

MINUTES OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL FINANCE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kathe Decker at 9:00 A.M. on January 26, 2006 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Kathie Sparks, Kansas Legislative Research
Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes Office
Art Griggs, Revisor of Statutes Office
Ann Deitcher, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Mark desetti, KNEA
Mike Womochil, Abilene High School
Kevin Bailey, Mill Creek Center
Robert Edelston, Manhattan Area Technical College
Debora Mock, KACTE
Tad Hernandez, Holton High School
Terry Holdren, Kansas Farm Bureau

Kathie Sparks gave an overview of the Post Audit Report regarding vocational education. She explained that under the school finance formula, vocational education is calculated as follows:

The number of contact hours in approved class/ by 6 hours (1 school day) times .5 equals the weighting.

The number of contact hours in approved class/ by 6 hours (1 school day) times .323 equals weighting.

“This calculation of .323 was achieved by taking a sample of 21 school districts that account for 32% of vocational education students and 28% of reported vocational education expenditures for 2004-05. They adjusted the direct costs reported by the 21 school districts by adding capital outlay and bond expenditures attributable to vocational education; adding salary and benefits based on time spent on vocation education; added additional direct expenditures districts had not reported in their vocational education funds for equipment, supplies, maintenance, transportation and repairs; removed allocated overhead expenses that were not incurred exclusively for vocational education programs; removed expenditures not related to an approved vocational education and added other minor adjustments for a total direct expenditure for vocational education.

This information was then allocated by students and ranked highest per pupil expenditure to lowest with the median be determined to be \$5,169 per pupil. From the \$5,169 the auditors deducted the cost of regular instruction per FTE (\$3,637) and federal funding for vocational education per FTE (\$352) which left \$1,375. The \$1,375 was deducted from the current vocational education amount of \$2,129 for a difference of \$754 or a decrease in the weighting of .177.”

Mark Desetti offered the thoughts of the KNEA in regard to the vocational education weighting issues raised in the LPA cost study. (Attachment 1).

Testimony was given by Michael Womochil. (Attachment 2).

Kevin Bailey appeared in support of vocational education. (Attachment 3).

Appearing in support of continued funding for vocational education was Robert Edelston. (Attachment 4).

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE Select Committee on School Finance at 9:00 A.M. on January 26, 2006 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

Debora Mock spoke as a proponent of vocational education. (Attachment 5).

Tad Hernandez offered testimony in favor of vocational education. (Attachment 6).

Terry Holdren appeared in support of vocational education. (Attachment 7).

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 31, 2006.



**Mark Desetti, Testimony
House Select Committee
School Finance
January 26, 2006**

Vocational Weighting

Madame Chair, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to share our thoughts on **vocational education weighting** issues raised in the LPA cost study.

This is the second study that recommends an alteration in the vocational weighting portion of the school finance formula. We believe that the Post Audit Division examined vocational weighting thoroughly. Their conclusions are based on mathematics – a logical approach. Unfortunately we don't believe that a purely mathematical application is appropriate in the case of vocational weighting and that further discussion is warranted.

In examining figure 1.4-7 on page 62 of the report, we noticed some wide variations in expenditures by districts within the categories analyzed. For example, capital outlay or bond expenditure per FTE student range from \$0 to \$1753; the number of teachers per FTE student ranged from 0.9 to 2.0; supplies range from \$3 per FTE student to \$680.

What needs to be examined is why there would be such wide variations. I imagine that the answer lies within the broad array of programs that fall into the vocational education umbrella. I would like to know what the difference is in pupil teacher ratio between an auto body program and a foods program. I would like to know the difference in supply costs between foods and business. What is the impact of facilities costs on growing school districts with student populations and communities that demand vocational programs and those of school districts with stable populations.

It is certainly conceivable that a weighting of .5 may generate more than enough funding for one program and that a .323 weighting will not generate enough funding for another program. This is an area where a one size fits all approach might create winners and losers. And what category you fall in is determined by issues outside of the district's control – what kinds of programs fit the community and how rapid growth is in that community. A demand for culinary arts might exist in a metropolitan area, animal and grain sciences in a rural area, and engine mechanics in another area.

We would urge this committee to examine why cost variations are so broad within vocational programs. Until you know that, applying a median to the establishment of a weighting might not be the best approach.

Thank you for your time; I would be happy to answer any questions.

