

Presentation to the
Kansas Board of Regents' State University Admissions Task Force

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On behalf of:

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The Kansas Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development
The Kansas Association of Secondary School Principals

The mission of United School Administrators of Kansas (USA|Kansas¹), 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.

First and foremost, thank you for the opportunity to participate in this dialogue on state university admissions policies and more specifically how our students are impacted by qualified admissions, concurrent enrollment and transfer policies.

Education administrators remain committed to ensuring that each and every child in Kansas receives a quality education that will help them reach their potential and become successful, productive adults. We also know that preparing our children requires a shared commitment, collaboration, and open dialogue among all shareholders – including K-12

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Kansas Association of Elementary School Principals (KAESP)
Kansas Association of Middle School Administrators (KAMSA)
Kansas Association of School Administrators (KASA)
Kansas Association of School Business Officials (KASBO)
Kansas Association of School Personnel Administrators (KASPA)
Kansas Assoc for Supervision and Curriculum Development (KASCD)
Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators (KASEA)
Kansas Association of Secondary School Principals (KASSP)
Kansas Council of Career and Technical Education Administrators (KCCTEA)
Kansas School Public Relations Association (KanSPRA)

education, institutions of higher education, the State Board of Education, and the Board of Regents.

In preparation for today's meeting, we surveyed districts and asked them to respond to the questions the Task Force presented:

- What is working with the current qualified admissions, concurrent enrollment, and transfer policies?
- What is not working with current policies?
- What are the stakeholder's recommendations for improvements in the policies?

Our presentation summarizes the feedback we received from districts and takes into account feedback that you will receive from our colleagues today. A complete transcript of district responses is included in the written testimony.

What is working with the current Qualified Admissions, concurrent enrollment and transfer policies?

Certain aspects of the current Qualified Admissions, concurrent enrollment, and transfer policies are [generally] working well. Concurrent enrollment and transfer policies offer opportunities for students to engage in thoughtful planning for high school and postsecondary education, while also encouraging greater participation in a rigorous curriculum. In some cases, participation in concurrent enrollment programs even seems to mitigate the impact of transitioning from high school to college.

The Qualified Admissions policy does a sound job of providing specific benchmarks that students must meet for acceptance to a Regents institution. While not directly related to the policies at hand, it is worth noting that the percentage of Kansas students with high school diplomas and post secondary degrees is at an all time high. The high school completion rate for Kansas students is nearly 86 percent, placing Kansas 13th in the nation and approximately 75 percent of graduating Kansas seniors continue on to pursue academic studies beyond high school.

It is difficult to ascertain how much of an impact the implementation of Qualified Admissions has had on the participation rate and success of Kansas students taking the ACT; however, more than 75 percent of high school seniors take college entrance exams – placing Kansas among the top 10 states nationwide. And, while the qualified admissions requirement states that students must score a 21 on the ACT, the Kansas composite ACT score is 21.9.

Concurrent enrollment and transfer policies enable students to earn college credit while still in high school. When *implemented* effectively, these policies can results in [tuition] cost savings for students.

It is also important to recognize that these policies encourage greater collaboration among K-12 and higher education in an effort to support Kansas students.

What is not working with current policies?

Currently, the K-12 education system is charged with ensuring students acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful, productive citizens. We are called upon to meet the state standards, the accountability requirements set forth in No Child Left Behind, and to increase students' competitiveness through mastery of 21st century skills (global literacy, problem solving, innovation, and creativity). Administrators and educators embrace these opportunities and are committed to providing students with opportunities to participate in rigorous and relevant curriculum

Unfortunately, there is an overarching concern that **Qualified Admissions standards are not aligned with state standards** and that postsecondary education standards are incongruent with changes that have occurred in K-12 education since the Qualified Admissions standards were adopted in 1996. There is also growing concern that the requirements for **concurrent enrollment and Qualified Admissions have too much influence over high school curriculum**, should a school district opt to participate. The most prevalent examples among districts include:

- the disconnect between the state graduation requirements and the Regents' requirements, related to physical science;
- integrated coursework not meeting the Qualified Admissions requirements; and
- antiquated technology standards in Qualified Admissions.

Districts are concerned that they are forced to choose between offering progressive, relevant curriculum that will best prepare students for 21st century skills and offering students the option to participate in concurrent enrollment courses that has been evaluated using dated standards – in some cases, districts opt out of offering a course for concurrent enrollment. While the student may be receiving more relevant instruction, they are also unable to realize the benefit of college credit and reduced tuition expense.

