



To: House Education Committee

Date: March 11, 2019

Re: Senate Bill 71 – Post Secondary Technical Education Authority

Chairman Huebert and members of the committee: Thank you for the opportunity to provide the Kansas Association of Technical Colleges support for Senate Bill 71 regarding the Postsecondary Technical Education Authority. The Kansas Association of Technical Colleges (KATC) is a seven-college consortium promoting career and technical education in Kansas. Our members provide high demand, business driven technical education to our students. Our focus is workforce development and supplying business and industry with the employees they need to succeed.

The Kansas Postsecondary Technical Education Authority (TEA) was established by the Kansas Legislature in 2007. Your legislative predecessors, or perhaps even you yourself, created the functions of TEA under the auspices of the Kansas Board of Regents to make recommendations to the Regents regarding the coordination, statewide planning and improvements/enhancements to the postsecondary technical education system. The 12 appointed members represent the visionary leaders from among Kansas, whose goal is for Kansas to be a national leader of premier technical education by developing a highly prepared workforce. The technical programs available at Kansas Technical Colleges and Community Colleges stand as shining examples of their vision.

Who are the most productive and efficient colleges in Kansas? The metrics indicate it is those with technical programs. Technical colleges lead the state in graduation, completion, and employment rates year after year. The community colleges with technical programs are consistently measured on the same metrics and their technically-trained students achieve at the highest rates among their institutions. The TEA is solely focused on the most successful educational program that touches every part of Kansas.

The TEA mission is to “Drive the advancement of a robust technical education system to meet the needs of Kansas business and industry.” The TEA strategic priorities driving that mission are:

- Aligning Education with Business and Industry
- Aligning Educational Offerings within the System
- Enhancing System Participation
- Enhancing Funding for Technical Education
- Enhancing Legislation and Policy for System Growth
- Evaluating and Measuring System Effectiveness
- Develop Benchmarks and Accountability Standards

To meet the goals outlined in the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) Foresight 2020 publication, technical education must be the number one priority in Kansas. Eliminating the expiration of the postsecondary technical education authority will help ensure that future Kansas business and industry will have the workforce necessary to build infrastructure, manufacture goods, and provide technical service to the citizens of Kansas.

The TEA is performing the duties assigned to it effectively and efficiently. Members of the KBOR staff work directly with the authority to align programs whenever possible. Collaboration is essential for efficient use of public resources. The TEA is at the forefront of collaborative efforts. Moreover, recent trends in public finance have called on higher education partnerships with civic and private institutions. The TEA has encouraged such partnerships and served to promote the entrepreneurial spirit that brought the settlers into the state many years ago. The TEA has both blocked programs where unnecessary duplication would saturate the higher education market and has allowed competition when the public good is better served. The authority members come from diverse parts of our state and bring a perspective that, frankly, higher education leaders need to hear.

It is important to note that the Board of Regents is a coordinating body for the two-year institutions and a governing body for the universities. The TEA is solely focused on the needs of technical education. Continuing the TEA would ensure that technical education programs would be scrutinized by members who understand business and industry. Eliminating the TEA would place the onus on the Board of Regents directly and would serve to overwhelm their governing processes over the universities. Though the TEA is not a final say in the coordination process and governance, it serves to provide specific assistance to the Board of Regents on technical education issues.

The Kansas Association of Technical Colleges asks that you continue this successful board to provide a strong voice for technical education in Kansas.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Schears, President