Select Comm. on School Finance
Date 1-26-06
Attachment # 1

A TESTIMONY TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL FINANCE

26 January 25, 2006

Good morning Madam Chair and to all the members of this committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on this extremely important subject.

My name is Kevin Bailey. I was born and raised in Kansas City Kansas. I have been married for 23 years and I have five children.

I served my county honorably for the duration of seven years in the United States Marine Corps.

My opportunity as an automotive technology instructor began in 1999. I have taught for the Olathe Kansas school district for six and one half years at Millcreek Center.

I would like to report that great things are transpiring there in Olathe. Our Automotive Technology Program is bustling with activity. Our two year, three teacher program is stretching the intended limitations of the facility. Business is brisk!

We are a nationally certified program (National Automotive Technician Education foundation NATEF). The number of requests for enrollment always exceeds our ability to serve. The community respects and supports us.

The reason for my appearance, is my staunch belief in, and support of, Career and Technical education

The subject of funding or the lack of funding is getting wearisome! I don't understand why legislative bodies have a difficult time acknowledging the massive importance of Career and Technical Education.

Not all students are benefiting from the traditional academic structures.

Career and Technical Education is exposing the reasons why our students must study math, read with comprehension, and work in harmony with their peers. That is called applied academics and life skills.

Most of the youth of today, have very little exposure to the rural, rugged, and the disciplined life style of yesterday. Gone are the days when children sit on the

Select Comm. on School Finance

Date 1-26-06

Attachment # 3-1

back porch after dinner with grand pa to whittle on a stick and talk about the days of old. Our students lack mechanical experience or the patience to do anything that takes time, let alone figure things out.

Vocational education, in many cases, is that parent that some child longed to have. The experience meets the needs of the student. It gives them a sense of belonging, affiliation, purpose, and pride. Core class performance will often rise with the heightened motivation and desire associated with CTE.

Vocational education helps prepare students for the world of work by teaching and practicing employability, problem solving, and abstract thinking skills.

The complexity of our automobiles demand that the youth of today start now for the jobs of tomorrow.

The bright future of our country relies on a steadfast commitment to vocational education. How could anyone consider the reduction of funds for something so critical and beneficial as Career and Technical Education?

Thank you,

I will stand for questions if needed.



January 26, 2006

Honorable Members:

Thank you for taking time to listen to our request. We understand that the limitation of funding all of the many Kansas initiatives is an ominous task and respect you for taking on this duty. What I hope to do today is present facts related to the funding of technical education that involve our high school students to provide you with data by which to weigh your decisions.

We have asked to speak with you today on behalf of the Kansas Association of Technical Schools and Colleges and in this capacity we represent all technical education institutions in Kansas. We urge you to keep in place the .5-weighted funding formula whose elimination would seriously affect the technical schools and colleges' ability to provide quality technical training in the state. As you are most likely aware, those high school students who attend technical training at our institutions are funded through the USDs at a 1.5 basis where .5 of those funds support our institutions to provide this expensive and yet critical training.

For several of the KATSC member institutions, the number of high school students receiving postsecondary technical training is a significant portion of the student population. At Kaw Area Technical School in Topeka this represent \$1,600,000 or 40% of their budget. Without weighted funding school districts would not send these students because they simply could not afford to pay for their tuition. Additionally, the higher education postsecondary funding does not cover the cost of secondary students.

Over the last ten years, technical education has been funded the least of any postsecondary higher education sector. The elimination of .5 weighted funding will only make this already serious situation worse. Technical institutions do not have the luxury of offsetting the low enrollment ratio and high cost of our programs with high enrollment, low-cost programs. We cannot generate revenue by packing lecture halls with students to subsidize high cost programs. All of our programs require a low student-to-teacher ratio because of the technical, hands-on nature of the curriculum.

It used to be called "Voc - Ed". It was where we dumped the losers. Truth is, a four - year degree isn't for everyone, nor should it be. But there's still a perception that Career and Technical Education, (CTE) is for entry-level, dead-end jobs. That's just wrong: Engineering technology, business, and health care are consistently at the top of the list of associate's degrees earned by CTE students. And the money's good. A few years back, a worker with a bachelor's degree earned a median salary of \$686 per week, while the average worker with an associate's degree made \$639, only a \$50 difference.¹

¹ Jacob Young, *Reader's Digest*, January 2005, Make Something Happen, p. 89

Select Comm. on School Finance
Date 1-26-06
Attachment # 7-1

In conclusion, let me leave you with this thought. According to statistics from the Kansas Department of Commerce, over 80 percent of the jobs in Kansas require more than a high school diploma and yet less than a four-year degree. If secondary students do not receive exposure to technical training in high school many will not choose technical training for their careers. What will we do when over 40 percent of employees, that represent the baby boomers, retire in the next decade and a half? Where will the next generation of workers come from?

