

MINUTES

KANSAS TECHNICAL COLLEGE AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOL COMMISSION

September 12, 2006
Room 514-S—Statehouse

Members Present

Mr. George Fahnestock, Chairman
Dr. Robert Edleston
Dr. Jerry Farley
Mr. Joseph Glassman
Mr. James Grier III
Senator Janis Lee
Mr. Reggie Robinson
Mr. Dick Veach

Staff

Audrey Dunkel, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Michele Alishahi, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Carolyn Rampey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Daniel Nibarger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Art Griggs, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Gary Deeter, Secretary

Conferees

Senator Steve Morris, President, Kansas Senate
Blake Flanders, Director, Workforce Training and Education Services, Kansas Board of Regents
Rich Hoffman, President, Kansas Association of Technical Schools and Colleges
Jim Means, Interim President, Wichita Area Technical College
Lori Usher, Executive Director, Workforce Development, Sedgwick County

Others Attending

See attached list.

Morning Session

The meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m. Chairman Fahnestock requested staff and audience members to introduce themselves. Each Commission member introduced themselves (see [Attachment 1](#)).

The Chairman welcomed Senate President Steve Morris, who thanked the Commission members for their service, emphasized the importance of vocational education, and reviewed the history of technical education in Kansas; noting three kinds of technical schools: those associated with community colleges, independent technical colleges, and those associated with unified school (K-12) districts. He suggested five areas of focus: increasing respect for technical education, governance, funding, curricula, and duplication; he commented that the proviso creating the Commission expires in one year, but if the Commission needs more time, the issues are important enough to arrange an extension if necessary.

Art Griggs, Revisor of Statutes Office, reviewed the legislation and statutes governing technical colleges and vocational schools ([Attachment 2](#)). He cited the parameters of the Commission in the enacting proviso: "The Commission shall undertake a study of the governance, funding, and the mission of Kansas technical colleges and vocational education schools." He then traced legislation from the inception of vocational schools (1963) to the present ([Attachment 3](#)). He noted the 1981 establishment of funding percentages (85 percent state, 15 percent tuition), the authorization to merge area vocational schools and vocational-technical schools with community colleges (1992), and allowing area vocational schools and area vocational-technical schools to become technical colleges (1994). He commented on two funding statutes, the one removing the 15 percent tuition threshold to accommodate state funding shortfalls (2002), and the other making receipt of new funds contingent on compliance with the institution's performance agreements (2002). He stated that by 1985, 16 vocational institutions existed in the state with three forms of governance: (1) under a single Unified School District (USD), (2) under a group of USDs, or (3) a vocational school that had merged with a community college. He commented that the 1999 Higher Education Coordination Act (1999 SB 345) transferred oversight of all vocational schools and colleges from the Kansas State Board of Education to the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR), later (2003 SB 7) required that the six technical colleges develop a plan to replace existing governance with an independent governing board separate from a USD.

During discussion, member Reggie Robinson explained that all postsecondary degree institutions must be accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA), and that one NCA requirement is an independent governing board, an issue for technical colleges associated with a USD. Members agreed on the importance of parallel standards among institutions in order for students to transfer from one institution to another. Discussion centered on funding discrepancies: community colleges and area vocational schools under a USD are allowed to levy taxes; vocational technical colleges are not, even if they provide adult basic education (ABE), which is generally under the purview of USDs. Mr. Robinson explained the performance agreements created by SB 345, which make a vocational college eligible for 2 percent additional funds if new funding becomes available from the state.

Regarding these performance agreements, he said the Regents suggest performance parameters, and vocational colleges propose performance goals and objectives, which form the basis for the performance agreement between the institutions and the Regents; the Regents then evaluate performance and certify the institutions as eligible or not for additional potential funding from the state. The Chairman requested a sample performance agreement. Another member requested a bullet-point summary of each institution's performance agreement. The Chairman said the

Commission's task is to identify the mission, funding, and governance of vocational colleges and schools.

Blake Flanders, Director of Workforce Training and Education Services, Kansas Board of Regents, provided further background on technical colleges and schools (Attachment 4). He noted the four mergers of area vocational-technical schools with community colleges (Hutchinson, Coffeyville, Johnson County, and Dodge City) and the emergence of six technical colleges following the 1994 legislation (Goodland, Beloit, Emporia, Manhattan, Atchison, and Wichita), further noting that governance structure varied from institution to institution in spite of SB 345, which promoted a seamless system. He said the 85 percent postsecondary state aid formula fell short of adequate funding, morphing into a *de facto* block grant and creating a disincentive for growth. In 2002, the 15 percent tuition cap was removed, and in 2006 a new funding model based on production was introduced, a formula based on postsecondary clock hours of instruction (Attachment 5). A member explained that 15-30 clock hours roughly equals one credit hour.

Following a short break, members discussed present and potential funding streams for technical colleges, discussing capital outlay funds, tax levies, grants, and tuition, as well as state funding formulas and ownership of buildings and assets. Members requested documents itemizing funding streams and funding mechanisms for all technical institutions. Members expressed interest in knowing what funding would be needed to accomplish the mission of technical education. A member expressed a desire for funding based on skills rather than clock hours.

