

Approved: 2/14/96
Date

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Mason at 3:30 p.m. on February 1, 1996 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Ben Barrett, Legislative Research Department
Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes
Dale Dennis, Department of Education
Beverly Renner, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Steve Jordan, Executive Director-Kansas Board of Regents
Representative Jim Lowther-Wichita Eagle clipping and note
David DePue, State Council on Vocational Education
Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards
Gerry Henderson, United School Administrators
Stan Larson, Kansas Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association
Onan C. Burnett, USD 501-Topeka Public Schools
Jeff Peterson, President of Student Body-Kansas State University

Others attending: See attached list

Chairman Mason continued the hearing on **HB 2668** - concerning state educational institutions admission requirements.

Dr. Steve Jordan, Executive Director-Kansas Board of Regents continued proponent testimony on **HB 2668** (Attachment 1). The Board of Regents has supported qualified admissions since 1987. Not only will improved preparation benefit those students who will go from school to technical college, school to community college, school to Regent's university, but, also, for success in today's work place. Dr. Jordan presented a graph and tables tracking high school graduates by placement at graduation (Attachment 2).

Representative Lowther sent an editorial from the Wichita Eagle with his notes to support **HB 2668** (Attachment 3).

This concluded the proponent hearing on **HB 2668** and the floor was opened to opponents.

Dr. David DePue, Executive Director-State Council on Vocational Education appeared in opposition to **HB 2668** (Attachment 4). Kansas rates significantly better than the national average on essential indicators of educational achievement. Despite the wide variety of requirements for university admission, 50 years of data show that the 50 states have about the same retention rates of about 50%. Changing Kansas admission requirements will not affect the national average. Prescribed college preparatory requirements limit preparations for work place experience.

Becki Cook, Student at Shawnee Heights High School appeared in opposition to **HB 2668** (Attachment 5). She cited a study done by Dean George Baxter Smith, University of Kansas which concluded that because "a free society's survival depends upon the widest and fullest possible development of all its human resources", a policy of selective admissions was the least desirable response to large enrollments. She spoke of witnessing students who would be affected adversely by qualified admissions. Some students would use them as an excuse for not striving. Teens who have not learned the value of priorities in life need more opportunities offered to them, not less.

Mark Tallman, Director of Governmental Relations-Kansas Association of School Boards spoke in opposition

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, Room 519-S Statehouse, at 3:30 p.m. on February 1, 1996.

to **HB 2668** (Attachment 6) citing lack of conclusive evidence that demonstrates a positive change in student performance if qualified admissions were put in place. Until a stronger case is made that open admissions really will make a difference in helping students succeed, the Boards do not believe Kansas should risk losing the students who are currently succeeding despite the odds.

Gerry Henderson, Executive Director United School Administrators of Kansas appeared in opposition to **HB 2668** (Attachment 7). An effort should be made to identify and assess demonstrated proficiency for admission to higher education rather than a list of course completions. Remediation should not be offered at public expense. The fact that Kansas is the only state with open admissions is not an excuse for change.

Stan Larson, Kansas Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association testified in opposition to **HB 2668** (Attachment 8). A prescribed curriculum does not consider student goals, abilities and aspirations. A student, with input from parents, teachers and counselors should be allowed to determine their own career and education goals.

Onan C. Burnett, USD 501 Topeka Public Schools spoke in opposition to **HB 2668**. A 10% window for exceptions to the minimum admission standards as set forth in the bills is inappropriate. There is no need for remediation at the college level.

Jeff Peterson, President of KSU Student Body appeared in opposition to **HB 2668**. Qualified admissions could discourage preparation for regent's institutions, college, technical school and life.

Chairman Mason, after requesting additional opponents or proponents, closed the hearing on **HB 2668**.

Representative Powell moved a bill be introduced on teacher due process relating to a 3-member hearing panel. Representative Ballou seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Ben Barrett, Legislative Research and Dale Dennis, Department of Education, distributed copies of materials requested by members at yesterday's meeting which are on file in legislative research.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 5, 1996.

HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: February 1, 1996

NAME	REPRESENTING
Ann Carlin Bogovic	Dept. of Human Resources
Bill Reid	Ks Independent College Assoc
Janet Brown	John Peterson Assoc.
Steve Larson	KVATA
Bill Medley	SCKESC Clearwater
George Hodgson	visitor
Bruce Cook	visitor
Becki Cook	conference
Bonni Cook	visitor
David DePue	Council on Vocational Education
Stephen Jordan	KS Bd of Regents
John HEBERT	" " " "
Alan Burnett	USD 501#
Jason Bitter	intern
Shannon Wood	intern
Susan Porter	KU
Ed Deller	Senator Martin
Mark Tallan	KASB
Katharine Wickett	USA

Jacque Daker
D. Ayl

SQE
USA

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
TESTIMONY ON HB 2668

Stephen M. Jordan, Executive Director
Kansas Board of Regents

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

I. Introduction - Dr. John Hiebert, Chairman, Kansas Board of Regents

Appreciate the Committee Chairman's and Representative Tanner's willingness to let me testify today. I had a previously scheduled engagement in Wichita yesterday which prevented me from attending the Committee's hearing.