Inconsistencies in coordination and transfer/acceptance policies continue to be problematic and in some cases deter students from participating in concurrent enrollment programs. On a related matter, the number of hours awarded for successful completion of Advanced Placement (AP) coursework also varies from institution to institution. Administrators strongly believe that there must be more seamless transition and reciprocal agreements between community colleges and four-year colleges and universities.

Finally, smaller districts are finding it increasingly difficult to provide these opportunities for students. Many districts are struggling to find **the highly qualified staff** necessary to meet university requirements. Some districts are able to utilize advanced technology to provide alternative delivery methods, but others do not have the necessary infrastructure.

What are the stakeholder’s recommendations for improvements in the policies?

First and foremost, administrators believe that the Kansas Board of Regents and the Kansas State Board of Education *must* work together to ensure a seamless transition from K-12 to postsecondary education and better alignment of expectations. Administrators encourage the Kansas Board of Regents to review the suggested state standards, required curriculum, current licensure issues, and the highly qualified teacher requirements to better understand the current landscape in K-12 education.

The purpose of concurrent enrollment programs is to increase opportunities for students, unfortunately, inconsistent implementation and interpretation of policies can often impede these efforts. Transfer policies must be evaluated and allow for seamless transition throughout the community college and Regents university system. More specifically, administrators believe that courses taken for college credit should transfer similarly at *all* [Regent’s] colleges statewide. There should be universal agreement among community colleges and universities on course transfer policies; currently, this seems to be very subjective.

The ability to offer concurrent enrollment courses is largely impacted by the availability of qualified staff. Administrators encourage the Kansas Board of Regents and the Kansas State Board of Education to invest in the appropriate professional development and provide additional flexibility in the identification of staff to teach these courses. For example, allowing a teacher with a master’s degree and credit hours in the specified content area may be a viable option.

Overall, the greatest challenges and opportunities lie in our ability to better coordinate K-12 and post secondary education programs.

Conclusion

As the Task Force evaluates current policies and considers recommendations to enhance state university admissions systemically, administrators encourage the Board of Regents to consider:

- whether current concurrent enrollment and transfer policies have been implemented consistently throughout the state and
- the viability of removing the current practice of regionalization within the Regents system; districts should also have the ability to identify the post-secondary partner that best meets the needs of their student population.

Again, administrators remain committed to ensuring that each and every child in Kansas receives a quality education that will help them reach their potential and become successful, productive adults. We are prepared to work with our partners in education – institutions of higher education, the State Board of Education, and the Board of Regents – to provide opportunities for our students to engage in rigorous programs and enhance their prospects for success.

Attachment 1:**District responses to USA|Kansas Survey on Qualified Admissions, Concurrent Enrollment and Transfer policies - June 2008****What is working with the current Qualified Admissions, Concurrent Enrollment and Transfer policies?**

- It is great for students to be able to receive both college and high school credit concurrently.
- It works well.
- No problems with current policy
- The system is OK with the possible exception of acceptance of home school credits.
- The current procedures help our district with the enrollment needs of our students by allowing them the opportunity to take concurrent classes as upper level courses.
- Allowing classes that students can take and receive credit in college is working very well. Students are able to transfer everything. The community colleges and universities work well with us to provide these opportunities.
- The relationship we have with our community college is fantastic. They now have good communication with us and take care of all issues. This makes the program work well.
- According to my counselor we have been able to coordinate our local curriculum to meet QA policies; however we are not able to offer foreign language locally so this creates a problem for our students.
- It seems to work fine for us.
- Concurrent enrollment gives students an opportunity to gain college credit while still in high school. Qualified admissions is a guideline for what students need to have before entering college.
- It has caused our students to consider higher level courses in their high school planning. It also gives us an opportunity to partner with our closest community college and private university to encourage concurrent enrollment when appropriate.
- Works pretty well in most areas.
- It seems to work fine
- Working satisfactorily
- We feel that the concurrent enrollment is working with our students. The schools we partner with both work with us to meet the needs of kids.
- Qualified Admissions: A good step towards establishing standards for current high school students to meet if they are to be successful in college. Encourages students taking rigorous courses. However, admissions and scholarships are based too much on class rank and GPA which may cause students to take and parents to support taking less rigorous courses.
- Kansas Graduates are able to get into a state university.
- The Regents' bureaucrats can answer that best as they don't really want suggestions from those of us who are in K-12 education. We follow their rules like good lemmings.
- Concurrent Enrollment policies are great!
- I don't think it is that bad, I just have some concerns that I will list below.
- Students are taking harder classes than 10 years ago. ACT scores are up.