Rich Hoffman, President, Kansas Association of Technical Schools and Colleges, presented the Association's structure recommendations for vocational schools and colleges (Attachment 6). He explained that the recommendations were a response to a Regents' document outlining options for governance and funding of Career and Technical Education. (The Regents' working paper was later provided to the Commission as Attachment 11). Mr. Hoffman said the return on investment for technical education was noteworthy, and he cited various statistics to establish his point, commenting that technical education requires high standards and teaches students not only information, but how to make learning a lifelong pursuit. He recommended a statewide tax, since most students remain in Kansas. He applauded the move to performance-based funding and recommended development of a core curriculum. Responding to a question, he cited business and industry initiatives that help fund programs.

Afternoon Session

Jim Means, Interim President, Wichita Area Technical College (WATC), gave an overview of the college programs and delineated problems with funding (Attachment 7). He stated that in FY 2004 state funding provided 47 percent of the cost of programs rather than the promised 85 percent, the deficit was partially alleviated by USD 259 funds. However, when the college became independent in order to qualify for NCA accreditation, USD 259 chose to withdraw support for the college Adult Basic Education program, an action that, beginning in FY 2007, could eliminate the ABE program. He suggested the Commission recommend taxing authority for the college's ABE program. Further, he noted that the Regents new funding formula based on clock hours will ultimately result in a 10 percent reduction in the college funding stream, hampering the college's ability to deliver quality career education. During discussion, a member noted that WATC's attempt to gain taxing authority was unsuccessful because the college board's membership is unelected. Staff commented that the Topeka Library Board is unelected but has taxing authority. Members discussed the implications of funding based on clock hours or based on student performance skills.

Lori Usher, Executive Director, Workforce Development, Sedgwick County, briefed the Commission on the Sedgwick County Technical Education and Training Authority's response to the Regents' working paper. She provided Attachment 8 to trace the process of developing the task force response; Attachment 9 summarizes the recommendations. She commented on the formation of the Authority, citing three strategic initiatives: to advance the Jabara campus project, to develop a one-stop solution for employers, and to become a repository of regional labor data.

Ms. Usher summarized the recommended direction of the task force regarding technical education:

- Develop a world-class technical educational facility at Jabara Airport Campus;
- Offer relevant technical education with a standardized curriculum;
- Provide business-led oversight;
- Assure seamless education among Regents institutions;
- Develop regional, collaborative delivery of technical education;
- Minimize duplication;
- Focus on workforce development; and
- Encourage weighted state funding for technical education to recognize the added costs of programs.

Ms. Usher said the study recommended a merger of WATC with a regional community college and, ultimately, the merger of all technical colleges with community colleges.

Answering questions, Ms. Usher said the Authority was created by the Wichita City Commission to coordinate technical education in the region. She said the Jabara initiative will first build the physical campus and then develop a delivery system. Answering a concern that the mission of community colleges and technical colleges is significantly different, Ms. Usher said nationally community colleges are moving toward a work-force-development mission. Noting the different learning approaches of technical education (hands-on) and general education (textbook-centered), a member expressed concern that merging community colleges with technical colleges will crowd out the hands-on approach to learning. Another member expressed concern that in merging a community college with a technical college, mission creep will crowd out the technical emphasis. A member stated that a technical education can help a student get a job; a general education will help him/her keep the job and gain promotions.

Dr. Flanders returned to present other issues related to technical colleges (Attachment 10). He said that on July 1, 2004, the KBOR began a partnership with the Kansas Department of Commerce to help connect postsecondary training initiatives to business and industry opportunities through Commerce workforce training programs, specifically the Kansas Industrial Retraining Program (KIR), the Kansas Industrial Training Program (KIT), and the Investment in Major Projects and Comprehensive Training (IMPACT). He cited figures to illustrate that technical colleges offer limited capacity for meeting employer needs and that state support (per FTE) for technical colleges is three times greater than what is provided to community colleges. He noted that programs vary widely among technical colleges, while business and industry expect standardization; he further noted that funding inequities and inadequate funding for facilities also are significant issues to be addressed. A member requested information regarding what technical education is offered by community colleges.

In seeking to summarize the day's meeting, the Chairman suggested members consider the question, "The work of the Commission is in the best interest of whom?" He reviewed the areas of focus: mission, governance, and funding; recommending that members center their ideas around

what is right with technical schools, what is wrong, and what is needed. A member requested the mission statement of each school. The Chairman requested that staff summarize and coordinate the day's information and send the summary to Commission members.

In discussing the agenda for the next meeting (October 10-11) and a further meeting (November 7-8), these topics were suggested: 15-minute presentations by a representative from:

- The Community College Association;
- Pittsburg State's vocational training program;
- The welding industry;
- The meat-packing industry;
- The nascent bio-science industry;
- The automobile repair industry;
- The building contractor area; and
- The health-care arena.

The Chairman suggested members contact Audrey Dunkel, Kansas Legislative Research Department, with specific recommendations.

Mr. Robinson noted that the State of Georgia has extensive experience in technical education, and that information about best practices and pitfalls from other states might be helpful. Dr. Blake noted that the State Workforce Board is concurrently meeting to evaluate what postsecondary system will best meet the needs of the business community.

Members also requested the following information:

- A copy of the Northwest Education Research Center report making recommendations to the KBOR regarding postsecondary education. (Two are listed on the Regents' website, <http://www.kansasregents.org/download/>);
- The funding report by the KBOR regarding technical education;
- A staff report highlighting the similarities and differences of responses to the KBOR working paper;
- A list of program offerings from each technical school/college and the number of clock hours and students per course; and
- The Governor's demographic report and a list of where the jobs are.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:17 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, October 10, 2006, in Room 514-S of the Capitol.

Prepared by Gary Deeter
Edited by Audrey Dunkel

Approved by Commission on:

October 10, 2006
(date)