

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:30 p.m. on February 3, 2009, in Room 545-N of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Matt Sterling, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Dorothy Gerhardt, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Shirley Antes, Vice President for External Affairs, Wichita Area Technical College
John Vratil, Senator
Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards
Gary George, Assistant Superintendent, USD #233, Olathe
Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools
Cheryl L. Semmel, Executive Director, United School Administrators of Kansas
Rob Balsters, Deputy Superintendent, USD #345, Seaman
Dennis Stones, Superintendent, USD #441, Sabetha
Stuart J. Little, USD #512, Shawnee Mission
Robert J. Vancrum, Government Affairs Specialist, USD #229, Blue Valley
Val DeFever, Schools for Quality Education

Others attending:

See attached list.

Approval of Minutes

Senator Vratel moved to approve the minutes of January 29, 2009 as written. The motion was seconded by Senator Umbarger. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Hearing on SB 131 - Technical colleges; change in name or designation

Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, presented a short overview of **SB 131**. This bill would allow all technical colleges to change their designation by adoption of a resolution by the governing body. She also stated line 15 referred to the Northeast Kansas Technical College which was never established. She recommended the bill be amended to strike this reference in line 15.

Shirley Antes, Vice President for External Affairs, Wichita Area Technical College (Attachment 1), presented testimony in support of the bill. She stated the intent of the legislation was not an attempt to change the scope of technical colleges, only the ability for the local governing board of technical colleges to change the name of the institution and to allow the board to determine that designation without having to enter the name into a legislative bill.

There were no other conferees to appear before the Committee.

The hearing on **SB 131** was closed.

Hearing on SB 73 - School districts; special local option budget authority for certain school years

Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, presented a short overview of **SB 73**. **SB 73** would provide for school years 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 allowing the board of any school district to adopt a local option budget which does not exceed the local option budget calculated as if the base state aid per pupil was \$4,433, or the amount calculated under 72-6433. She stated it does not apply to this school year. An amendment would be necessary to accomplish this.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the Senate Education Committee at 1:30 p.m. on February 3, 2009, in Room 545-N of the Capitol.

John Vratil, Senator ([Attachment 2](#)), testified in favor of **SB 73**. He suggested the committee might want to amend the bill to include the current school year. It is an attempt to 'hold harmless' school districts' local option budgets should their state financial aid be reduced.

Mark Tallman, Kansas Association of School Boards ([Attachment 3](#)), testified in favor of **SB 73** with the suggestion that any reduction in Supplemental General State Aid would reduce the LOB authority available for all districts, not just those in the lower percentile of districts based on valuation per pupil.

The following conferees testified in favor of **SB 73** with the suggestion that it be amended to include the current school year or any school year and that it also apply to special education funding.

Gary George, Assistant Superintendent, USD #233, Olathe ([Attachment 4](#))
Diane Gjerstad, Wichita Public Schools ([Attachment 5](#))
Cheryl L. Semmel, Executive Director, United School Administrators of Kansas ([Attachment 6](#))
Rob Balsters, Deputy Superintendent, USD #345, Seaman ([Attachment 7](#))
Dennis Stones, Superintendent, USD #441, Sabetha ([Attachment 8](#))
Stuart J. Little, USD #512, Shawnee Mission ([Attachment 9](#))
Robert J. Vancrum, Government Affairs Specialist, USD #229, Blue Valley ([Attachment 10](#))
Val DeFever, Schools for Quality Education ([Attachment 11](#))
Bill Reardon, USD #500, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools
Jennifer Crow, USD #501, Topeka

There were no other conferees to appear before the Committee

The hearing on **SB 73** was closed.