- We have a list of classes we try and provide for universities to review.
- Concurrent is working in KCK especially in relation to partnership with KCKCC. We are finding that concurrent classes bridge students to college. We are finding it a better alternative for our students in the comprehensive high schools than AP. Over 150 high school students in KCK are enrolled--60 from Wyandotte High School. We also participate in Dual enrollment with by using PrepKC funding (Bill and Melinda Gates) to transport our students to the KCKCC campus. This avenue helps poverty kids experience college while staying connected to their small learning communities to support them in the adjustment. One of the goals of KCK is to exit graduates college ready. We are doing more and beyond ACT prep to make sure the basic skills are solid.
- Concurrent enrollment allows students who are academically strong to begin their college careers. They can already have the credits for the classes that are typically difficult to get in to in the colleges due to them being pre-requisites for most other classes.
- It is good to have students attending Regents Institutions demonstrating that that they are qualified to succeed in college. A mere high school diploma with the student having taken the least rigorous schedule possible was a recipe for student/university failure in too many cases.
- The current situation certainly demands much from students that plan to matriculate to a State University governed by the regulations.
- The KBOR website where we can place our courses and make appropriate modifications works well.
- Good preparation for students attending 4- year college. Qualified Admissions help lay out an effective course of study for this group of students. Concurrent enrollment is an excellent opportunity for students to get a "jump" on college classes while finishing up their high school diploma. Transfer policies seem to be effective.
- I don't have any problems with the status quo. Students have several options for qualifying for admission.
- Encourages more students to take appropriate college prep courses.
- Most courses transfer easily.
- Students do start thinking about what they need to take to get into college sooner. It's not an automatic anymore that they will just be accepted.
- Currently, no major concerns. However, as the teacher shortage becomes more of an issue there will be problems for smaller school districts. (Examples: Foreign Language, upper level science and math, etc.)
- Sets some standards
- Know nothing about concurrent enrollment and transfer, but the QA is a joke--it deters only a small fraction of students from enrolling, but is a major pain in the rear for schools to comply.
- Qualified admissions - It is worth less and stops innovation in School Concurrent enrollment - Is great. Need more of it. Our students should have the option of graduating at 18 with their associate's degree if they choose.

What is NOT working with the current policies?

- The Qualified Admissions requirements for courses are not the same as what the Regents requires for college courses, therefore, a student enrolled in a college comp course may receive both an English high school credit and college credit, but the course may not meet the Regents requirements.
- N/A
- The state requiring a third year of science for non-college bound students creates some real enrollment/graduation challenges for vocational students, especially those attending area tech schools.
- It becomes exceedingly difficult to provide some of the courses required with Qualified Admissions as we currently do not have access to ITV to receive some of the courses if we are not able to offer them in house. The shortage of teachers available for hire is making a difficult situation for school districts to meet these requirements.
- None
- Smaller schools are finding it harder to hire qualified staff to be able to provide all the courses required to meet QA standards, especially state scholarship standards.
- All Colleges and Universities need to make sure they are inline with each other so there are no transfer issues. Some colleges do not do a very good job in accepting from others
- We would like to see Physical Science allowed as a QA course. It covers many of the Science content standards and is seen by my science teachers are needed prior to enrollment in Biology or Chemistry.
- My concern is with qualified admissions. It is an outdated policy that does not address a wider range of studies. It is promoted as being the only way to get a good start in regent colleges and to get scholarships. It limits what a student can take in high school.
- The qualified admissions requirements should not dictate what is taught in high schools. One size does NOT fit all in this case.
- Literature requirements in English can cause problems with concurrent courses through community colleges. Their composition courses do not always have what the KBOR wants.
- Very little at the moment
- Sciences. Physical science should be accepted.
- Language Arts is difficult sometimes because of the requirements of the college and the requirements of Regents but we make it work.
- Too much emphasis on GPA and class rank for scholarships and college admission. This invites students to avoid taking challenging courses and parents to support taking less rigorous classes to inflate student class rank and GPA.
- Qualified Admissions - Our courses change titles/names on a regular basis and keeping up the approved list is challenging. QA has also forced us to change our curriculum because Physical Science was not an approved course. Concurrent enrollment has been a challenge because the rules continue to change. Students interested in taking concurrent College Algebra classes must be tested in Reading. What does a Reading score have to do with taking College Algebra?
- Schools with Regents Universities in their county have trouble offering as many concurrent credit classes at the same price as schools working with comm. colleges. As a

result, some students and families are at a disadvantage regarding concurrent enrollment opportunities

