

KACCT

Kansas Association of Community College Trustees

Verbal In-Person Kansas Community College Testimony in Support of SB 32

Thank you for the opportunity today to testify in support of SB 32. Kansas Community Colleges support the K-12 system being able to both pay for students taking college classes and to transport students to properly accredited institutions of higher education such as Kansas Community Colleges. There are situations where students desire to take community college classes, but their parents lack of ability to afford tuition, fees, books, and transportation prohibit their enrollment.

This bill provides a critical access path to these students enabling them to take college classes while still in high school. The Unified School District (USD) is best equipped to understand the student's individual financial situation, and make decisions based on those needs, about whether the student needs assistance in funding enrollment in college classes. The USD also knows what resources they may have at their disposal which would be appropriate to fund such expenses. Allowing USD's to fund dual/concurrent classes for students ensures all students, regardless of their family's ability to pay, will have access to college classes while still in high school. Allowing the USD to provide transportation to the college is also a positive improvement for this bill. Transportation is also often a barrier for students to accessing classes. Having the ability for the school to transport the student ensures all students have access to higher education options regardless of any transportation barriers which may exist.

One thing to note is that the foster care youth who would have their tuition waived under the bill would be an unfunded mandate for the colleges. The foster care tuition waiver waives the fee for the student, but the college does not receive any tuition for that student from any source. It is estimated that up to 2000 foster kids would be in grads 9-12. It is unknown what portion of those may be juniors and seniors who are academically prepared to participate in these classes.

While supportive of the bill, Kansas Community Colleges suggested a few friendly amendments in the Senate to the transferability of courses portion of the bill. This section is particularly important to ensure that the course will transfer. On page 3, line 27 a technical amendment was included indicate transferability to a in-state post-secondary institution. The reason for the amendment was that our colleges would not know how the course may transfer at colleges outside the state. Also, on page 4, line 33-34 we recommended an amendment to correct what we believe was wording which may have had unintended consequences given some changes with how KBOR has been handling technical courses and programs in the last year. While we believed that this section was trying to carve out SB 155 classes, there are other technical education classes which the bill may have intended to not exclude from payment. The amendment was needed to clarify that no class that is covered through SB 155/Excel in CTE funding should be paid for rather than saying no technical education classes may be funded by the USD. There are technical education classes which a student may want to enroll in which are not eligible for SB 155/Excel in CTE payment. This was a very technical amendment, but the clarification may avoid a situation where a USD unknowingly pays for a technical education class which is not SB 155/Excel in CTE eligible (USD's would not necessarily be aware that a course may be a technical education course but not eligible for SB 155/Excel in CTE funding eligible). The bills intent was to ensure that the current SB 155/Excel in CTE process stays in place but all other courses could be funded which is why the amendment was needed.

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