

State of Kansas



Speaker Mike O'Neal
Kansas House of Representatives

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.B. 2745
February 29th, 2012

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I had H.B. 2745 introduced in response to this year's report to leadership from the Kansas Board of Regents on Implementation of Qualified Admissions. I've attached that report to my testimony. The crux of my concern deals with the current 10% exception window, its utilization, and lack of tracking data or lack of positive data relating to those students admitted under the exception. I remain concerned, as well, with the cost of remedial education courses offered by the Regents schools.

Of the 711 Kansas students admitted by exception, the question arises as to how those students performed in comparison to their peers and whether the use of the exception was in the student's best interests as opposed to encouraging an alternative pathway to graduation from a Regents institution by way of initial attendance at one of the state's community colleges.

In 2007, the Board of Regents conducted a study on retention and graduation rates of students admitted as exceptions. Freshmen to sophomore retention rates for students who met minimum admission standards were 20% higher when compared with students admitted as exceptions. The difference in the four year graduation rate between the two groups was larger, with the exact rate of difference not available. H.B. 2745 would reduce the 10% exception window to 5%.

The Board has not conducted a study of the cost of remedial education at state universities for students admitted through the exception window. I'm advised that even those who meet minimum admission standards may take remedial coursework. On average, we're told that national studies cite that 28% of high school graduates who are admitted to college immediately enroll in at least one remedial course.

Last year I introduced H.B. 2248, which would have charged back the cost of remedial college courses to the sending school district. The Dept. of Ed estimated this could involve as many as 7000 students and would require at least \$1M to be deducted from school district budgets. H.B. 2745 does not contain a claw-back provision, but, rather, provides that the State would not be required to pay for the cost of remedial courses offered by the Regents schools. A 2009 LPA Performance Audit Report found that the state could reduce its instructional costs by having community colleges teach any remedial courses.

In summary, I question the efficacy of the current 10% exception rule under Qualified Admissions and believe more students, particularly those needing remedial coursework and/or who do not qualify under the standard QA criteria should be encouraged to attend a community college initially to provide a better chance for graduation from their Regents school of choice. In addition, I question why the State should pay for remedial coursework at the Regents level given the lack of data that this policy results in student success. I continue to wonder why we wouldn't have a policy of charging back sending school districts for failing to prepare students for post-secondary coursework.



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

TO: Representative Michael O'Neal, Speaker of the House
Representative Paul Davis, House Minority Leader
Senator Stephen Morris, Senate President
Senator Anthony Hensley, Senate Minority Leader

FROM: Gary Alexander, Vice President of Academic Affairs *GAA*

CC: Andy Tompkins, President and CEO

DATE: January 24, 2012

RE: Report on the Implementation of Qualified Admissions

KSA 76-717, better known as Qualified Admissions (QA), requires the Kansas Board of Regents to submit an annual report to the Legislature that includes information on student admissions in three categories: (1) the number and percentage of **freshmen class admissions** permitted as exceptions to the minimum admissions standards established in the statute; (2) the number and percentage of **resident transfer student admissions** permitted as exceptions to the minimum admissions standards; and (3) the number and percentage of **non-resident transfer student admissions** permitted as exceptions to the minimum admissions standards. The statute states that this information may be submitted to the Legislature in a single report.

The annual report on the admission of the 2010-2011 state university freshman class and transfer students, which has been approved by the Board, is attached for your information. The report includes a summary of the qualified admissions process, and all of the data are very similar to data from past years.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at (785) 296-3421 or at galexander@ksbor.org.

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Accept Annual Report on Qualified Admissions

Summary and Recommendation

Annual reports on admission of the 2010-2011 freshmen class and 2010-2011 transfer students are mandated by K.S.A. 76-717. This statute requires the Board to submit to the Legislature information on three categories of student admissions: (1) the number and percentage of freshmen class admissions permitted as exceptions to the minimum admissions standards established in the statute; (2) the number and percentage of resident transfer student admissions permitted as exceptions to the minimum admissions standards; and (3) the number and percentage of non-resident transfer student admissions permitted as exceptions to the minimum admissions standards. The statute states that this information may be submitted to the Legislature in a single report. Staff recommends acceptance of this report for submission to the Legislature to fulfill K.S.A. 76-717 reporting requirements.