II. Board Position

1. The Board of Regents has had a position supporting qualified admissions since 1987. This continues to be the official position of the Board of Regents. While support for qualified admissions continues to be the official position of the Board, it is not the only endeavor the Board is engaged in to improve the preparation of students for the Regents universities.
2. The Board is extremely concerned about the preparation of all Kansas students for the future which awaits them, not just those who choose to attend a Regents university. There is an abundance of evidence that all students, regardless of whether they go from school to technical college, school to community college, school to Regents university, will require a preparatory experience which include proficiencies in communication skills, mathematics, the sciences and the social sciences, if they are to be successful in today's workplace. Qualified admissions, is one way, among several of achieving better preparation of our children.

III. Where do Kansas Students Go from High School

1. Kansas has one of the highest participation rates in Postsecondary education in the country - 70 percent. Something that we, as Kansans, can be very proud.
2. Review the Graph and Table on Kansas High School Graduates by Placement Upon Graduation. You can see that over the past nine years, the greatest decline has been in students going directly from school to the work-force. On the other hand, continued education, particularly at the community colleges and the Regents universities has climbed. Regents universities continue to have the single largest component of

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Attachment 1

Postsecondary placement.

III. What do we Know About Current Preparation

1. Kansas is an ACT (American College Testing Service) state. That is, it is the college placement test used by Kansas Postsecondary institutions, public and private. Consequently almost all students who intend to go onto some form of Postsecondary education take the ACT. Last spring, 19,728 students in Kansas took the ACT out of the 27,682 high school graduates, or 71 percent.
2. ACT uses what it calls a "College Preparatory Curriculum", in evaluating students potential for success in Postsecondary education. I would call your attention to the "Comparison of ACT Recommended Curriculum and Regents Recommended High School Curriculum" in your handouts. The ACT curriculum includes 4 years of English, 3 years of Mathematics (not less than Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry), 3 years of Science and 3 years of Social Science. You will notice that it is very similar to the Regents Recommended Curriculum except that the Regents Recommended Curriculum also includes 2 years of Language, and specifies that the 3 years of Science include Biology, Chemistry and Physics. House Bill 2688, which is before you, is modeled after the Regents Recommended Curriculum, except that it does not specify the Sciences and it provides for an alternative of 1 year of computer technology as a substitute for 1 of the 2 years of Language.
3. In Kansas, 48 percent of the students who take the ACT have completed the ACT College Preparatory Curriculum. Remember, this is not 48 percent of the high school graduates, but 48 percent of the 70 percent who go on to some form of Postsecondary education. Nationally, 59 percent of all ACT test takers have completed the ACT College Preparatory Curriculum. Of the 48 percent in Kansas who took the ACT College Preparatory Curriculum, the average composite ACT score was 23, a full point above the national average of 22 for all ACT test takers who completed the ACT College Preparatory Curriculum. For those Kansas students who did not complete the ACT College Preparatory Curriculum, their average ACT score was 19.6, a half-point higher than the national average of all students who did less than the ACT College Preparatory Curriculum.
4. You will notice from the handouts that the trend-line for students completing the Regents Recommended Curriculum is going down. In the past two years, it has dropped from a high of 5,307 students, or 20 percent

of the high school graduating class, to 4,388 this past spring, or 16 percent of the high school graduating class. Most important, however, is the fact that students who completed the Regents Recommended Curriculum had an average ACT score of 25 this past spring.

5. What are these scores indicative of? The answer is expected performance in college. Students with scores under 20 have significantly less chance of succeeding in college level work, without additional academic preparation to succeed in such courses. What do I interpret from this information? Kansas students who choose to prepare themselves by taking a rigorous curriculum are well positioned to succeed in their Postsecondary studies, while those who do not choose to prepare themselves, unnecessarily risk being an academic casualty.