Sincerely,



Robert J. Edleston, Ed.D
Secretary, KATSC



Technical Education Doesn't Cost...It Pays.

Challenge	Solution	Result
80% of jobs in Kansas today require some training beyond high school, but only 20% require a 4-year degree.	Kansas' technical colleges offer certificate and degree programs that let students complete specialized training in six months to two years.	In 2003 Kansas produced 7,292 graduates with two-year degrees. This represents an estimated \$236 million in annual payroll revenue, contributing approximately \$27.8 million in sales and state income taxes.
860 prospective students are on waiting lists to get into Kansas' technical colleges.	Fund Kansas' technical colleges to eliminate the waiting lists, create more opportunity, attract new investments, and improve quality of life.	The elimination of waiting lists would produce over 800 workers earning an estimated \$25 million in payroll and \$2.9 million in sales and state income taxes.
Keeping 4-year college graduates in Kansas is difficult due to the ratio of available jobs to number of graduates.	More than 90% of technical college graduates stay within Kansas' borders to live and work.	Kansas realizes a significant return on investment with technical college graduates.
Reduce the need for government subsidized support for families.	The average wage for technical college graduates is \$15.60 an hour or \$32,442 annually.	Technical college graduates are able to earn sustainable incomes quicker and have smaller student loans to pay off creating more bang for the buck.
Four-year college graduates who decide to stay in Kansas often settle for careers where they are overqualified due to a lack of jobs at the four-year level.	Over 90% of technical college graduates secure employment within their fields of study immediately upon graduation.	In 2004 Kansas graduated almost 12,000 bachelor-level students with only 7,276 available jobs requiring a bachelor's or higher. This left 29,102 jobs empty to be filled by 7,000 two-year graduates.



Chairperson and Honorable Representatives:

Thank you for inviting me to testify today on these important issues. I am Debora Mock, and I serve as the current President of the Kansas Association for Career and Technical Education. K-ACTE represents approximately 2000 professionals in career, technical and vocational education. Our members are the educators who are working in schools across Kansas every day to prepare America's work force. I am also a Family and Consumer Sciences instructor and FCCLA advisor at Abilene High School, Abilene, KS.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Members for your longstanding recognition of Vocational Education. We appreciate your enduring support.

As you know, Vocational Programs prepare students for the future by building skills for careers of today and tomorrow – it is essential to strengthening the workforce. Career, technical and vocational education provides effective and proven links to vocational skills and academic opportunities as well as improve employment outcomes.

I am a proud product of the vocational education system. I gained the needed skills and the courage to try from my vocational classes. The students are the reason we are here. Being part of their lives and helping them develop into contributing members of our society is what we are about. I get the opportunity to see students with scared "deer in the headlights" looks turn into pride beaming from ear to ear at CTE contests. I have seen students that did not know the difference between a screwdriver and a nail gun, drive their first nail into the Building Trade house and then be there when the house is sold. Students are preparing professional looking web pages within the Business classes. Vocational Teacher Do Make the Difference!

What is at stake? A cut of any part of the Vocational Weighing would force already cash-strapped schools, training programs and community colleges to reduce or eliminate programs that are working. This cut would mean hard choices for administrators and teachers, program lost, and educational opportunities diminished or denied for students in Kansas. Within my school district this year, vocational classes are overcrowded, five vocational classes could not be offered, and budgets are too tight to purchases need equipment. Equipment that is purchased has been done so with other funds. With a decrease in state vocational funding, the problems will only get worse.

Next time you go out to eat, think about the person preparing your food. Do they know about the danger zone, washing hands, and preparation skills? They would if they were certified in serve-safe through the occupational Family and Consumer Sciences classes.