- It is questionable when taking some Junior College courses as to how the courses will be granted credit at the major universities.
- If a potential student has the funds they are accepted into a university.
- (1) The Regents' "watchdogs" are very demanding and not understanding when it comes to course approval. English IV would be an example of this. (2) There does not appear to be good communication nor agreement between the Regents and K.S.D.E.
- Board of Regents and KSDE (State Assessments) MUST get together and make sure they are aligned to allow us to teach classes that meet the standards during the years testing is taking place.
- What is difficult for us is that it is tough to get some classes approved. I had a senior English class turned down twice because it didn't have enough literature. It was good enough for a university to accept the credit, but not for the regents to approve it at the high school level. Another problem is that if the high school is in a county which contains a regents university, then they have control over which dual credit classes we can offer. If the cost of the credits was similar, then it wouldn't be a big issue. Cloud County can teach a math class in our school, but if K-State decides that THEY want to teach the class, then they have that right. Why do they have this right in our school? The cost of the class is over twice as much for our parents and students for K-State to teach it as it is for Cloud County. That is HUGE for our kids and parents.
- Advanced Placement credit is NOT working. Each department in each university makes the determination on credit. These courses are MORE rigorous than most community college dual credit classes and should be recognized as such.
- How classes approved by BOR do not have anything to do with state standards and what schools need to teach.
- Physical Science not being recognized as part of the QA requirements
- We seem to be making the concurrent policies work for us.
- The Board of Regents and the state graduation requirements need to correspond better. The state requires biology, physical science, and an elective to graduate. The Board of Regents asks for Biology, Chemistry, and Physics specifically. They will not accept the Physical Science and the state says they won't accept the Chemistry or Physics for the Physical Science.
- Where the student takes the course having any impact on credit is really bizarre. With the majority of states middle schools offering algebra and geometry in middle school, these course should count toward any college requirements for admission.
- Qualified admission standards are not aligned with state standards.
- The demands are so high that there is little time for electives in a comprehensive high school.
- 1. KBOR should not change qualified admissions when they do not match KSDE standards; e.g. the physical science/Earth & Space Science debacle. 2. Community colleges have too much say on whether to sign off on concurrent classes. Our school has put a lot of money and time into our IDL lab, but Butler County Community College will not sign off on IDL offerings thru Cowley Co. and expects our school to use Butler's online courses instead.

- Students who are following the qualified admissions pathway do not have much room for exploratory classes. Concurrent enrollment works with the two-year colleges. However, many of the four-year schools are too rigid in their philosophies to work with the high school.
- Too many restrictions with regards to our teaching staff being "qualified" to teach dual credit courses.
- Algebra taken in grades 7 or 8 and taught by a teacher who is licensed to teach high school algebra (grades 9 and above) should count part of qualified admissions.
- Still tied to increasingly outdated course titles/structures (i.e. Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II) because we are afraid our students will have difficulty getting into college. Some students delay taking math or science courses so they occur in the final two years before college.
- Some courses are not accepted at one BOR school but are at another.
- Technology Standards in Qualified Admissions are antiquated. They are no longer necessary.
- We have never had anyone not accepted to a Regents University, even if they didn't make "the grade" as the universities want whomever they can get.
- May be too restrictive as it relates to State Scholars, scholarships, etc.
- The standards that are being set are not in line with the needs of the students if we are to prepare them to be productive in the 21st century.
- Certification issues resulting from QA policies--esp in regards to General Science vs. Earth-Space Science.
- Qualified admissions is stifling because we can not have integrated Courses and still meet their requirements.

What are your recommendations for improvement in the policies?