Wichita Area Technical College/National Center for Aviation Training

Shirley Antes, Vice President of External Affairs, Wichita Area Technical College, ([Attachment 12](#)) presented a short report on the efforts of the Wichita Area Technical College in cooperation with the National Center for Aviation Training to expand educational opportunities for students, particularly in the field of engineering to meet the ever increasing demands for students.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: February 3, 2009

NAME	REPRESENTING
ROB MEALY	KEANEY & Assoc
Diane Gjerstad	Wichita Public Schools
Bill Pearson	KCKs. Public Schools
Gary George	Olathe Public Schools
Mark Tallman	NASB
Bill Brady	SPP
Missy Taylor	Kansas Families for Education
Val DeFever	Schools for Quality Ed.
Dave Holtwick	Overland Park Chamber
Ashley Sheard	Lenexa Chamber
Tom Kutz	KASB
Tom Bruno	WATC
Juwene Miller	KBOR
Blake Flanders	KBOR
Cheryl Semmel	USA/Kansas
ROB BALSTERS	USA/KANSAS - USD 345
Dennis Stone	USA/Kansas - USD 441
Sharon Zoellner	DeSoto USD 252
John Barber	Pittsburg - Smart
TERRY FORSYTH	KNEA
Rae Ann Kobylinski	Shawnee Mission Area Council-PTA
Cynthia Jarrold	^{Kansas PTA} Shawnee Mission Area Council of PTA
Melissa Rooker	Shawnee Mission Area Council PTA - SM East area
Bob Vancrum	Blue Valley USD 279

KATC

**Legislative Testimony
February 3, 2009
Senate Education Committee**

**Kansas Association of Technical Colleges
Technical College Name Change Legislation**

Madam Chair and Senate Education Committee members. I am Shirley Antes, Vice President of External Affairs at Wichita Area Technical College and I speak today on behalf of the Kansas Association of Technical Colleges. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding S.B. 131 that was introduced last week regarding name changes for technical colleges.

When Kansas established technical schools in the mid-1960's, which were governed by local school districts, the names of the technical schools became part of the approved legislation. Many of those names were rather long and over the years legislation allowed the school districts to change those names, primarily by shortening the name of the school. This was only possible through legislative action for each name change. Over the past 15 years these institutions have either become independent technical colleges or have merged with other institutions. As the technical schools revised their names or became technical colleges, the new names had to be legislatively changed individually.

Over the past three to four years, some of the technical college governing boards have once again had discussion about the name of their institution and the desire to consider a new name. WATC, in particular, has had significant discussion locally with a variety of constituents about a possible new name that reflects a greater emphasis on their mission as a technical college.

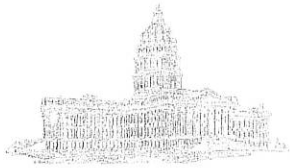
This legislation by no means has the intent of changing our scope as technical colleges – only the ability for the local governing board to change the name of the institution and to allow the board to determine that designation without having to enter the new name into a legislative bill. By allowing all of the technical college governing boards this authority; they would have the ability to change their name without returning to the legislature each time as a word or two, or the whole name changes.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to address any questions you have.

*Senate Education
2-3-09
Attachment 1*

JOHN VRATIL
SENATOR, ELEVENTH DISTRICT
JOHNSON COUNTY
LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE
1-800-432-3924

State of Kansas



Vice President Kansas Senate

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
VICE CHAIR: EDUCATION
WAYS AND MEANS
MEMBER: JUDICIARY
ORGANIZATION, CALENDAR
AND RULES
INTERSTATE COOPERATION
KANSAS CRIMINAL
CODE RECODIFICATION
COMMISSION

Testimony Presented to
Senate Education Committee
By Senator John Vratil
February 3, 2009
Concerning Senate Bill 73

Good afternoon! Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Senate Education Committee in support of Senate Bill (SB) 73. Senate Bill 73 seeks to stabilize the local option budget (LOB) at its current level for school years 2009/2010, 2010/2011 and 2011/2012.

Under current law, a school district may enact an LOB up to a maximum of 31% of the district's state financial aid (base state aid per pupil times the districts adjusted enrollment). Senate Bill 73 locks in the base state aid per pupil amount at its current level, \$4,433, and enables districts to use \$4,433 to calculate the amount of LOB it may levy for the three school years beginning with the 2009/2010 school year. Making this change in current law would not require additional state appropriations.

Please support SB 73 to provide school districts with a stable local option budget and provide them with a funding amount the school districts can rely on as we move forward through the current financial crisis facing us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Vratil".