IV. College Preparation in the Context of QPA

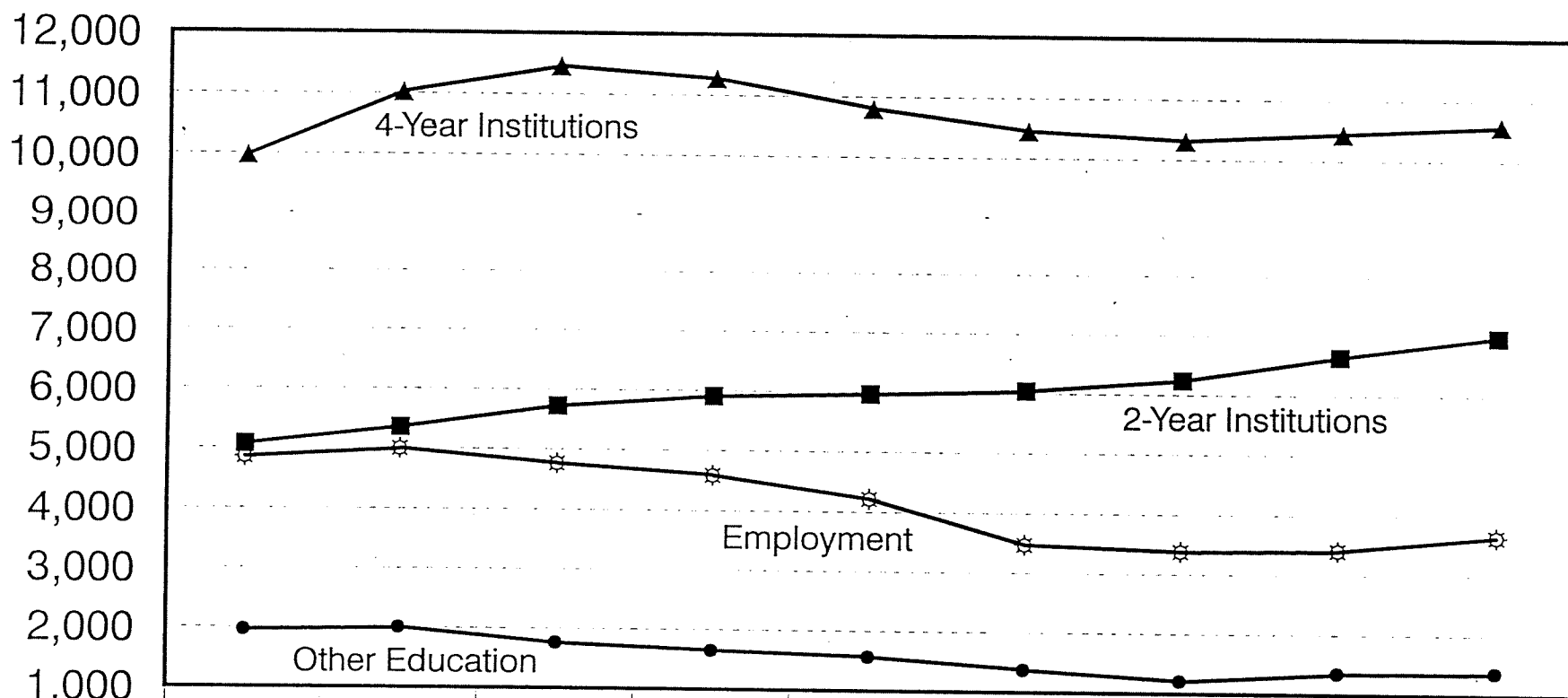
1. QPA is an accreditation process that is based on school and student performance outcomes that are identified, measured and assessed by the State Board of Education and local boards of education. The emphasis on QPA on student performance outcomes suggest a change in the methods by which the educational process of students is assessed; specifically, there is a national movement toward performance standards and away from traditional Carnegie units. The success of QPA in generating education reform in K-12 education in Kansas appears to affect in significant ways the notion of Qualified Admissions and the College Preparatory Curriculum which are based on Carnegie Units. There is also a recognition that QPA provides an opportunity for higher education to help shape K-12 reforms and moved off dead center on the Qualified Admissions initiative.
2. Acknowledging these dynamics, the Board of Regents established a Task Force comprised of sixteen education leaders who represented a wide range of perspectives and constituent groups in the Kansas educational community, including representatives of the State Board of Education, schools boards, and school administrators. The Task Force offered two recommendations that were adopted by the Board of Regents. First a joint statement on college preparation should be articulated in terms of student proficiencies. However, the Task Force did not believe that the abandonment of Carnegie Units was advisable at this time. Student proficiencies should be articulated within each curricular area. Second, faculty-teacher task forces in each area of the preparatory curriculum should be convened to identify the student proficiencies and content knowledge necessary for college preparation.

3. On September 25, 1995 the Chairman of the Board of Regents presented this proposal to the State Board of Education. The State Board endorsed the concept of working with the Board of Regents on this endeavor to include a broader look and performance expectations for all high school graduates. We have had several staff-to-staff follow-up conversations since then and are awaiting a draft process proposal from the State Board of Education.

V. Conclusion

1. We believe the issue is not whether students should be better prepared, the issue is the best way to achieve better preparation.
2. It is clearly a legislative decision about how this important change should come about, whether through Qualified Admissions, QPA Performance Expectations, or some combination of both.
3. Should the legislature choose to improve preparation through the Qualified Admissions process, I would encourage you to consider modification to the bill which would, at least for the short term, not mandate the language requirement in the Qualified Admissions Curriculum for the following reason: The gap between the number of students taking the Regents Curriculum and the number of students taking the ACT College Preparatory Curriculum is so great, that closing that gap in the four-year period provided for in the bill might be too ambitious.
4. Thank you. I would be pleased to respond to questions.

Kansas High School Graduates by Placement Upon Graduation 1986 - 1994



	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
4-Year Inst. ▲	9,970	11,024	11,460	11,273	10,803	10,458	10,314	10,443	10,579
2-Year Inst. ■	5,063	5,349	5,718	5,900	5,958	6,038	6,236	6,644	6,985
Employment ☼	4,852	4,994	4,762	4,584	4,215	3,474	3,379	3,408	3,647
Other Ed. ●	1,959	2,003	1,759	1,650	1,568	1,375	1,207	1,354	1,371

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Attachment 2

Source: Graduation Reports, Kansas State Department of Education
Data reflect intended placement, as reported by Kansas School Districts

Kansas Public High School Graduates by Placement Upon Graduation

1986 - 1994

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Four Year College or University	9,970	11,024	11,460	11,273	10,803	10,458	10,314	10,443	10,579
Two Year College or University	5,063	5,349	5,718	5,900	5,958	6,038	6,236	6,644	6,985
Other Post Secondary	1,959	2,003	1,759	1,650	1,568	1,375	1,207	1,354	1,371
Subtotal - Continued Education	16,992	18,376	18,937	18,823	18,329	17,871	17,757	18,441	18,935
Employment	4,852	4,994	4,762	4,584	4,215	3,474	3,379	3,408	3,647
Military	1,050	1,200	1,127	1,205	1,052	831	845	864	753
Unemployed	804	686	607	425	441	390	367	291	252
Other and Unknown	1,889	1,677	1,603	1,811	1,330	1,848	1,781	1,716	1,732
Total Graduates	25,587	26,933	27,036	26,848	25,367	24,414	24,129	24,720	25,319

