

## BOARD OF REGENTS DUAL/CONCURRENT TASK FORCE

### RECOMMENDATIONS

June 14, 2023

The Kansas Board of Regents established a Dual Task Force in July 2022 charged to develop recommendations designed to accelerate the Kansas talent pipeline, ensure access and affordability of opportunities, and structurally strengthen collaboration between education systems. The Task Force is comprised of representatives of the Kansas Board of Regents, community and technical colleges, Kansas State Department of Education, and Unified School District superintendents.

The Task Force met multiple times over the past twelve months. We agreed to have rigorous conversations, always keeping the focus on creating opportunities for Kansas students. The Task Force coalesced around the vision of A Credential, Certificate or Degree for Every Graduate. We identified challenges and opportunities important to realizing this vision and most importantly to preparing our students for their future.

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2018, Kansas was ranked 40<sup>th</sup> in the nation for working age population. Our state was 44<sup>th</sup> in out migration and was identified as having an over-abundance of low wage, low skilled jobs (McKinsey 2018). Today, Kansas has secured significant economic investment in high growth, high skilled jobs that trend toward technology driven emerging markets. These investments are accelerating opportunity for a highly skilled and educated workforce.

To be part of our rapidly growing economy, “Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce” identified that 72 percent of Kansas jobs require some level of postsecondary education and training. The Kansas Department of Education reported in 2020 that just under 55% of graduates obtained a certificate, credential, or degree within two years of graduating. In the same period, Lumina reported 52% of Kansans held a certificate, credential, or degree. These indicators suggest a 17-20 percent gap in attainment and preparation during a period when Kansas is experiencing exponential growth in high skilled, high demand, and emerging market jobs. Deeper examination of attainment levels paints the picture that various population groups are facing an even steeper skills gap.

Conversely, over the past decade Kansas has become a national leader in career and technical education (CTE) through the Excel in CTE (SB 155) program. Excel in CTE allows for high school students to take technical education classes without paying tuition. Kansas has also expanded dual enrollment offerings, facilitated by community and technical college partnerships with local school districts. Kansas statewide investments are expanding to include the Challenge Act, Promise Act, newly adopted Federal Application for Financial Aid (FAFSA) graduation requirement, Kansas Comprehensive Grant – needs based aid, and numerous partnerships at the local or grassroots level. Kansas is well positioned to build on its successes and create pathways to learn, earn, and live in Kansas.

## **KANSAS BUILDS FORWARD**

The Diploma Plus Program is designed to accelerate the Kansas talent pipeline, ensure access and affordability for all Kansas students, and strengthen collaboration between education systems. The Diploma Plus Program will be a key pillar for Kansas to continue to build toward a prosperous future. Diploma Plus will expand access, address affordability, and accelerate our talent pipeline through dual enrollment and credit offerings to high school students.

What is Dual and Concurrent Enrollment and Dual Credit? Dual enrollment is an encompassing term referring to programs that offer high school students the opportunity to access college-level coursework. The term “dual credit” means the student earns credit toward high school graduation while simultaneously earning college credit. Concurrent enrollment is another term utilized when the course is taught by a qualified high school instructor contracted by a postsecondary institution to teach the course. Delivery modalities for dual and concurrent vary from on-campus to on-line courses.

Research demonstrates the positive effects of dual enrollment. In 2022, Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) reported that Kansas seniors earned 133,206 college credits through a variety of partnerships with community and technical colleges, independent colleges, and universities. The Kansas experience supports that graduating high school with a diploma plus industry recognized credentials, certificates, and degrees promotes greater access, contributes to affordability, encourages completion, and aids in a better prepared workforce.

While the landscape is promising, Kansas Higher Education Statistics shows participation is not representative across student groups, or across regions in Kansas. Of the participants:

- 54% were female, 46% male
- 68% white, 13% Hispanic, 3% black, 7% other, 9% unknown and
- 34% reported lower socio-economic status (source KSDE)

The data indicate that Kansas urban centers have higher participation than other areas. Kansas Higher Education Statistics reports an unduplicated count of dual participants (for AY 2022) revealing uneven engagement throughout counties: (1) Sedgwick County 5,169, (2) Johnson County 5,036, (3) Shawnee County 1,865, (4) Wyandotte County 1,057, and (5) Douglas County 771. Students from the five counties comprise 42% of the 2022 high school headcount participating in some form of postsecondary coursework. The remaining 100 counties represent 58% of students enrolled in postsecondary courses.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The taskforce recommends the Board of Regents and the State Board of Education jointly adopt a statewide policy to **Establish the Diploma Plus Program** to offer at least 3 dual enrollment courses (9 credit hours) in **all** Kansas public high schools. The courses offered must be identified as Board of Regents approved systemwide general education transfer courses.

To fully realize the impact of the recommended policy the following actions are recommended:

- A. 1. The Board of Regents, in cooperation with the State Board of Education, shall actively encourage enrollment in postsecondary courses of eligible high school students.
2. Local school boards shall be encouraged to adopt policy which recognizes all dual enrollment as dual credit and count the credit toward high school graduation.
3. The Board of Regents, working in coordination with the postsecondary education system, shall establish uniform enrollment requirements with an emphasis on determining course readiness utilizing multiple measures.
4. The Board of Regents, State Board of Education and the Kansas State Department of Education are encouraged to jointly create “educational award” pathways offering introductory courses in the high schools (beginning with education, healthcare, engineering, Information Technology, data science, and cybersecurity).
- B. 1. Subject to appropriations, a high school student certified as eligible to receive free or reduced meals by the Federal Free Lunch Program, and who is academically eligible, may apply to receive tuition and fee assistance for up to 24 course credit hours.
- a. The program will utilize state authorized funding to pay a credit hour rate, agreed upon by each participating colleges governing board, to cover 100% of the tuition and fees for students deemed eligible, with an annual appropriation of \$11,000,000. This amount shall be increased by the consumer price index each year to adjust for rising costs. Participation shall be granted to those eligible up to the total annual appropriations.
- b. Nothing in this recommendation shall prohibit or limit scholarships or funding investments for any eligible student as determined at the local level.
2. Subject to annual state appropriations of \$2,600,000, or locally identified resources, College and Career Navigators shall be deployed to work in collaboration with each Kansas public high school as a resource to students and families focused on access, affordability, and planning (including enrollment, financial aid, course planning, and general system navigation).
3. The State Board of Education, Board of Regents in coordination with the community and technical colleges, shall prepare educational materials explaining the requirements, features and opportunities of dual enrollment and shall encourage each school district to distribute the materials to students and families as part of the annual enrollment process.