(10/20/11)

Background

K.S.A. 76-717, which established admission criteria for state universities, requires the Board to submit an annual report that includes information on student admissions in three categories: (1) the number and percentage of **freshmen class admissions** permitted as exceptions to the minimum admissions standards established in the statute; (2) the number and percentage of **resident transfer student admissions** permitted as exceptions to the minimum admissions standards; and (3) the number and percentage of **non-resident transfer student admissions** permitted as exceptions to the minimum admissions standards. The statute states that this information may be submitted to the legislature in a single report.

This report also includes an overview of admissions criteria, followed by the report on admissions for Academic Year 2010-2011. The information contained in Tables 3 through 5, Table 7 and Table 8 are not required by statute, but the tables do provide information that contextualizes the number of exceptions admitted.

Qualified Admissions Criteria

K.S.A. 76-717 requires freshmen applicants under the age of 21 who graduated from an accredited high school to meet one of the following criteria to gain admittance to a state university: (1) earn a minimum ACT score of 21; (2) graduate in the top one-third of the high school class; or (3) complete the precollege curriculum with a GPA of at least 2.0 for residents and 2.5 for nonresidents. Graduates of unaccredited high schools must earn a minimum ACT score of 21 for admittance. Kansas residents with a GED credential, regardless of age, must possess qualifying scores on the GED for admittance to a state university. Kansas residents 21 years of age or older qualify for admission by graduating from an accredited high school. These admissions requirements are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Minimum Statutory Criteria for Admission of Freshmen to a State University

	Resident ¹	Non-resident ²
Applicant under 21 years of age (with less than 24 hours of transferable postsecondary coursework)	1. Graduate from accredited high school AND o Earn ACT composite of 21 or above OR o Graduate in top 1/3 of class OR o Earn GPA of 2.0 in QA precollege curriculum OR 2. Earn GED with qualifying scores	Graduate from accredited high school AND o Earn ACT composite of 21 or above OR o Graduate in top 1/3 of class OR o Earn GPA of 2.5 in QA precollege curriculum
Applicant under 21 years of age (with less than 24 hours of transferable postsecondary coursework)	Graduate from unaccredited high school AND Earn ACT composite of 21 or above	Graduate from unaccredited high school AND Earn ACT composite of 21 or above
Applicant 21 years of age or older (with less than 24 hours of transferable postsecondary coursework)	Graduate from accredited high school OR Earn GED with qualifying scores	

¹State universities are required to admit students meeting these minimum criteria.

²State universities are not required to admit students meeting these minimum criteria. State universities may adopt additional and/or more stringent standards.

When making admission decisions for freshmen applicants under the age of 21 who graduate from an accredited high school, state universities review student materials in the following order: ACT score, class rank and precollege curriculum. The process works as follows:

1. Students with a composite ACT score of 21 or higher (or a SAT score of 980 or higher) are admitted under the test score criterion.
2. If the student's ACT test score is below 21, the university checks the student's high school class rank. Students graduating in the top one-third of their high school class are admitted under the class rank criterion.
3. If the student's ACT test score is below 21 and the student ranks in the bottom two-thirds of the high school class, the university checks the student's GPA in the QA precollege curriculum. Kansas residents with a 2.0 GPA (or higher) on a 4.0 scale on the precollege curriculum are admitted under the curriculum criterion; non-resident students with a 2.5 GPA (or higher) on a 4.0 scale on the precollege curriculum are admitted under the curriculum criterion.

Freshmen applicants under 21 years of age who graduate from an unaccredited high school are admitted under the test score criterion, provided they meet that criterion. Kansas residents with at least an overall score of 2,550 on the GED and a minimum score of 510 on each subtest are admitted under the GED criterion. Kansas residents who are at least 21 years of age and older and have graduated from an accredited high school are admitted under the age criterion.