1200 S.W. 10th Avenue Topeka, Kansas 66604 (785) 233-2690 Fax: (785) 234-2433
Visit us online at www.k-acte.org

Select Comm. on School Finance
Date 1-26-06
Attachment # 5-1

Comments from K-ACTE Members:

“We have received cuts in our budget the last 4 years. Our school has not purchased any capital outlay items due to funding shortfalls. If the .35 would pass it would only make things worse! *Rick Tremain -Greenbush*

“I would like to encourage the need for increased vocational funding. The price of any tool or supply always goes up. With the technical jobs on the rise, (in some places over 50%, Bureau of Labor 2004) we need to follow with the technical education.” **Alan Berndt Clay Center Community High School, Clay Center**

“The additional funding helps to insure that our programs get the required and needed items to be CAREER and TEN oriented. Without the additional funding, we would not have what we need to be competitive in the workplace.” *Stella Tharp, Ottawa High School*

“Funding for career/technical programs, especially those that require continuous upgrades in equipment to keep up with the industries are seriously under funded from the state and federal levels. Considering the need for technical skills in the workplace, especially in the allied health fields, and the demand from our public and the state to maintain quality and expand access, this is an acute challenge. In order to keep tuition at a competitive level, our community college has to depend on general education courses to keep the tech programs open and viable. Additionally, fewer grant programs are available and for those that are, there are many more applicants due to rising costs, recession of state and local funds, and demands to keep tuition competitive. Salary demands for qualified instructions in critical areas is also a drain on operational funds. Our college is located in one of the poorest areas of Kansas; it is very rural and has a high percentage of low-income families. Over 60% of entering students require developmental education. We also have a high percentage of first generation students. Many of these students enter Career/technical programs in order to get jobs, and perhaps later go on for a 4 year degree.” *E. Jean Rodgers, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Labette Community College, Parsons, KS*

“Based on the current .5 funding, we estimate to receive 295,436.00 next year. If the funding goes to .35, we will lose approx. 100,000.00 -- Computer-based programs and other programs that can allow 25 students per class are of course more economical to operate than T&I programs like welding, Machine Tech, Auto Tech and to some extent Building Trades. Due to intense curriculum, number of machines and safety issues, teacher to student ratio has to be lower. The nature of these programs, the Technology and machinery required makes for programs that are costly to operate. We provide workforce development -- lowering the weighted funding will cause us to provide mediocre programs, maybe even elimination of some. For sure, we won't be able to address the needs of students in terms of providing NEW programs. We don't want to be relegated to the old Industrial Arts days. These programs keep students in school -- they provide viable options for students after high school. We MUST not reduce the weighted funding.” **Joanella Lucas, Newton KS**

“As a vocational instructor, I would not receive the technical in-services and teacher development without vocational funding nor would I receive funding for technical instructional equipment. Basically, without vocational funding, I believe my school would reduce vocational offerings.” *Joe Curran USD 286, Sedan, KS*

“Once again, this is a ridiculous idea to reduce .5 funding. Every year the cost of supplies goes up between 4-6% while our vocational budgets do not go up. This year alone, the shielding gases that we purchase from Airgas went up between 6-14% depending on the type of gas. Delivery charges because of fuel surcharges went up an additional \$400.00-\$600.00 more than last year. This is just a delivery charge we get no product for this! The cost of welding rod has gone up. Metal costs have at least doubled in the last 2 years. Electricity and heating costs for our shop has increased tremendously. Budgets are the only thing that does not go up! If the legislature is intent on putting vocational, skill, or career training out of business in this state, cutting money to these programs will do it quickly. We should be getting a drastic increase not a decrease!”
Mike McConnell, Welding, Newton High School Welding

1. “The Hutchinson Vocational Technical Center, which is on the Hutchinson High School campus has 12 vocational funded programs that consist of 80 funded courses. Hutchinson High School is serving 1,460 students this year and approximately 1,400 of those students will take a vocationally funded course. The Hutchinson Vocational Technical Center also serves eight other districts, including two parochial schools.
2. Three of the programs are 3rd party certified, several of the courses address “core-knowledge” academic requirements and count for communication and science credit, while several of the programs also offer national certification.
3. Obviously, vocational programs get and attract a high percentage of “at-risk” students, but also have a large percentage of higher academically-achieving students. In light of this, vocational students, in comparison to the general school population have a slightly higher graduation rate, slightly higher overall GPA and almost the same percentage of students in higher education.
4. In relation to “Technology” education, at least in District 308, the vocational programs carry the banner for technology training. I.e., we are the heartbeat of the technology training in our district. Except for the CAI (computer assisted instruction) lab, Hutchinson High School does not “own” or is responsible for a computer lab of its own.
5. It is interesting in lieu of the rumors about reducing .5 to .32, that numerous vocational departments are just like Hutchinson’s; they are the technology training centers for the district, yet they might be expected to integrate technology, purchase more technology and train more students in technology...all on less appropriated dollars.
6. As far as workforce development and career training goes...or should I say the push to provide students with more/better career counseling, pathways, etc., vocational programs, with their advisory board requirements, leadership development initiatives