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Senate Education
2-3-09
Attachment 2
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john.vratil@senate.ks.gov

KANSAS
ASSOCIATION



OF
SCHOOL
BOARDS

1420 SW Arrowhead Road • Topeka, Kansas 66604-4024
785-273-3600

Testimony before the
Senate Education Committee

on
SB 73
by

Mark Tallman, Assistant Executive Director/Advocacy
Kansas Association of School Boards

February 3, 2009

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on **SB 73**. For the benefit of committee members who may not be familiar with how KASB determines policy positions, each member school board has a vote in our annual Delegate Assembly, which adopts policies and resolutions, which guide our testimony and positions. Of course, new issues often arise that our members have not addressed. In that case, we have to look to the basic principles our members have adopted.

We appear today as proponents of **SB 73** because it would allow districts to maintain Local Option Budget authority as if the base budget per pupil is \$4,433 over the next three years, even if the base budget is reduced. We support this step because it would help cushion the impact of state budget cuts – cuts our members believe could damage the quality of education and level of student academic performance the state has achieved.

However, another important principle for KASB is that any local funding should be “equalized” so funding for education is not dependent on the wealth of the district. KASB can only support this measure if the Local Option Budget continues to be equalized so all districts can maintain their LOB with the current tax effort. To allow districts to keep an LOB based on a base budget per pupil of \$4,433, but reduce supplemental state aid, means lower wealth districts would either experience a loss in LOB funding or require a greater tax increase to make up the loss. We believe both are unacceptable.

We would further suggest that **SB 73** be amended so any reduction in Supplemental General State Aid would reduce the LOB authority available for all districts, not just those in the lower 81.2 percentile of districts based on valuation per pupil. Reductions in state aid, if necessary, should not fall disproportionately on students based on the wealth of their district.

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

*Senate Education
2-3-09
Attachment 3*



**Olathe School District
Testimony provided by Dr. Gary George
Senate Bill 73
February 3, 2009**

We are present today in support of Senate Bill 73, which would allow any school district to adopt a local option budget for 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 which does not exceed the LOB calculated as if the state aid per pupil was \$4433.

The Olathe community has been supportive of the LOB and our board of education has a legislative position supporting the LOB.

As we contemplate additional budget reductions for 2010-2011, it is essential that we maintain an LOB that is based on a state aid per pupil of \$4,433 to minimize the adverse impact on the classroom and the local economy.

We urge you to support Senate Bill 73.

Thank you.

Senate Education
2-3-09
Attachment 4



Senate Education
Senator Schodorf, Chair

S. B. 73 – LOB Authority

*Submitted by Diane Gjerstad
Wichita Public Schools*

February 3, 2009

Madame Chair, members of the Committee:

We face unprecedented times which call for unusual actions. We rise in support of SB 73 which would provide school districts with a local option budget authority consistent with the a base budget of \$4433 for the next two school years.

Allowing districts to maintain a constant LOB through the next two years will slightly lessen the impact of likely state budget cuts. In Wichita this bill would not raise local property taxes because Wichita is at the 30% cap and would not likely face a protest and subsequent election for an additional one percent. This bill would simply provide local LOB funding at the level districts budgeted for in the current school year.

One caveat in our support of this bill is LOB state aid be maintained.

Thank you, Madame Chair, and members of the committee for your consideration of SB 73.

Senate Education
2-3-09
Attachment 5

Testimony on

SB 73

Senate Education Committee

Presented by: Cheryl L. Semmel, Executive Director

February 3, 2009

The mission of United School Administrators of Kansas (USA|Kansas*), through collaboration of member associations, is to serve, support, and develop educational leaders and to establish USA|Kansas as a significant force to improve education.

Education administrators remain committed to ensuring that each and every child in Kansas receives a quality education that will help them reach their potential and become successful, productive adults. There are 465,000 students in our public schools that we strive to impact positively every single day. As you know, Kansas students are making unprecedented academic achievement and we are on a path of continuous improvement.

Administrators are committed to identifying opportunities to provide increased flexibility that will help maximize resources and impact districts as equitably as possible. I am here today in support of Senate Bill 73.

Our understanding of SB 73 is that it authorizes districts to adopt a Local Option Budget (LOB) for the 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years based on the 2008-2009 Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) amount of \$4,433. This "decoupling" from the general state aid will allow districts to preserve those funds raised through local effort and allow districts to continue to raise the same amount of money at their current percentage, even if the base is reduced.

