

Senate Education Committee
February 7, 2012

Chairman Schodorf and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to speak in support of the Career and Technical Education initiative outlined in Senate Bill 361. My name is Ken Willard and I am a member of the State Board of Education. I am here today representing the State Board. On January 10, the State Board voted 10-0 to support the Career and Technical Education initiative announced by Governor Brownback earlier in the month. Please note that I am speaking only in support of the Career and Technical Education portion of the current bill. The State Board has not discussed Senate Bill 361.

The Kansas State Board of Education has had Career and Technical Education as a goal for several years. In February 2008, the State Board of Education approved nine policy motions regarding Career and Technical Education. The policy motions reflected a progressive, challenging agenda for Kansas students in preparing them for high-skill, high-wage and high-demand occupations. The Board reaffirmed the initiatives in May of 2010 and added two additional initiatives. The initiatives include:

- 1) Creating an integrated system of assessments for each of the 16 Career Clusters;
- 2) Adopting integrated core content standards with 21st century skills as the organizing principle;
- 3) Supporting the creating of performance-based Qualified Admissions Standards by the Kansas Board of Regents;
- 4) Revising teacher preparation program standards to reflect the integration of content standards;
- 5) Requiring schools to create integrated courses that allow students to gain at least three additional credits in the career clusters;
- 6) Expecting that all students enter secondary-level studies prepared to succeed in project-based, contextual learning activities;
- 7) Offering a school accreditation option for all Kansas schools based on 21st century learning environments;
- 8) Offering a graduation option for all Kansas students designed around the 21st century learner profiles;
- 9) Requiring all Kansas local education agencies to ensure that every student has access to services that help guide them in career planning;

- 10) Requiring every Kansas student, beginning in middle-level or junior high school, to utilize a personalized college and career-ready plan of study; and
- 11) Creating opportunities for Kansas schools to develop funding mechanisms based on verified, performance-based student achievement.

The State Board of Education and the State Department of Education have been working diligently on the initiatives over the past few years. Kansas has adopted the National Career Clusters model of 16 career clusters and has developed 31 pathways within these clusters. The Career and Technical Education Advisory Council, comprised of individuals from business and industry as well as education, has assisted in developing the curriculum for each of the pathways.

Given the focus on Career and Technical Education at the State Board of Education level, we were thrilled to hear of the Governor's plan to improve Career and Technical Education by providing for student tuition, transportation costs, marketing to increase awareness and student participation, and incentives for high schools who increase the number of students earning an industry-recognized credential in key occupations. Additionally, we were pleased that amount of money for secondary vocational education, also known as career and technical education, will be maintained.

While there are a few areas of the initiative that need further discussion, such as the 30-mile duplication rule, we are confident the staff of the State Department of Education and the Kansas Board of Regents will work together to ensure that Kansas students are the beneficiaries of this opportunity to increase the percentage of students who are career and college ready upon high school graduation.

Thank you.