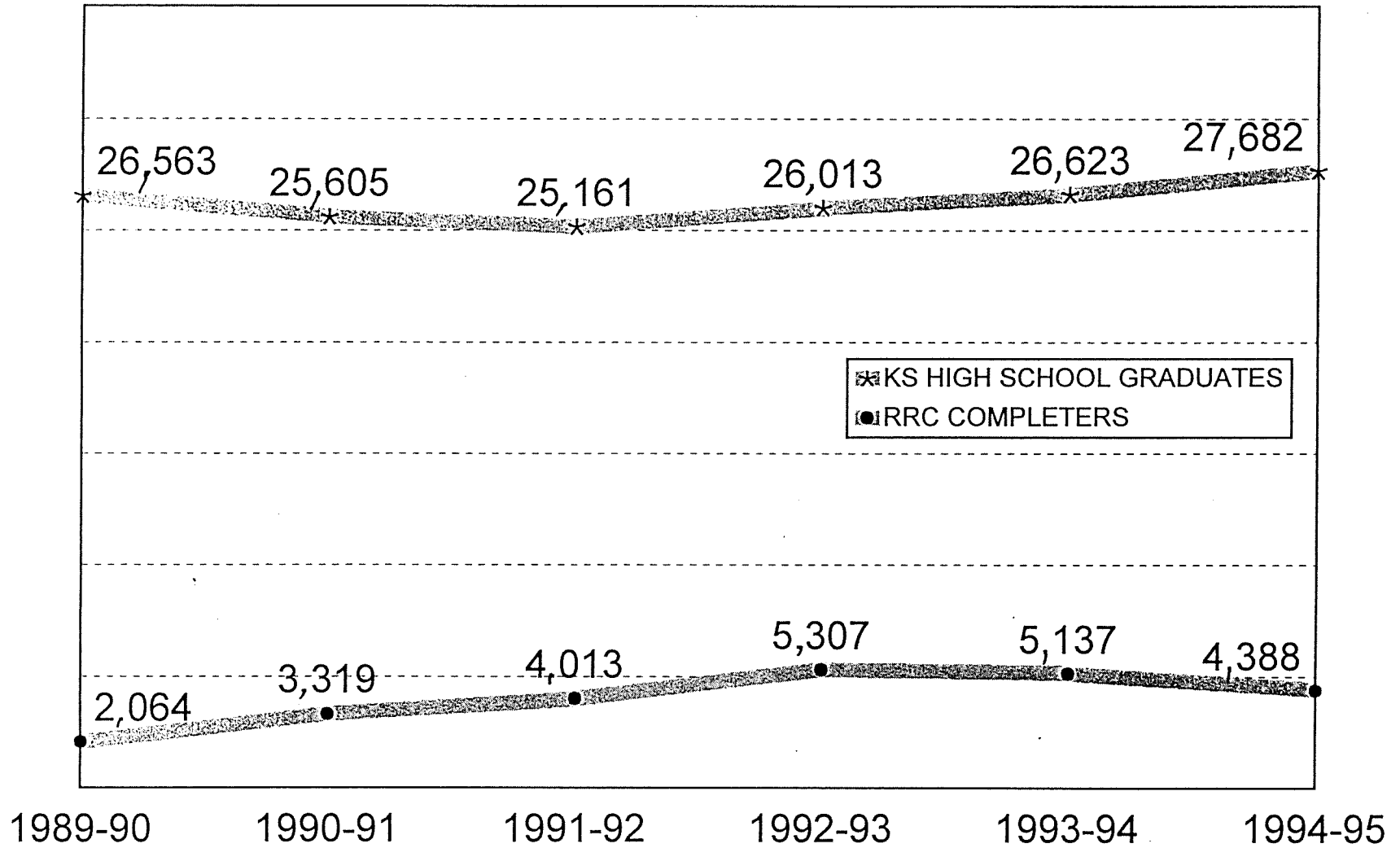
Source: *Graduation Reports, Kansas State Department of Education*
 Data reflect intended placement, as reported by Kansas School Districts

COMPARISON OF ACT RECOMMENDED CURRICULUM AND REGENTS RECOMMENDED HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

February, 1996

	English	Mathematics	Science	Social Science	Foreign Language
National Core (ACT)	4 years	3 years, not less than Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry	3 years	3 years	No
Regents Recommended Curriculum	4 years	3 years, not less than Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry	3 years, not less than Biology, Chemistry, Physics	3 years	2 years

KANSAS REGENTS RECOMMENDED CURRICULUM



2-4

Regents Recommended Curriculum Certificates

Year	Total Number of Kansas High Schools	Number of Schools Participating	%	Number of High School Graduates	Number of Students Awarded Certificates	%
1989-1990	354 Public 20 Private	129	34	26,563	2,064	08
1990-1991	354 Public 21 Private	164	44	25,605	3,319	13
1991-1992	354 Public 21 Private	201	54	25,160	4,013	16
1992-1993	352 Public 21 Private	240	64	26,013	5,307	20
1993-1994	352 Public 21 Private	273	73	26,623	5,173	19
1994-1995	353 Public 22 Private	299	80	27,682 *est	4,388	16