State universities may admit Kansas residents who do not meet the minimum freshmen admissions criteria, but the number of these exceptions is limited by statute to 10% of the university's total freshmen admissions. This is referred to as the 10% exception window. Admitting applicants as exceptions is at the discretion of the state university.

The number of freshmen resident applicants that may be admitted through the 10% exception window is calculated by totaling the number of freshmen class admissions on the 20th day of the Summer, Fall, and Spring semesters of the current year. The maximum number of exceptions for the current year is equal to 10% of the sum of these three counts. Each state university has a written policy to guide decisions about exceptions. Non-resident freshmen applicants may not be admitted as exceptions.

Freshmen Applicants

Required Report #1. Freshmen Admitted as Exceptions (Table 2)

K.S.A. 76-717 requires that on or before January 31 of each year, the Board of Regents report to the legislature on the number and percent of freshmen admitted as exceptions. The statute specifies that this information be disaggregated by institution. As a whole, the 2010-2011 freshmen data are very similar to data from previous years.

Table 2 presents the number and percent of freshmen students admitted under the 10% exception window, disaggregated by institution.

Table 2: Number of Freshmen Students Admitted as Exceptions¹

	Exceptions	Admits	Percent
Emporia State University	107	1,314	8.1%
Fort Hays State University	99	1,459	6.8%
Kansas State University	272	7,440	3.7%
Pittsburg State University	146	2,045	7.1%
University of Kansas	38	9,418	0.4%
Wichita State University	49	3,033	1.6%

¹Only Kansas residents may be admitted through the 10% exception window.

Freshmen Admission by Categories and Freshmen Denials

The following three tables are not required by statute, but the tables do provide information that contextualizes the number of freshmen exceptions admitted. Table 3 displays the aggregate number of students admitted under the ACT, class rank or precollege curriculum criteria. Students are counted only in the criterion on which they were admitted even though they may have met more than one criterion.

Table 3 shows 78.2% of resident students under the age of 21 who had graduated from an accredited high school were admitted under the test score criterion; 6.7% were admitted on the class rank criterion; and 10.6% were admitted on the curriculum criterion. Universities chose to admit as exceptions 4.5% of resident applicants who could not be admitted on the basis of test score, class rank or precollege curriculum.

Table 3: Freshmen Students Admitted by Categories

	Resident		Non-Resident	
	State Totals	Percent of Admits	State Totals	Percent of Admits
Test Score	12,361	78.2%	5,740	75.2 %
Class Rank	1,056	6.7%	782	10.2 %
Curriculum	1,683	10.6%	1,111	14.6%
Exception	711	4.5%		

Table 4 displays the “yield rate,” or the number of freshmen students admitted under the test score, class rank or precollege curriculum criteria, or as exceptions, who actually enrolled.

Table 4: Admitted Freshmen Students who Enrolled by Categories

	Resident		Non-Resident	
	State Totals	Yield Rate ¹	State Totals	Yield Rate ¹
Test Score	6,614	53.5%	1,397	24.3%
Class Rank	566	53.6%	211	27.0%
Curriculum	1,116	66.3%	386	34.7%
Exception	500	70.3%		

¹Yield Rate is the number of students who enrolled divided by the number of students who were admitted.

Table 5 shows the number of freshmen applicants denied admission to state universities.

Table 5: Number of Freshmen Applicant Denials

	Resident			Non-Resident		
	Denials	Applied	Percent	Denials	Applied	Percent
Emporia State University	2	1,107	0.2%	1	173	0.6%
Fort Hays State University	110	1,141	9.6 %	69	448	15.4%
Kansas State University	11	5,096	0.2%	5	2,251	0.2%
Pittsburg State University	13	1,386	0.9%	23	616	3.7 %
University of Kansas	100	4,895	2.0 %	432	4,956	8.7 %
Wichita State University	124	2,546	4.9 %	45	327	13.8 %

Transfer Applicants

State universities are required to admit resident transfer applicants who have earned at least 24 credit hours of transferable coursework with a cumulative grade point average of not less than 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. State universities may admit non-resident transfer applicants who have met these minimum criteria, but are not required to do so. State universities may adopt additional and/or more stringent standards to admit non-resident transfer applicants.

