



Date: October 10, 2023

To: Chair Kristey Williams, Special Committee on Education

From: Jim Genandt, President, Kansas Technical Colleges

Re: Informational Briefing

Thank you for invitation to testify on behalf of the Kansas Association of Technical Colleges. I am here today to address the questions presented to the technical colleges by the Committee. We provided our members the Committee's questions and compiled their responses in the attached spreadsheet.

Overview

Kansas Technical Colleges represent a network of seven institutions dedicated to providing top-tier technical education and training programs that address the evolving workforce needs of Kansas. These institutions include Flint Hills Technical College, Manhattan Area Technical College, North Central Kansas Technical College, Northwest Kansas Technical College, Salina Area Technical College, Washburn Institute of Technology and WSU Campus of Applied Sciences and Technology (WSU Tech). Each college focuses on delivering programs aligned with regional occupational demands, ensuring students are well-prepared for high-demand, high-wage, and critical need careers. Kansas technical colleges play a pivotal role in fostering community and economic development, driving the state's growth and prosperity.

When it comes to training our next workforce and attracting more skilled jobs to our state, Kansas technical colleges are at the forefront. For more than 50 years, our state's technical colleges have trained and prepared students to meet the ever-changing demands of today's employers.

- **Kansas technical colleges rank among the best in the country**, with all seven colleges having ranked among the Top 10% in the nation of two-year colleges.
- **Technical colleges have higher graduation rates than other Kansas higher education institutions**, adding more than 40,000 highly skilled graduates to our state's workforce.
- **Technical colleges are the fastest growing in Kansas**, with a 12.62% jump in enrollment last year compared to decreased enrollment at the state's other higher education institutions. KBOR recently announced that Kansas Technical Colleges have had a full decade of consistent enrollment growth.

- **Enrollment figures for the fall 2023 semester show Kansas technical colleges continuing their upward trajectory.** Headcount enrollment has surged by 8.6% from the fall of 2022, while full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment has increased by 8.7%.
- **Job placement rates for Kansas technical college graduates remain consistently over 90%,** with more and more employers turning to technical colleges for the training that meets their workforce needs.

Each of the seven institutions comprising Kansas technical colleges is dedicated to addressing the unique needs of its region. From aerospace programs at WSU Tech to Precision Agriculture at Northwest Kansas Technical College and emerging semiconductor production capacity at Flint Hills Technical College, our colleges remain at the forefront of preparing students for high-demand, high-wage, and critical need careers. All technical colleges provide health care education in support of that critical industry for all of Kansas.

Senate Bill 155

A goal of Kansas education is to support secondary students who are eligible to participate in early college courses to have that opportunity in both general education and technical education areas. SB 155/Excel in CTE has been a rousing success in meeting its original intent of providing a path for secondary students to graduate from High School with credentials that accelerate their entry into the Kansas workforce. We have some suggestions for your consideration to further strengthen Excel in CTE and address more access for secondary students to general education courses with transferability.

Excel in CTE:

1. Consider reintroducing the incentives to the school districts for transportation to a college campus or center, as many students have more focus on meeting the postsecondary skills and requirements away from the high school setting.
2. Consider reintroducing incentives to the school districts for their students who complete the course for both secondary and postsecondary credit AND pass the industry-recognized credential or licensure. This reinforces the outcomes desired by the overall program.

General Education:

1. Consider funding to KBOR to provide a smaller scale of Excel in CTE for general education courses or implement a pilot using non-tiered funding to pay the two year colleges the complete formula reimbursement in exchange for not charging the students tuition and fees. Non-tiered funding is already in place and with some increase, could be similar to Excel in CTE for general education courses.

Technical Education Authority

The TEA was formed after the administration of the two-year colleges was moved from under the Department of Education to the Kansas Board of Regents in the early 2000's. Its establishment created a formal board focused solely on the two-year sector and the development of a robust technical education system. For the first time in history through the TEA, technical education and work force development has received the full attention of a body charged with providing continuity and access across the state of Kansas. KBOR staff and 2-year college leadership frequently discuss continuous improvement of processes and practices of the TEA to meet both the current education environment and to position the TEA for future challenges.

Since inception the TEA's composition of various appointing authorities has worked successfully for a well-balanced board. When the TEA was established, the Community College and the Technical College associations were each very intentionally given the ability to provide the Board of Regents their recommendation for appointment to the TEA. Those two appointments are two of the four KBOR appointments to the TEA. The intention at that time was not to provide either group with an advocate for that organization on the TEA, but to have meaningful input into the shaping of the TEA with qualified candidates concerning technical education and workforce development. We are concerned about any change that would allow the appointment of a TEA member that may create a conflict of interest.

Conclusion

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and answer your questions today. The legislature's continued investment in our state's Technical Colleges is crucial for the sustained growth of the Kansas workforce. This collaborative effort has driven progress and prosperity for Kansas, solidifying our commitment to excellence in education and workforce development.