While administrators welcome this additional flexibility, we also recognize that this action is not a long-term solution to the fiscal challenges facing us. However, this additional flexibility may prove helpful given the extraordinary budgeting challenges that lie ahead and as districts work to maintain programs that might otherwise be jeopardized by budget reductions to state aid.

In closing, on behalf of education administrators, I would like to thank you for your continued support of education and for realizing the importance of investing in education. Preparing our children requires a shared commitment, collaboration, and open dialogue among all stakeholders. Thank you for being partners in education.

*USA|Kansas represents more than 2,000 individual members and ten member associations:

Kansas Association of Elementary School Principals
Kansas Association of Middle School Administrators
Kansas Association of School Administrators
Kansas Association of School Business Officials
Kansas Association of School Personnel Administrators

Kansas Assoc for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators
Kansas Association of Secondary School Principals
Kansas Council of Career and Technical Education Administrators
Kansas School Public Relations Association

Senate Education
2-3-09
Attachment 6

Testimony on

SB 73

Senate Education Committee

Presented by: Rob Balsters, Deputy Superintendent, Seaman USD #345

February 3, 2009

Thank you very much for allowing me to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 73.

We understand that SB 73 authorizes districts to adopt a Local Option Budget (LOB) for the next three school years based on this year's Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) amount of \$4,433. This "decoupling" of the LOB from any reduced BSAPP in effect in the future will allow districts to retain and spend locally generated dollars on proven programs that increase student achievement. We believe that this initiative is in line with the overall philosophy of the Local Option Budget.

We would welcome this additional flexibility as we also recognize that this action is not a long-term solution to the fiscal challenges facing us. Our desire is to maintain effective programs that might otherwise be jeopardized by future budget reductions applied to state aid for education.

In order for us to solidify and continue the achievement gains made during the past few years, we welcome all reasonable opportunities to retain as much budget authority as possible. Senate Bill 73 provides districts with this option and we ask for your support.

The education of our children is the single, most important positive factor for economic development that we can accomplish. Thank you for your support of Kansas education and for the investments you have made in education.

Senate Education
2-3-09
Attachment 7

USD 441 Sabetha Unified School District

107 Oregon Street
Sabetha, Kansas 66534
(785) 284 - 2175
Dennis Stones, Superintendent

Testimony on SB 73

Senate Education Committee

February 3, 2009

Sabetha USD 441 is a rural district in Northeast Kansas. Our district covers 318 sq. miles. We have Pre-K, 6-8, and 9-12 buildings in Sabetha and a K-12 building in Wetmore. We have a total of 975 students in the district. Our at-risk students number about 21 percent of the entire student body. Our district was fortunate to have two buildings receive the Kansas Governors Achievement Award.

As superintendent, I can assure you that our district is committed to putting children first and doing what is necessary to preserve those programs that benefit students. I believe it is necessary to identify opportunities that will increase flexibility, maximize resources and impact districts as equitably as possible. I am here today in support of Senate Bill 73.

My understanding of SB 73 is that it authorizes districts to adopt a Local Option Budget (LOB) for the 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years based on the 2008-2009 Base State Aid Per Pupil (BSAPP) amount of \$4,433. This "decoupling" from the general state aid will allow Sabetha to preserve those funds raised through local effort and allow districts to continue to raise the same amount of money at their current percentage, even if the base is reduced.

Sabetha's LOB is calculated at 30 percent of the general fund budget. Decoupling LOB from the general state aid would allow our district to utilize monies that have already been collected from patrons. In Sabetha, decoupling could save as much as \$43,000. While this may seem like a small amount compared to some other districts, it has a significant impact in a district with an overall budget of approximately \$7 million.

I recognize that this additional flexibility does not provide a long-term solution to the fiscal challenges facing us. However, this additional flexibility may prove helpful given the extraordinary budgeting challenges that lie ahead and as districts work to maintain programs that might otherwise be jeopardized by budget reductions in state aid.