Kansas Board of Regents
 Student Financial Aid
 May 23, 1995
 wp51\charts\rec.2



TOPEKA

HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES*TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE*

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

CHAIRMAN: LEGISLATIVE POST AUDIT COMMITTEE

MEMBER: APPROPRIATIONS

APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEES:

KPRS AND RETIREMENT ISSUES—CHAIRMAN
BUDGET REFORM AND GOVERNMENT IMPACT
STATE HOSPITALS AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT

JAMES E. LOWTHER
REPRESENTATIVE, 60TH DISTRICT
LYON COUNTY
1549 BERKELEY ROAD
EMPORIA, KANSAS 66801
ROOM 183-W
STATE CAPITOL, TOPEKA 66612

Fraud

Open admissions policy hurts quality of Kansas universities

Imagine you were one of the 60 National Merit scholars who graduated from a Kansas high school last year and decided to attend a regents university.

You studied hard in high school. You made excellent grades. You could have gone to almost any college in the country. Yet you wanted to remain in Kansas. And, experience suggests, because you went to college in Kansas you likely will stay in the state after graduation.

You arrive on campus, eager to do well. In your first freshman class, however, you notice one of the more notorious slackers from your high school sitting in the back of the room. This is a guy who goofed off in high school, took easy courses and graduated only because the State Board of Education's high school standards are woefully inadequate.

You have every right to feel cheated. The slacker will take up the professor's time with senseless questions. He will offer little to the class discussion. He will lower the academic prestige of your college because national rating services are appalled that Kansas guarantees a spot in a regents university to anyone with a Kansas high school diploma.

Of course, the slacker thinks he will be a "late bloomer" and thereby justify the taxpayer's indulgence in him. But he's fooling himself. He doesn't have the academic skill to succeed. He flunks his freshman year, a victim of the open-admissions system that fails to ensure that young people are pre-

pared for college-level work.

The House Education Committee holds hearings today and Thursday on a proposal to require high school students to meet minimum academic standards to be admitted to a regents university. Indeed, the requirements are minimal — a 23 score on the American College Test, or a 2.5 grade-point-average in college-prep subjects or a ranking in the top third of your high school graduating class. Meet any one of those requirements and you are in a regents university. Students who don't meet any of those requirements can go to one of the state's outstanding community colleges, which have excellent records in boosting academic performance.

Open admissions perpetuates a fraud on young Kansans. It tells high school students that they don't have to work hard to gain admission to college; thus, many of them squander learning opportunities. It weakens the academic climate of the regents schools, which undermines the attitudes of good students.

The Legislature does young Kansans no favor by offering them a slot at a regents university, but not demanding that they work for the privilege of attending a four-year college.

Open admissions does not serve the interests of young people or the taxpayer. This year, when accountability is the byword of government, it's time that young people earn the right to attend a regents university.

*In case you didn't see this in support of
HB 2668: The need for a change is over-due!
Kids will rise to the challenge.*

Jim Gwathmey
House Education
2/1/96
Attachment 3



KANSAS COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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 SUITE 250
 (913) 296-2451 FAX (913) 296-0622

Dennis K. Shurtz, Chair
 Shurtz Commodity Trading, Inc.
 Agribusiness Owner
 Arkansas City

David L. DePue, Ph.D.
 Executive Director

Cynthia Dowdy
 Vice Chair
 Career Counselor
 Manhattan Technical Center
 Manhattan

TO: The Honorable William Mason, Chairman
 and Members of the House Education Committee

FROM: David L. DePue

Gregg Haas
 Executive Committee Member
 Training Manager
 Martin Tractor Company
 Topeka

SUBJECT: Testimony on HB 2668

Robert Thiry
 Executive Committee Member
 Coordinator, KS Carpentry
 Apprenticeship
 Perry

DATE: February 1, 1996

Thank you for the opportunity to address this issue. I cannot say that it is a pleasure to be here. I prefer speaking for issues rather than in opposition. However, I am speaking for many of your and my constituents. The State Council on Vocational Education serves the U.S. Congress, providing policy advice and oversight on vocational education and training programs in Kansas. Each of our 13 members represents one of the constituent groups served by education and training programs.

Karen Conklin
 Market & Survey Research Analyst
 Johnson Co. Community College
 Overland Park

Judith A Crymble
 School-to-Work Coordinator
 USD 457
 Garden City

Eddie Estes, Ph.D.
 President, Western Kansas
 Manufacturers Association
 Dodge City

COMPLIMENTS TO OUR UNIVERSITIES:

The American University is the envy of the world. I understand that approximately half of the world's PhDs were educated here. Many nations send their young to us for their baccalaureate level education. Our universities do an outstanding job with the top 10%, the gifted and highly motivated student. The large lecture sections, the emphasis on research and publication, and the social atmosphere has minimal impact on this percentage of our students.

Dr. Rosemary Kirby
 President, Wichita Area
 Technical College
 Wichita

Allene Knedlik
 Dean of Academic Affairs
 Coffeyville Community College
 Coffeyville

Janis Lee
 State Senator
 Farmer/Rancher
 Kensington

Carol Nigus
 Director, Brown County Kansas
 Special Education Cooperative
 Hiawatha

COMPLIMENTS TO KANSAS EDUCATORS AND POLICYMAKERS:

Kansas rates significantly better than the national average on essential indicators of educational achievement.

