's passing of the Kansas CTE Incentive Program has made a huge impact on gaining ground of finding those workers. Secondary schools are starting to produce many of those much-needed workers

AGC of Kansas has invested a lot of time and money into sponsoring both secondary and Post-Secondary schools with the NCCER Curriculum. This curriculum is a Knowledge based performance proven skills needed for the construction industry. The NCCER Curriculum provides students with an industry-recognized certification in over 65 skilled trades.

Since the NCCER curriculum is a lifelong learning curriculum it is the perfect bridge between secondary, post-secondary, and the contractor. The student starts in secondary learning the foundation to the skilled trade, they then can go to a post-secondary school to add to their knowledge and skills. When they finish with their post-secondary education the go to a contractor, the contractor can continue their education.

### Background

Before the Kansas CTE Incentive Program I would sit down with a local secondary school and their closest post-secondary school and ask how we can move students from secondary to post-secondary schools for students to continue their education in our industry. I was told it would not work, KSDE has specific requirements and KBOR had different ones. There wasn't any funding source or incentive for either to change their curriculum. They said it was too time consuming and costly to undertake a change in curriculum. The Incentive Program has provided this, it has provided the funding and incentive for schools to work together and build those bridges. There is a huge partnership program going on statewide. Articulation agreements now are the norm instead of a rarity and schools are working together to help prepare the student with real-life, work-ready skills.

At the time of the passage of the Kansas CTE Incentive Program there were approximately 30 schools sponsored with the NCCER Curriculum. There were almost no students obtaining an industry-recognized certification. At this time there are almost 80 schools statewide that are being sponsored with the NCCER curriculum. The results have been spectacular.

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The CTE Incentive Program is providing schools with the incentive to do a couple of things. For smaller schools it is helping them concentrate on programs that will produce students that are job ready. The incentive is providing the funding to support these programs. The larger school districts are being incentivized to seek articulation agreements with their local community colleges to provide higher skilled labor industry needs.

The most exciting results are that the schools are now seeking out industry to help with their programs. Our industry is also seeking out schools with these programs. The Kansas CTE Incentive Program has shown the construction industry that Kansas understands their needs and is doing something about it. We are now partnering with schools, we are going into schools speaking about our industry, demonstrating skilled practices. What has been wonderful to see is that the construction industry is hiring graduating students.

### **Local Control**

Because Kansas schools are locally controlled each school can teach what curriculum they choose as long as they meet some basic requirements for a particular trade, carpentry is a perfect example. A local school may teach a general "wood shop" class. This program may have the teacher teaching how to make a birdhouse or a nightstand. This gives the student some very basic skills that does very little in preparing the student for a job. The NCCER curriculum gives the teacher and student a foundation based on the carpentry profession, it teaches the student the principles of materials, fasteners, walls, floors, roofs and most importantly it talks and shows the students the construction industry. This sponsorship for the NCCER curriculum has been offered to schools for around 8 years.

An example that I know of is in a small town school that only graduates approximately 30 students a year. We sponsored the school and they at first had a woods class that with the help of our NCCER program, has changed their program to an actual Industry Carpentry program. Several of their students have graduated and gone onto Pittsburg State. *One is now a superintendent with a large general contractor.*

The carpentry teacher told me the town only had one plumber, he has tried to retire 4 times. He cannot retire, there is no one to replace him. There isn't anyone with the skills to do what he does. He is willing to take on an apprentice and sell the company on installments, but there simply isn't anyone. The Carpentry teacher wants to start a plumbing program with the contractors help with the more technical pieces. The problem is their school is so small they do not have the funding to develop a program, buy the equipment needed or pay for another teacher to teach the program. They are hopeful that with the revenue from the Kansas CTE Program they will be able to develop a much needed community program.

I will give you an actual example of a contractor who went to a school to speak about their company, answer any questions and to help the program. At the end of the presentation, the contractors took the teacher aside and asked how many were graduating in May. The teacher stated he had 6 that would be graduating; the contractor looked at him and said he would hire them all. The teacher was speechless, then said that it was only the first of April. The contractor said that he would wait until they graduated. He talked with the students and they all agreed that the day after they graduated they would show up to work for the contractor. He gave them his cell phone number and told them to call if they needed anything between now and graduation.

There are other stories similar to this one. This incentive program does not only provide an incentive to secondary schools, it is changing the framework of CTE education. For so many years the construction industry has been striving to work hand in hand with the state on workforce development, we now have the means to do so.

## Conclusion

We do not feel that everyone understands what impact reducing the amount of the incentive would have on our momentum of workforce development. Reducing the incentive and keeping the tuition reimbursement would still have devastating effects on workforce development.

The tuition reimbursement does not include materials, consumables and book costs, this cost has been subsidized from the Incentive Program. The tuition reimbursement is good for secondary schools in cities that have a post-secondary school close by.

What about our rural schools, where is the incentive for them to help in our workforce development? Where will the funding come from to change their curriculum, purchase books and materials? These schools tend to be small and have only a few CTE students in the first place; these few students are vitally needed in their communities. Where will the incentive come from to develop new programs to help our economy?

Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

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