State universities may admit transfer applicants who have earned less than a 2.0 on 24 or more transferable credit hours, but the number of these exceptions is limited by statute. The number of resident transfer exceptions is limited to 10% of the university's resident transfer admissions. The number of non-resident transfer exceptions is limited to 10% of the university's non-resident transfer admissions. Admitting applicants as exceptions is at the discretion of the state university.

Required Reports #2 and #3: Resident and Non-resident Transfer Student Admissions (Table 6)

K.S.A. 76-717 requires the Board of Regents report the following to the legislature on or before January 31 of each year: (1) the number and percent of resident transfer students admitted as exceptions, and (2) the number and percent of non-resident transfer students admitted as exceptions. The statute specifies this information be disaggregated by institution.

Table 6 presents the number and percent of transfer students admitted by each state university under the 10% exception window. This information is disaggregated by institution and by residency status.

Table 6: Number of Transfer Students Admitted as Exceptions

	Resident			Non-Resident		
	Exceptions	Admits	Percent	Exceptions	Admits	Percent
Emporia State University	14	575	2.4 %	4	68	5.9%
Fort Hays State University	69	1,373	5.0%	58	862	6.7%
Kansas State University	34	1,760	1.9%	16	986	1.6%
Pittsburg State University	14	469	3.0%	12	160	7.5%
University of Kansas	1	797	0.1%	0	247	0.0%
Wichita State University	27	2,136	1.3%	3	219	1.4%

Transfer Student Admission by Categories and Transfer Student Denials

Table 7 and Table 8 are not required by statute, but the tables do provide information that contextualizes the number of transfer exceptions admitted. Table 7 displays the “yield rate,” or number of admitted transfer students who actually enrolled in the university. Students meeting minimum requirements were admitted under the GPA criterion.

Table 7: Admitted Transfer Students who Enrolled

	State Total: Resident			State Total: Non-Resident		
	Admitted	Enrolled	Yield Rate ¹	Admitted	Enrolled	Yield Rate ¹
GPA	6,951	5,169	74.4%	2,449	1,328	54.2%
Exception	159	123	77.4%	93	39	41.9%

¹Yield Rate is the number of students who enrolled divided by the number of students who were admitted.

The number of transfer applicants denied admission to state universities is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Number of Transfer Applicant Denials

	Resident			Non-Resident		
	Denials	Applied	Percent	Denials	Applied	Percent
Emporia State University	0	575	0%	0	68	0%
Fort Hays State University	14	1,387	1.0%	14	876	1.6%
Kansas State University	42	1,802	2.3%	65	1,051	6.2%
Pittsburg State University	4	473	0.8%	5	165	3.0%
University of Kansas	24	821	2.9%	20	267	7.5%
Wichita State University	110	2,246	4.9 %	18	237	7.6%

Admissions Standards for State Universities

On December 15, 2010, the Kansas Board of Regents approved new standards for undergraduate admission to the six state universities: Emporia State University, Fort Hays State University, Kansas State University, Pittsburg State University, the University of Kansas, and Wichita State University. The standards apply to freshmen entering high school in 2011.

At the June 2011 Board meeting, the Board approved new and amended permanent state university qualified admissions regulations that guide the implementation of the new admissions standards. During the open public comment period held before the regulations were presented to the Board for action, staff incorporated a number of suggestions received from the public and state universities that did not materially differ in subject matter or effect from the regulations as originally proposed. The comments that contained substantive changes could not be included without initiating a new rule making process. The Board directed staff to begin the process to amend the regulations again and limit the scope of the amendments to the changes suggested by the public and state universities during the open comment period. The Board will act on the proposed amendments at its January 2012 meeting.