(VS0s), cooperative (OJT & Internship programs) education initiatives are second to none within the typical secondary environment. **Kent Blessing, Hutchinson, KS**

The reduced vocational funding is not good news, however the impact of losing that funding in smaller schools is nowhere as damaging as losing the low-student enrollment weighting. At Rawlins County High School, the voc funds will cost us about \$10,000. The loss of the low-enrollment weighting will cost us about \$450,000.00!!! I do feel the legislature should fully fund all required areas, including technical education. As a long time ag teacher, I have always backed the vocational funding issue. However, when most schools stick that money into the general fund or simply replaced general fund money with vocational funds, it will be hard to justify maintaining the present level of funding.

Kurt Dillon, USD 105

1. Career and Technical Education has had accountability measures in place to justify funding for many years. AYP, state assessments, and outcomes based education are all recent measures compared to CTE accountability. The statewide difference is that in our collective CTE programs, we continue to show growth and to reach our established benchmarks.
2. VE-2 funds are used in a variety of ways across the state. However, all programs would suffer without the additional resources for equipment, staffing and staff development.
3. Career and Technical Education has had accountability measures in place to justify funding for many years. AYP, state assessments, and outcomes based education are all recent measures compared to CTE accountability. The statewide difference is that in our collective CTE programs, we continue to show growth and to reach our established benchmarks.
4. VE-2 funds are used in a variety of ways across the state. However, all programs would suffer without the additional resources for equipment, staffing and staff development.
5. Ultimately, reduced funding will punish students in CTE programs. This should be reason enough. **Mike Gross, Junction City**

If the funding would drop for our school, a 2A school, my department would decline in quality and therefore, quantity of students. Funding helps drive the enrollment and upkeep of our facilities, as well as giving "clout" to our programs. As money is already extremely tight, this would be a detriment to our students and school. **Jenny Niblock, FACS Teacher and FCCLA Adviser, Stockton High School**

Select Committee on School Finance

Written Testimony Tad Hernandez
Holton High School
Business/Computer Education Instructor
www.holton.k12.ks.us/staff/thernandez

Chairperson Decker and honorable representatives, on behalf of the Kansas Business Education Association and Holton High School Business Department, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of Career, Technical and vocational Education.. I wish to express concerns over possible reductions suggested in “.5 Vocational Weighting” in the Legislative Post Audit Study on Education. For the following reasons, I am concerned with the potential negative impact the findings of this study would have on Career, Technical, and Vocational Education (CTVE) in the state of Kansas.

Impact on the Kansas economy

The purpose of these programs is to provide training, skills, and knowledge to prepare students to enter the workforce. Plain and simple, the elimination or reduction of vocational weighting contradicts one of the legislature’s major goals “to help grow and enhance the Kansas economy”. For any economic growth to occur in the state, we need a skilled and trained workforce as the foundation. High School CTVE programs, like the one I teach at Holton High School play a vital role in the skill development of the students that will become the contributing members of the Kansas economy.

What does CTVE funding mean to business and other programs

Holton High School has been able to maintain a high quality program through out the state of Kansas due to the funding that has been received through the CTVE programs. If this funding is cut, it will be hard to stay on top and to provide students with the most up to date experiences possible. These opportunities would not be afforded to the students, if we did not receive this funding. Not only do students receive a vocational trade education,, but they begin to make the connection of all classes, and the walls are torn down. They may not do well in a math or reading class, but the connection can and will be made in most CTVE programs. Thus helping to improve reading and math assessment scores. In my opinion schools without strong CTVE programs are missing an essential element to improving performance on these tests.

Seaman High School:

“In the past two years, we have been able to offer Desktop Publishing, Webpage Design, Visual Basic Programming, and C++ Programming because of the additions of the new software and equipment provided by the vocational funds we receive

Wamego High School:

“When we did our funding report last September, I had never noticed how many of our students are enrolled in tech ed programs. At Wamego High School, we have 81% of our students enrolled in at least one vocational funded course. Many are enrolled in more than one.”