Joe D. Pucci
 Benefit Fund Administration
 PPI - H & W Fund
 Wichita

Gary Withrow
 Human Resource Manager
 Morton Salt
 Hutchinson

	Only a H.S. Degree	Some College	4yrs College	1990 H.S. Dropouts	Average A.C.T.	Minorities Enrolled
Kansas	32.8%	21.9%	14.1%	8.7%	21.2%	10.0%
Nat'l						
Average	30.0%	18.7%	13.1%	11.2%	20.8%	10.8%
						19.0%
						21.3%

Kansas has higher statewide high school graduation requirements (22 units) than most of our neighbors. Kansas has 91% of our college students enrolled at public institutions, the highest percentage of our six neighbors.

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 Attachment 4

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Kansas can boast that state residents made up 78% of all freshmen enrolled in fall 1992 who had graduated from high school in the previous year. However, the national average is 81%. Our six neighbor states average 78%. We could encourage more Kansas residents to attend our tax supported universities. Our numbers look better when community colleges and private universities are added to the picture. Kansas has 87% of freshmen attending college in their home state. This is the highest percentage among our six neighbors (Oklahoma has 87% also).

WHO COULD BE AGAINST HIGHER STANDARDS?

American workers are facing increased pressure for higher technical skills along with improved oral and written communication skills. The Kansas State Board of Education has responded by moving to an outcomes-based accreditation system. Outdated is the century-old system of counting courses and "seat time." New curricula are being implemented to develop higher order skills and contemporary competencies. Examples include applications oriented subjects: applied math, applied communications, and principles of technology. The focus is on analysis and synthesis rather than "recall" and "number manipulation." For example, math emphasis shifts to problem solving, probability theory, logic, statistics, and measurement systems. A shift back to admissions standards based on a curriculum conceived in 1912 would be foolish. This restricts the ability of the State Board of Education and local boards in efforts to meet the needs of the 50% who do not go to the university and the 50% who do attend and do not complete their studies. We are aware that whatever the Board of Regents prescribes for admission, will become the desired high school curriculum. The prescribed liberal arts curriculum does not prepare a young person for a desirable entry level job in today's competitive marketplace, after completing either high school or college. Such short term planning only serves the approximately 50% of the graduates who succeed in a career oriented curriculum and obtain employment in their field of study.

ADMISSIONS STANDARDS HAVE LITTLE EFFECT ON RETENTION:

The 50 states have a wide variety of requirements for university admission. Yet, 50 years of data show that the 50 states have about the same retention rates (about 50%). In fact, Kansas universities do better than the national average (approximately 43% complete a B.S. in six years nationally).

NATIONAL DATA - FOUR YEAR PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES:

- 15% of traditional entry path students complete a baccalaureate in four years.
- 43% (approx) of traditional entry path students completed a BS in six years.
- 42% of **high ability** low social economic status students dropped out before the 3rd semester (18%) dropped during 1st year)
- 20% dropped **after** eight semesters (4 years)
- 90% who received a grant during 1st year were still enrolled 2nd year
- 75% who **did not** receive a grant during the 1st year were still enrolled in the 2nd year

HOW TO IMPROVE RETENTION RATES:

Develop highly restrictive admissions criteria. Private universities and "elitist" or "flagship" state universities boast graduation rates of 55 to 77% over five years. Even high school valedictorians are not assured admission in those institutions. In my experience at four universities, I can report that students drop out primarily because of social, personal, and/or financial problems. These all result in poor academic progress. Approaches to alleviate these problems might include some social restrictions, giving a grant to first year completers who are at risk, and developing learning centers to help with study skills, including: time management, preparing for tests, and career planning. This would be especially helpful as we attempt to serve those with one or more barriers to success. The economically disadvantaged and those with language or cultural challenges.

The challenge of remedial work to meet higher expectations is a national issue. In a Chronicle of Higher Education 1992 report, beginning freshmen were asked if they thought that they will need remedial work. Responding "yes" were 28.7% in mathematics, 12.5% in English, and 11.7% in science. There are no easy answers here. However, the proper question may be 'how do we serve these students,' rather than 'how do we exclude them.' I believe that this is being addressed through K-12 education reform, this includes: field based work in teacher education programs, staff development for educators, periodic assessments and feedback for students, and a focus on planning and career development in the K-12 programs.

DATA SOURCES:

- "America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages", National Center on Education & the Economy, Rochester, NY 1990.
- "Undergraduate Completion and Persistence At Four Year Colleges and Universities", National Institute of Independent Colleges and Universities, Washington, D.C. 1989.
- "Almanac" The Chronicle of Higher Education, Washington D.C., 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995.
- "Minority-Group Enrollment", The Chronicle of Higher Education, Washington, D.C., January 22, 1992.

2/1/96

TESTIMONY on HB 2668

Chairman Mason, Honorable Members of the Education Committee, and guests. My name is Becki Cook. I am a senior at Shawnee Heights High School.

As you consider restricting University admissions, I ask you to consider a formal study that followed up on KU graduates.

