

House Education Budget Committee

Written Testimony on

HB 2248

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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.

I am here today in opposition to HB 2248, a bill that would require K-12 public education to pay for the cost of remedial courses offered at the postsecondary level. We oppose this bill because of the financial implications for schools. However, I would also like to address what I believe to be the underlying issue of “assigning cost” and that is whether students are prepared for postsecondary education upon graduation.

Accountability for preparing students for post-secondary education and the workforce has never been higher. At both the federal and state levels, Kansas has supported policies that increase expectations for student performance and establish rigorous goals for student outcomes. To achieve these goals, K-12 and postsecondary education are working collaboratively to best serve students.

Students enter postsecondary education needing remedial coursework for a number of reasons, including circumstances that are well beyond the control of either the K-12 educational system or the Kansas Board of Regents. These factors may include changes in personal circumstance, a decision to take time off between high school graduation and college admission or a change in career choice.

It is also important to recognize that high school graduation requirements and college admissions requirements are not the same. Those students who graduate from high school and then decide to enter college without the Qualified Admissions curriculum or similar coursework will often need remedial courses.

Administrators believe that recent collaborative efforts by the Kansas State Department of Education and the Kansas Board of Regents are address concerns related to the alignment of

curriculum between K-12 and higher education. We further believe that that students are best served through these efforts.

Examples of collaboration and alignment

The Kansas State Department of Education and the Kansas Board of Regents are working together to ensure our students are prepared for post-secondary education and the workforce.

P-20 Educational Council. In 2008, the P-20 Educational Council was created in recognition that an integrated educational system, extending from early childhood to the workplace, is necessary to provide the high quality education and training essential to prepare Kansans for life and work in the 21st century. Traditionally each stage in the educational process (pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, elementary, high school, postsecondary education, and lifelong learning) has been considered a self-enclosed unit having little direct contact with the other sectors. Research and experience have demonstrated that effective education rests on aligning education sectors in an integrated way.

The Council was comprised of 22 members representing K-12 education, postsecondary education, and the state's business community. The Council sunset in December 2011 and, as part of their final recommendations to the Governor, the Council recommended that the work of the P-20 Educational Council be continued through a formal process.

Longitudinal Data System. The Kansas State Department of Education and the Kansas Board of Regents are utilizing a longitudinal data system that will track student progress from kindergarten through postsecondary education.

Common Core Standards. Kansas is one of forty-one states that has adopted these more rigorous standards. The Common Core standards are designed to be relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our students need for success in college and the workforce. The State Department of Education (KSDE) is currently rewriting state standards for math and language arts and will be phasing in new state assessments over the next three years. As part of this initiative, KSDE and KBOR are working together to ensure alignment with postsecondary requirements.

Qualified Admissions. The Kansas State Board of Regents recently amended the Qualified Admissions criteria and, effective this Fall, high school freshman will be required to meet additional math requirements prior to graduation.

Ultimately, the decision to offer remedial courses is made by the colleges and universities, however, we do believe that are students are best served when the education system works together for students.

I encourage you to vote against HB 2248 and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.