Senate Education
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Attachment 8

In Sabetha, we have undertaken efforts to reduce district spending, including:

- adjusting supply budgets across the board,
- assessing transportation costs by looking at numbers of buses required for extra curricular activities (e.g., track trips),
- eliminating a track coach, and
- reviewing transfers.

Thank you for your continued support of education and for realizing the importance of investing in education. Preparing our children requires a shared commitment, collaboration, and open dialogue among all stakeholders. Thank you for being partners in education.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

STUART J. LITTLE, Ph.D.
Little Government Relations

February 3, 2009

Senate Education Committee

Testimony Supporting Senate Bill 73

Chairperson Schodorf and Members of the Committee,

I appear today on behalf of the Shawnee Mission School District 512 in support of Senate Bill 73.

Shawnee Mission School District is the state's second largest school district serving over 26,770 students in 35 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, and 5 high schools with 4,063 employees. The district covers 72 square miles in Johnson County. The district has been a strong supporter of the Legislature's continued funding of the school finance formula while pointing out areas where the formula needs to be amended to provide greater equity in funding. For example, while the available state average expenditure per pupil increased to over \$10,000 in 2008-09, the amount of funding available to Shawnee Mission remains well below the state average at \$8,142. Two hundred and sixty-fifth of 296 districts in the state outrank Shawnee Mission in funding available for operations.

During these times of falling state revenue, Shawnee Mission School District supports SB 73. The current law allows school districts across the state to assess a local option budget based on the amount authorized for the general and special education funds. As lawmakers reduce base state aid and special education funding, districts lose the state support and the corresponding local object budget amount. Shawnee Mission currently has a 31% LOB. For each \$1 reduction in state support for the general and special education, Shawnee Mission loses \$1.31. This scenario plays out similarly for all districts around the state.

This bill protects the LOB revenue for changes in the base state aid per pupil. It does not protect districts for the LOB effect of reductions in special education. We would also support holding special education harmless. On a final note, we would like the bill amended to apply to the 2008-2009 school year as the Legislature will be adjusting the BSAPP downward in the current year.

Thank you and I would be happy to stand for questions.

Testimony to Senate Education Committee on SB 73
Robert J. Vancrum, Government Affairs Specialist
Blue Valley USD 229

February 3, 2009

Chairman Schodorf and Other Honorable Senators:

I am here to testify on behalf of the Blue Valley School District as a proponent of House Bill 2095. I believe this bill is intended to help school districts facing serious budget cuts due to rescissions to at least not lose their previously authorized local option budgets. language to allow districts to continue to utilize their previously approved local option budget . I will address each separately.

Without such relief, districts would be unable to expend the funds raised locally for the previously approved LOB. Thus districts would not only have to manage the cuts in state funding but actually reduce their LOB. Stranger yet, the funds have already been raised this year (2009) to pay for it would lay idle and couldn't be spent while the district was making cuts in its budget due to the loss of state assistance. The bill simply says USDs can continue to raise and fund LOB budgets "as if the BSAPP per pupil were still \$4433".

But notice the bill also limits the years in which the \$4433 base amount can be used to the FY2010, 2011, and 2012. I assume the advocates for the bill had in mind that the budgeted BSAPP would be back to \$4433 by then, but how can we be sure? Further, if this is appropriate policy shouldn't it also apply to FY 2009? If I'm reading the intent correctly, this can be fixed fairly easily. I would suggest a friendly amendment that would leave the \$4433 base in place for purposes of the calculation of the LOB by deleting the specific years enumerated and inserting "until BSAPP is again set at \$4433 or above."

Thank you very much for your attention. I will be happy to stand for questions.



Schools for Quality Education

007 Bluemont Hall, 1100 Mid-Campus Drive, Manhattan, KS 66506 • (785) 532-5886 • www.coe.ksu.edu/sqe

Testimony before the
Senate Education Committee
by
Val DeFever, Schools for Quality Education

February 3, 2009

Madame Chairman and Members of the Committee,

We wish to stand in support of SB73 which would allow the school districts of Kansas to calculate their local option budget based on \$4,433 for the next three fiscal years. In a time when budget cuts will make it very difficult for our districts to meet the needs of their students, the ability to access the this level of funding is appreciated.