In 1955, George Baxter Smith, then Dean of the University, completed a straightforward study of who would be eliminated if a policy of selective admissions were instituted at the University of Kansas. Dean Smith obtained scores on entrance exams for 1,066 of the 1,134 students who graduated from the University in June 1955 and identified those graduates who would not have been admitted if they scored below the 50th percentile, a "cutting score" widely discussed at the time. Two hundred eight students, or roughly one-fifth of the graduating class, would have been eliminated by this criterion. Of these 208 students, 29 were on a dean's scholastic honor roll one semester, while two were for six semesters. A total of 46 were on the honor rolls at least one semester. Perhaps even more striking, Dean Smith discovered that this cutting score would have resulted in a "loss to the state and nation" of "forty teachers, twenty-two engineers, five journalists, seven lawyers, seven doctors, seven pharmacists, and 96 graduates from the college of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the School of Business. Similar results were produced when the study was replicated for 1958 graduates.

Dean Smith concluded that because "a free society's survival depends upon the widest and fullest possible development of all its human resources," a policy of selective admissions was the least desirable response to large enrollments. His study was widely read and no doubt played an important part in maintaining support for the open admissions policy.

House Education
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Attachment 5

Committee members, I have earned a 4.0 GPA over 3 ½ years in a gifted program at my school. Next week I will be honored as National Student of the Year by Campus Life/Youth For Christ USA. I can go to any university in the nation. I personally would not have been affected by these proposed restrictions. However, I have witnessed the students who would be affected. That's why I am here. Almost daily, people in my generation are told that there is little hope for the future. There are fewer openings for good jobs. We are told that even a college degree may only result in a menial job. There is despair among many in my generation. Many see no reason to strive for better grades when there appears to be little career advantage.

I have been fortunate to learn of the value of education from the example of people very close to me. Many in my generation do not have these examples. They have not learned of the advantage that we have as a result of obtaining knowledge and skill. Many think that success is a result of natural born talent. You and I know that success comes from hard work. My good grades are not the result of good genes, but of consistent hard work. This does not come easy for any of us.

The restrictions on university admissions could set a mental roadblock in the minds of some students. They could use this for an excuse for not striving. Instead, we should be showing them the importance of thinking and that knowledge is not just for a select group which does not include them. The high school years are a time of confusion for most. Priorities are in constant change. Most adults that I have asked about this have admitted that their priorities were not set until after high school, and for some after college. The teens who have not learned the value of priorities in life need more opportunities offered to them, not less. I feel that this bill takes away opportunity for some.

Thank you for allowing me to speak. I would attempt to answer any questions that you might have.



TO: House Committee on Education
FROM: Mark Tallman, Director of Governmental Relations
DATE: February 1, 1996

RE: Testimony on H.B. 2668

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear today as opponents of H.B. 2668, which would end the state policy of open admission to our public universities.

This issue is always certain to generate great controversy and public attention, and I have been contacted by a number of media representatives in the past few days. The general attitude of the reporters and editors I have talked to is one of mild surprise that anyone is actually defending open admissions, and some relief to have found the required "balance" in a news story about this issue. After all, few would argue with the goals expressed by the supporters of this legislation: better preparation for college by Kansas students, more student success once they reach college, less money spent on remediation and dropouts, and a better prepared workforce and citizenry. Qualified admissions seems like a logical way to achieve that result; after all, hasn't every other state in the Union turned to some form of qualified admissions?

But I believe that for our member school boards, a majority of whom have continued to keep support for open admissions in our policy positions, such a significant change in public policy should not be made without real evidence that it will have the intended results. To our members, no such evidence has been produced, at least not up to this point in time. This is curious precisely because qualified admissions is not an untried theory. We have the examples of 49 other states to examine. Several members of the committee yesterday asked the same question we would: what has been the experience of those other states we are so often compared to?

Public policy analysis requires that the impact of a policy be measurable. The proposition is that admissions standards will make a significant difference in student performance at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. If Kansas is the only state without university admissions standards that exit a high school diploma, then the performance of Kansas students should be significantly different from other states. If higher standards result in better performance and Kansas has the lowest standards in the nation, then we should be at or at least near the bottom in student performance. But we know that Kansas ranks above the nation average in high school completion, in performance on college admissions tests, and on the level of postsecondary education attained. Clearly, there are many among the other 49 states who have not achieved the goals that qualified admissions is expected to bring.

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It might be argued that other factors account for our strong showing as a state, and suggested that qualified admissions would help us do even better. But we know that a number of other states have increased admissions standards over the past 10-15 years, while Kansas has not. If qualified admissions has the intended results, student performance in other states should have improved relative to Kansas student performance. No such change has been presented.

In fact, many proponents of qualified admissions say they are alarmed because American students seem to be learning less than students in other nations; that employers are less satisfied with recent graduates; and that test scores are down. But all of these negative indicators reflect national trends, which seem to be occurring when most of the country (49 other states) has been either raising admission standards or maintaining higher standards than Kansas requires. In other words, if qualified admissions is so good for the rest of America, why do its supporters believe that American education is in so much trouble?

In fact, KASB believes that U.S. student performance nationally is not nearly as bad as some portray it to be, and has, in fact, been increasing in recent years. Test scores are actually up; more students are taking higher level courses in high school. Perhaps the national move to higher standards has had something to do with this. But Kansas student performance is also improving on many of these same measurements without qualified admissions! Our association has seen no evidence that Kansas state universities have a higher attrition rate than other state schools; that Kansas spends more on remediation than other states; that more students complete college in other states. (At the time this testimony was written, no information had been presented on how many students would even be excluded under the new policy. If 10% of each university's freshman class can be admitted as exceptions, how much money will be saved on remediation. Do the number of students taking remedial courses exceed 10%? Do the number of academic drop-outs exceed 10%?)

