

Senate Education Committee

**Testimony on SB 361
Excellence in Education Act – Career and Technical Education**

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Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee to address the Career and Technical Education provisions of SB 361, the Excellence in Education Act.

USA|Kansas applauds the Governor's stated support for education as the most important function of state government, as it impacts our most important resource -- our children.

While USA|Kansas maintains support for funding the current formula and believes we should work to restore funding over the next three to five years, we were very interested in working with you to strengthen our Career and Technical Education programs and prepare Kansas' future workforce.

Administrators believe that Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs play a vital role in making students "workforce ready." We also know that these programs are powerful tools for engaging students who may struggle to see the relevance in traditional "college-prep" programs.

We support the **allocation of funding to promote career and technical education**. Far too often, there is a perception that CTE programs are less rigorous and are the "fallback plan" for students. This couldn't be further from the truth. What we know is that high quality CTE programs are no less rigorous and, in fact, require mastery of the same standards included in the traditional college preparation programs. More recently, CTE programs have been recognized for their integration of 21st Century Skills and project-based curriculum.

USA|Kansas is encouraged to see that CTE programs are a priority for state leaders and are hopeful that, with all stakeholders working together, we can enact meaningful reform. The proposed plan encourages all partners – local schools, the Kansas State Department of Education and the Kansas Board of Regents to work together for students.

We like the concept of providing a **\$1,000 award** to school districts for each secondary student who graduates from high school with a CTE certificate in high demand occupations.

Administrators continue to **support concurrent enrollment**. We believe that allowing students to participate in these programs is essential to engaging students and preparing them for the

workforce and post-secondary education (whether that be technical college, community college or a four-year institution).

Administrators also believe that if there are **articulation agreements** – at the state or local level – and there is limited space available in the technical and community college CTE programs, then a viable option is to utilize concurrent enrollment to address concerns about duplicative programs. In this way, those courses could be used to help students earn post-secondary education credits and use existing infrastructure to do so. Every approved secondary pathway currently has an articulation agreement in place, many with concurrent credit attached.

Districts have already developed, staffed and equipped the articulated pathways. K-12 CTE aid can continue to support these programs, while partner colleges would receive credit hour aid and tuition assistance.

Recommendations

USA|Kansas recommends **removing the 30 mile limit** included in SB 361 to ensure that students continue to have access to programs. We believe that removing the 30-mile limit will address concerns related to:

- post-secondary institutions that are at capacity and cannot accept additional high school students;
- high schools that are currently collaborating with post-secondary institutions and delivering programs for students on-site;
- scheduling issues that may arise for high school students as a result of transportation to and from off-campus locations.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your continued support of education and for realizing the important of investing in education. Preparing our children requires a shared commitment, collaboration, and an open dialogue among all stakeholders. Thank you for your leadership and for being our partners in education.

The mission of United School Administrators of Kansas (USA|Kansas), through collaboration of member associations, is to serve, support, and develop educational leaders and to establish USA|Kansas as a significant force to improve education.

Kansas Association of Elementary School Principals
Kansas Association of Middle School Administrators
Kansas Association of School Business Officials
Kansas Association of School Personnel Administrators
Kansas Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators
Kansas Association of Secondary School Principals
Kansas Council of Career and Technical Education Administrators
Kansas School Public Relations Association
Kansas School Superintendents' Association