Senate Education
2-3-09
Attachment 11

"Rural is Quality"

**Senate Education Committee Presentation
February 3, 2009**

**Wichita Area Technical College
Engineering Opportunities**

Madam Chair and Senate Education Committee members. My name is Shirley Antes and I am the Vice President of External Affairs at Wichita Area Technical College. Thank you once again for the opportunity to speak to you this afternoon. My comments at this time speak to the efforts of Wichita Area Technical College (WATC) and the National Center for Aviation Training (NCAT) as it continues to expand educational opportunities for students, particularly in the field of engineering.

After over ten years of infrastructure and program planning by the aviation industry in Wichita, community leaders, and state officials, it was determined that a new center for aviation and manufacturing training be developed in order to offer technical education for highly technical careers. The Sedgwick County Technical Education Authority (SCTETA) was established by Sedgwick County to oversee this effort. One of the cornerstones of the NCAT will be the offering of a diverse group of two year degrees in Engineering Technology, Aviation Maintenance, and Avionics.

We are all keenly aware of the shortage of skilled engineers nationwide. Here at home, especially in South Central Kansas the shortage is severely acute. According to the Kansas Occupational Outlook, produced by the Kansas Department of Labor, from 2004 to 2010, they project a demand for over 4,000 new engineers due to growth. If we use a very conservative number of 20% attrition rate, this translates to an additional demand for over 5,000 engineers for a total of 9,000 engineers. In other words, our companies need to hire 50 engineers a month to keep pace with this demand. We all know this demand is much greater than the supply we currently have in Kansas.

The SCTETA has directed the NCAT and Wichita Area Technical College (WATC) to initially incubate five new two-year engineering technology degrees and to work collaboratively with Wichita State University (WSU) to develop a career path for these engineers. These degrees are in Aviation Maintenance Technology, Avionics Technology, Manufacturing Engineering, Design Engineering, and Quality Engineering. All of which will be offered at the new NCAT campus located at the Jabara Airport in Wichita, Kansas.

WATC and WSU are committed to developing this innovatively new approach for new engineering opportunities in Kansas. This partnership, along with the inclusion of the National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR) in the NCAT, will provide opportunities for the industry and students never before seen in education.

Senate Education
2-3-09
Attachment 12

Wichita State is currently developing three engineering technology baccalaureate degrees that will allow the students from the WATC degree programs to advance through an engineering career path.

There are barriers, however; to developing these transferable and articulated degrees between our two institutions of higher education that we are all working to overcome. Specifically, these barriers include:

- The legislative statutes that have not been updated since the movement of the Technical Colleges from the Board of Education to the Board of Regents. Fortunately the Kansas Board of Regents has brought these changes to the legislature for your consideration this session through H.B. 2003. We encourage you to support this legislative change to update out-of-date statutes.
- The second barrier, however; is even more critical for our state technical colleges. It is the inability of the Technical Colleges to offer the Associate of Science degree. The Kansas Board of Regents mandated that the Technical Colleges become accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in 2002. This is the same accrediting body that accredits all Kansas universities and community colleges. The technical colleges, however; can only offer Associate of Applied Science degrees. On the other hand, the community colleges can offer Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Science, Associate of Arts, and Associate of General Studies degrees. By limiting the technical colleges to the Associate of Applied Science degree, historically considered by some elitist academic institutions as terminal degrees, and therefore; non-transferable, limits the technical colleges' ability to help fill the shortage of engineers. If our technical colleges are not allowed to offer, at a minimum, the Associate of Science degree then we will have student transferability barriers as well as regional and engineering accrediting body impediments. Wichita Area Technical Colleges' hosted a visiting team from the Higher Learning Commission this past August in which they strongly recommend that the college award the Associate of Science degree. However, this can only become possible through a legislative change. WATC, along with the other Kansas technical colleges, will continue to work with the Kansas Board of Regents and legislatures to rectify this and other 1960's barriers. The demand and landscape has changed over the past forty plus years and it is time to look at ways to create a seamless pathway of education for our learners.

We look forward to working with you as we move forward to increase engineering opportunities for students and employees and as we all strive to meet the economic and workforce development needs of our companies in Kansas.