Our association believes that Kansas has long been a national leader in education at all levels. Maybe that has occurred in spite of open admissions. But we believe that at least as strong a case can be made that it is because of open admissions. We have valued higher education enough to make it widely accessible. There is a price to be paid for that accessibility. But there is also a benefit. We have a better educated and more productive people as a result. Until a stronger case is made that open admissions really will make a difference in helping students succeed, we do not believe Kansas should risk losing the students who are currently succeeding despite the odds.

Thank you for your consideration.



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Testimony presented before the House Committee on Education
by Gerald W. Henderson, Executive Director
United School Administrators of Kansas

Mister Chairman and Members of the Committee:

United School Administrators of Kansas is in opposition to any change in policy which would serve to remove the existing open access to regent universities for any graduate of an accredited Kansas high school. We are especially opposed to changes in the law which impose admissions criteria based on antiquated in-put systems. K-12 education is at this moment engaged in the most significant reform effort in the history of the profession. At the heart of this reform is the notion that schools are being judged solely on demonstrated improvements in student performance. The question is no longer, "What did you take?", but "What do you know?" or "What can you do?" The education community, and this includes other than professional educators, has struggled mightily for the past eight or nine years to reach agreements on what all Kansas students should know and be able to do when they complete K-12 programs. We have likewise struggled with the whole concept of how we as a total community know when students have demonstrated whatever it is we agreed upon they should know and be able to do. In a word, **ASSESSMENT**.

For the past year we have been encouraged by the efforts of the Board of Regents and the State Board of Education to begin a dialog to tie the reforms begun in K-12 education with the needs of the Universities to enroll students who are better prepared. I hope that the legislature will encourage the continuation of that dialog, and that at some point Kansas will

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both graduate students from high school and admit students to higher education based on demonstrated proficiencies. As with other reforms, the identification and assessment of those proficiencies will be difficult and time consuming.

Finally just a few words on the arguments often presented in support of abandoning open admissions. The first argument is that Kansas spends too much money on remedial classes. Our advice is, stop it. Don't offer remediation, at least not at public expense. If students can not handle regular freshman English classes for example, provide remediation, but at the individual student's expense. Secondly, we reject out of hand the arguments that we ought to scrap our open admissions policy simply because Kansas is the only state which still has one. You have heard testimony here today that university systems with strict admissions criteria have little better retention rates than does Kansas. Only those universities which admit only the top one or two percent of high school graduates can boast of retention rates much over 75 percent.

Much of our problem as a state and as a nation lies in the attitude we have about post-secondary education provided at other than colleges or universities. Too many students, even those who would meet all the options contained in this bill, are going to college. All the data indicates that our economy needs more technically trained rather than university educated citizens. It is our belief that the dialog between the two boards will over time address this issue. We would ask the committee to encourage the continuation of this dialog and to reject the provisions of **HB 2668**.

To: Kansas House of Representatives
Education Committee

Subject: House Bill No. 2668

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you concerning House Bill No. 2668 on behalf of the Kansas Agriculture Education Teachers. We are opposed to this bill in its present form and ask you not to pass it out of committee.

We feel that every student has the right to determine their own career and education goals with the assistance of their parents, teachers, counselors, and their own aspirations. We do not feel that standards should be set in law that are unrealistically high or ridged or that curriculum should be recommended that does not meet the career needs of most students and indeed may be obsolete by the time the bill comes into effect.

If a bill regulating admissions is to be forwarded, we recommend the following changes.

That the score on the ACT be set at about the 50 percentile level of the population who take the test. Not all high school seniors take the ACT, so already many have eliminated themselves by choice. Also many who are very good students do poorly on tests. There are also social/economical reasons why some may score lower than others on standardized tests.

We feel that applicants should rank in the top 40 to 50 percentile of their high school class. This would be comparable to the 2.0 or better on a 4.0 scale. This would better meet the needs of students who do poorly on standardized tests or chose not to take the test, for whatever the reason.

We feel that the regents prescribed precollege curriculum should be dropped completely. The State Board of Education sets the standards for high school accreditation and for graduation which should be the guide for admissions. Prescribed curriculums are usually obsolete or do not permit the student to pursue their own career goals.

The universal language of business is English. The predominate language on the internet is English. Most under graduate degrees at the regents institutions do not require any foreign language. This is one example of the precollege curriculum restricting students unnecessarily and reduces the opportunity for other subject matter areas in the high school to meet the needs of these students.

Most elementary schools have a computer center and many have computers in each classroom. By the time students enter high school they have the basic understanding of computer operations and applications. Certainly not all who will attend college need to be computer programmers.

The American college testing program (ACT) evaluates students in English, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, and also evaluates reading comprehension. The ACT score should be an indication whether a curriculum is meeting the needs of students without legislating a curriculum. Everyone wants the best for our children. The problem is that when a curriculum is listed as RECOMMENDED for college, most interpret that as REQUIRED for college and do not consider what the students goals, abilities, and aspirations may be.

For these reasons we feel that House Bill No. 2668 should not be passed in its present form. If it is to be considered, we feel it should be changed in the favor of the student.

Thank you

Stanley Larson
Kansas Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association

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