- If it is an approved college course, it should meet the Regents requirements without additional work of high school students. College courses should be harder than high school courses and students should be rewarded for enrolling in them.
- None at this time
- It would be nice if the requirements for Qualified Admissions and the NCAA requirements were the same.
- If Concurrent classes are allowed in the high schools, the transfer of these completed courses should apply to all regent schools. With the current shortage of qualified teachers available for schools in Kansas, especially in the areas of math and science, along with language arts, additional pressure has been placed on school districts to offer the upper level work that is required for the Regents' Admission. If some form of waiver could be in place for those years when a highly qualified math, science, or language arts' teacher is not in place, it would help students still qualify for admission to regent schools. There could be a restriction as to how many times a school district could apply for the waiver so that it doesn't become an annual application.
- None
- Allow more flexibility in the courses offered.
- Colleges and Universities need to communicate and continue to develop equal criteria.
- Review Physical Science as an addition to the QA policies.
- Eliminate or make it much broader.
- Eliminate qualified admissions.
- Someone needs to look at the literature problem cited above.
- None at this time
- Physical science qualification
- The concern I have is with instructor qualifications - they need to be relaxed to a master's with hours in the content area teaching. Also limiting the number of hours a kid can take is unfair if they are doing college work and paying for the credit.
- Select standardized tests or demonstrated skills for admissions and standardize the admissions criteria across the state of Kansas. This may already have been done or be well on the way to being established but we need to do all we can to support students being required and/or encouraged to take more challenging curricula for admissions into our colleges and universities and it must be consistent and standardized. Community Colleges would be the secondary route for students to prove their academic skills for reaching such standards. The same is true for technical schools (admissions and scholarships) although the skills may be more applied and demonstrated or project oriented. They should, however, be more rigorous which would make high school academic work more relevant to future success and opportunities and therefore more vital for serious student commitment. Transfer of credits must be made seamless throughout the state. Credits from high school, from high school to college or university, and from community college to 4 year institutions must be better standardized and seamless.
- Matching requirements for Kansas Assessments and Qualified admissions would make a great improvement. Both arenas continue to change their requirements and force the schools to figure out how to meet these changing needs. Surely the requirements for

educating high school students has enough in common with preparing students for college, that we wouldn't need two sets of curriculum requirements.

- All courses taken for college credit must have the same weight at every college in the state.
- Do we need to improve the policies or just enforce what is in place?
- Make the individuals who write the recommendations come and teach in a Kansas high school for one year, so they can find out what it is like to work with our students.
- KSDE and Board of Regents **MUST WORK TOGETHER!**
- Get rid of the regents dual credit policy and let local high schools decide which school should be teaching them in their school.
- Any student scoring a "3" or above in an AP course will receive credit at a Kansas Regents school. This will be true credit in that area, not elective credit.
- Get the universities to get after the AYP folks or make the BOR understand what we have to teach to get kids ready to pass a test so our school can make AYP. That seems more important than getting an engineer ready for college so unless something changes what are we supposed to do.
- Recognize Physical Science
- Most of KCK issues surround the issues of nondocumented students- most of our top graduates. The issues are not around entrance or performance in college but financial support for personal expenses....the policies do not interfere
- Keep a benchmark for students to qualify for admissions. Without the benchmark, colleges were forced to offer non-credit courses that students should have taken in high school. This was a drain on college resources. Have upper level courses taken in middle school count toward admission requirements to enter college.
- The Kansas Department of Education and the Kansas Board of Regents working together to close the gap.
- It is the age old question of what is wanted: Quality or quantity? I do suggest that the community colleges and universities agree on the transfer of credits. So many times, students are told that credits will transfer but it is not so. It may depend on the change of personnel in the admissions offices and the interpretation of the regulations. IT should be easier to do for a transfer student.
- I would suggest decisions and policies be made using people under KSDE and KBOR and that they work together to develop policies that help all students (adult and juvenile). If each works to consider the needs of all and work together to meet those needs in the best way possible, we will have a better working policy. This will require some compromise and the committee developing those policies will have to have the power to make decisions that cannot be rejected by either side's hierarchy.
- 1. Allow students to test out of Qualified admission classes and allow this to apply toward completion. 2. Make concurrent enrollment more flexible.
- Allow our teaching staff to teach dual credit courses and follow the respected curriculum.
- Flexibility in coursework allowed to meet the standards has improved. It is a difficult task given the variety of courses offered by high schools, but continued improvement in this area would be beneficial.
- If KSDE approved the courses and JuCo (dual credit) approved the courses, then all should be acceptable to transfer at any BOR school.

- KBOR needs to significantly and proactively expand concurrent enrollment options in the junior and senior years of high school. This expansion needs to provide equitable access to all Kansas students. The cost of attending college is becoming so prohibitive for low-income students that we will waste and or lose a great deal of human capital if we don't rethink delivery of higher education.
- I personally don't think sophomores should be taking college classes.
- Align the standards with the demands of 21st century on the students as they leave the K-12 school system.
- The curriculum standards on which the Regents determine the qualifications of high school courses to meet their standards have not been reviewed or revised since the advent of NCLB. In some cases there have been as many as three major revisions in state standards since the BoR set their standards. They need to take a look at what the "suggested" KSDE standards, current licensure issues, and what schools must comply with in regards to highly qualified staff and State BOE required curriculums. Long story short, the BofR is out of touch with the reality of current Kansas curricular requirements.
- Eliminate Qualified admissions