



Senator Schodorf and members of the Committee:

I am Russell Plaschka, the Legislative Committee Chair for the Kansas Association of Career and Technical Educators as well as a secondary CTE instructor. KACTE has over 500 members involved in the delivery of career and technical education at the secondary level here in Kansas. We are affiliated with ACTE the national organization composed of more than 27,000 career and technical educators across America.

On behalf of KACTE I would like to thank you for recognizing the importance of Career and Technical Education in the lives of our students and the future of Kansas. We have always understood the importance of CTE to the Kansas economy and the impact our students have in bringing and keeping industry here in our state. We will continue to produce the best and brightest students that are career ready or have a clear plan of college and career.

KACTE supports the provisions of SB 361 that continues to maintain and direct funding for secondary programs that offer or are working towards offering industry recognized certifications. All CTE programs have pathways that students may specialize in and we are continuously working to offer more pathways for students to explore.

Some of our programs do not readily lend themselves to industry specific certifications, but we are currently working directly with business and industry as well as KSDE and KBOR in developing certifications that are industry driven and specific. For certificates to be meaningful to business and industry they must be industry driven. Many schools are providing a "stackable" certificate that states the students have passed and completed a program competent in all areas and that they are ready for the next level.

On behalf of KACTE I would encourage you to remove the 30 mile rule for closure of programs that is currently in the SB 361. Secondary programs are the lifeline to postsecondary programs providing the career exploration that our young people need to really find out if this is the path they wish to pursue. Before any provision like the 30 mile rule is enacted, we encourage you to allow the CTE system at both the secondary and post-secondary levels to work through the articulation, coordination and capacity issues that exist today to get this vertically integrated system of CTE successfully off the ground.

Our secondary CTE programs are the exploration, guidance and challenge for the high school student to help them hone in on their plan of study while still in high school. Within each CTE program there are numerous pathways that students are exposed to during their four years exposing them to those hands on activities that provide the basic skill set they need to move to the next level. CTE programs in the secondary school also provide those "soft skills" that industry tells us they need, such as: work ethic, customer relations, and understanding of the specific industry. Remember it was the secondary program that sparked and maintained that interest level for that student to choose CTE as a career option and pursue it into postsecondary programs.

Currently students have the opportunity in most areas to concurrently enroll in post-secondary CTE, but are often times met with transportation and tuition challenges that we believe SB 361 begins to solve with the larger plan the Governor has proposed this year.

SB 361 is a real step toward creating a more seamless system of career and technical education providing a prepared workforce for the state of Kansas. Thank you again for recognizing the importance of CTE to the future of Kansas.