

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMERCE AND LABOR COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman John Grange at 9:04 a.m. on February 5, 2009, in Room 784 of the Docking State Office Building.

All members were present except:

Representative Scott Schwab- absent

Committee staff present:

Rena Jefferies, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Daniel Yoza, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Jerry Donaldson, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Dennis Hodgins, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Stephen Bainum, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Blake Flanders, Kansas Board of Regents

Others attending:

See attached list.

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman John Grange at 9:04 a.m. The minutes of January 27, January 28, January 29 and February 3 were approved.

Blake Flanders, Kansas Board of Regents, gave the Committee an update on the Kansas Workforce (Attachment 1). He gave an overview of the changing workforce and the needs for increased talent development for the innovation economy in Kansas. Our current workforce must have higher skills to be successful participants in the Kansas economy. The new Kansas economy demands that workers have postsecondary education and training beyond a high school diploma. Kansas has shortages in jobs requiring baccalaureate degrees and technicians.

He also gave a synopsis of the economic downturn and the opportunities it presents. Layoffs have increased fourfold over last year at this time. However, workforce issues continue to be a challenge to businesses. We have an opportunity to educate and train the workforce with the right skills. Kansas has a high college going rate and ranks 6th among the 50 states for credentials/degrees awarded by community/technical colleges.

Finally he summarized the Technical Education Authority's strategic priorities and accomplishments. The Authority has invested a great deal of time to guide policy decisions and drive success for our postsecondary technical education system. Career technical education provides for a healthy Kansas economy. Career technical education helps address the financial barrier to college participation as well as the increasing levels of student debt. The Authority has implemented a statewide framework to align technical programs to the needs of business and industry by establishing standards of excellence for each program area and utilizing the business community to identify appropriate industry-based certifications and program outcomes. Another benefit of the program alignment process is that it provides a systematic pathway for a true seamless transition from high school to college. Finally the Authority has developed a new funding/cost model for technical education which is tiered to recognize cost differentials in high demand/high tech training and is responsive to program growth.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.