“vocational funding also impacts our graphic arts, desktop publishing programs for journalism, yearbook and broadcasting. Our FACS department has an awesome Culinary Arts program that sent students to national competition in it’s first year. Don’t forget the work that our vocational organizations FFA, FBLA, TSA, and FCCLA do in our schools and communities. Student leadership is a valuable part of the vocational experience”

Select Comm. on School Finance

Date 1-26-06

Attachment # 6-1

These are a few small examples of how much of an impact CTVE programs are making across the state.

Challenge of Maintaining Standards and Up-to-date Technology in CTVE programs

To receive funding in the current school finance formula, all programs must go through a rigorous approval process. CTVE programs must not only meet the standards for their various career areas, but also must have local advisory committees in place and meeting regularly. These advisory committees keep the CTVE programs connected to the local community and local as well as state industry. In addition, these committees make recommendations on curriculum decisions and equipment needed to keep the programs up to date and meeting the needs of today's students. These local committees hold the programs to a high standard which in turn is best for the young men and women enrolled in these CTVE programs.

If there is no separate funding available for vocational education, then school districts have NO INCENTIVE to maintain the established standards. If local schools do not address these standards, then the students enrolled in these programs are done a disservice and may lack the skill development and preparation inherent in these programs. For students to be successful in this "digital economy" schools must step up to the challenge and prepare these students for the every changing digital economy.

Career Focus at the Secondary Level

A fundamental component of CTVE programs is some form of job/career experience. For example, in my business education program, students run their own business through the In House Training program, that is similar to OJT, but ran in the school. The students are expected to meet with clients to develop websites, videos, posters, programs, flyers, and more. Students are expected to maintain a time sheet that shows the hours they have worked on each project. This is where a very powerful and real connection to the career is made. Students apply what they learn in all their previous classroom experiences and also gain practical hands on experience.

Also, it should be noted that these programs serve all students within the schools. In the area of career and vocational education, we serve all students and recognize our responsibility to integrate academics of all curricular areas, which will in turn provide the connection from an education to an eventual career.

You don't need to take my word for this, if you truly want to see the impact that these programs are having, let me put you in touch with some former students who can really speak of the value of these programs.

In Summary:

The result of implementing the cuts in funding suggested by the Legislative Post Audit Study will have drastic impact on the quality of education of all students in the state of Kansas. On behalf of the Kansas Business Education Association we recommend that no decrease in funding occur in CTVE programs across the state. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee.

Respectfully Submitted,



Tad A. Hernandez-
Kansas Business Education Association President
2003 Apple Distinguished Educator
Holton High School Business Teacher

PUBLIC POLICY STATEMENT

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL FINANCE

Re: Vocational Education Funding.

January 26, 2006
Topeka, Kansas

Testimony provided by:
Terry D. Holdren
Local Policy Director—KFB Governmental Relations

Chairperson Decker, and members of the House Select Committee on School Finance, thank you for the opportunity to appear today. I am Terry Holdren and I serve as the Local Policy Director—Governmental Relations for Kansas Farm Bureau. As you know, KFB is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 40,000 farm and ranch families across the state through our 105 county Farm Bureau Associations.

Our members have long supported a quality, and adequately funded system of education in Kansas. We have encouraged the development of agricultural education components and have assisted school districts across the state in implementing these programs in the classroom. And, our members, like all other Kansas residents, have financially supported our elementary and secondary schools through a mix of income, sales, and property taxes, with the hope that the future of Kansas will continue to shine brightly.

As you might expect, the recent study by the Division of Post Audit has left us with no small amount of concern. As it relates to the issue of funding for vocational education,

Select Comm. on School Finance
Date 1-26-06
Attachment # 7-1

our member adopted policy supports continuation of current funding levels. These dollars prepare youth for careers in agriculture and agri-business, as well as the many other technical fields that are developing and need qualified workers.

Kansas is becoming well positioned to attract business and industry. Our ability to offer a qualified work force is one of several factors that will attract new business to our state, especially to rural areas, where the need for revitalization is great. Our current vocational education programs can provide these workers and create opportunities for partnerships between agriculture, business, and labor, that will strengthen the commitment between schools and their communities across the state.

Kansas Farm Bureau is committed to identifying and preparing the next generation of Kansas agriculture and the next generation of Kansas leaders. We urge your support for these programs.

Thank you.