

**KANSAS POSTSECONDARY
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY**
MINUTES
October 23, 2025

The Kansas Postsecondary Technical Education Authority (TEA) meeting was called to order by Chair David Reist at 10:00 a.m. on October 23, 2025. The meeting was held at the Board Office, Curits State Office Building, 1000 SW Jackson, Ste. 520, Topeka, Kansas.

MEMBERS PRESENT:	David Reist, Chair	Keith Humphrey	Dr. Tiffany Anderson
	Curtis Sneden,	Debra Mikulka	Amber Shultz
	Vice Chair (via Zoom)	Todd Zimmer	
	Ray Frederick	Mike Beene	
	Cindy Hoover (via Zoom)	Natalie Clark	

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Member Sneden moved to approve the minutes for the August 21, 2025, and September 11, 2025, meetings. Member Beene seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

INTRODUCTIONS & REPORTS

INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Tiffany Anderson introduced Mr. Dustin Dick, Principal of Topeka High, TCALC, and Lead Principal for all district high schools, highlighting his leadership in secondary education and CTE. Mr. Dick shared the launch of a full-service Envista Credit Union branch inside Topeka High, called the Trojan Vault. Unlike typical school banks, this branch offers students real accounts with debit cards and checkbooks. Envista staffs the branch with a manager and hires students as paid interns, who receive formal training and real-world banking experience. The ribbon-cutting took place on October 15, marking what may be the first actual bank branch inside a Kansas high school. The bank operates during lunch, Tuesday through Friday, and currently employs five student interns. Dr. Anderson noted the presence of state officials at the event and emphasized the broader impact on students pursuing careers in business and finance. She also highlighted other student-run ventures at the school, reinforcing the district's commitment to hands-on learning and career pathways.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Chair Reist expressed appreciation for the progress made by the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Taskforce, which was established at the previous meeting. He noted that the Taskforce has held two productive meetings and reached a consensus, resulting in a recommendation being presented to the full Authority. He thanked all participants for their time and contributions.

REPORT FROM TEA MEMBERS

Member Frederick shared his experience attending the Workforce Innovation Conference in Salina, themed Forging the Future: Workforce Transformation Through Partnerships. He emphasized the conference's strong focus on collaboration across sectors, particularly in supporting justice-involved youth. He highlighted a compelling workshop on successful reentry strategies for youth in correctional facilities, noting the importance of partnerships among educators, correctional staff, and employers. Member Frederick praised the work of Dean Scott Smathers and Washburn Tech for their impactful programs within the Topeka facility, which equip youth with certifications, life skills, and employment opportunities upon release. He shared a success story of a young man who, after earning certifications and saving money while in the facility, secured a well-paying job with EB Construction in Wichita immediately upon release. Member Frederick also congratulated Tobias Wood and Ben Shears for their presentations at the conference and thanked Member Beene for his leadership. Member Beene acknowledged Vice President April White and the KBOR Workforce Development staff for their key roles in organizing and supporting the event.

REPORT FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

April White, Vice President for Workforce Development, began by expressing her enthusiasm for the new student-run bank at Topeka High, noting her personal connection as a former student. She then shared several updates from recent events and initiatives. On September 16, Pittsburg State University welcomed its new president, Dr. Thomas Newsom. Vice President White also highlighted the success of the Workforce Innovation Conference, which drew over two hundred attendees and focused on workforce transformation through partnerships. From October 6–8, she attended the Complete College America Policy Academy, where efforts are underway to evaluate the effectiveness of math pathways and remedial education, in collaboration with the Academic Affairs Unit and faculty from across Kansas.

On October 10, the Kansas Core Outcome Group met to review more than twenty system-wide transfer courses and develop seven new ones. She thanked Brad Bennett, Seward County Community College President, for hosting the event. Vice President White also introduced a new initiative aimed at supporting internationally trained professionals living in Kansas by helping them align their foreign education with local workforce needs. Additionally, she reported on the first meeting regarding the proposed 90-hour baccalaureate degree, a concept that will require further exploration with colleges and the Academic Affairs staff.

Vice President White reminded institutions that Excel in CTE fee data collection was due by October 31 and noted that, despite the ongoing federal government shutdown, there have been no disruptions to Adult Education or Perkins funding. Looking ahead, she will participate in a Rural Talent Development Policy Academy in North Carolina and begin a tour of Western Kansas schools in early November, weather permitting.

REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Amber Knoettgen, President of Cloud County Community College, began by acknowledging the strong participation of community colleges in the Workforce Innovation Conference and expressed appreciation for the valuable training and guidance provided. She noted ongoing efforts to submit Excel in CTE data and thanked Vice President White for her coordination. President Knoettgen emphasized the importance of including community and technical colleges in the 90-hour baccalaureate degree Taskforce, stating that their input is valuable. She also expressed pride in the work being done through the Excel in CTE Taskforce, highlighting the progress made despite challenges.

In her report on community colleges, President Knoettgen shared that she has implemented a monthly reporting schedule for all nineteen institutions, aligning their updates with both the Kansas Board of Regents' strategic plan and the goals of the TEA. This month's focus is on affordability and access, with particular attention to student loan debt. She highlighted data showing that community colleges maintain significantly lower student loan debt—45% lower for Pell recipients and 23.2% lower for non-Pell recipients—compared to other sectors. She attributed this to efforts such as fee waivers, use of Open Educational Resources (OER), increased foundation support, and targeted scholarship programs. Some colleges also offer credit incentives to help near-completers finish their degrees.

President Knoettgen concluded by referencing recent press releases included in the report and noted that more updates are expected next month. In response to a question from Chair Reist about how colleges offset reduced student costs, she explained that community colleges operate efficiently with limited resources, rely heavily on growing their foundations, pursue grants, and maintain strong partnerships with industry and school districts to support students and reduce financial barriers.

REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Greg Nichols, President of Salina Technical College, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to represent Kansas technical colleges and highlighted their continued alignment with the goals of the Technical Education Authority (TEA) and the Kansas Board of Regents. He encouraged attendees to review the full report, which includes numerous examples of how technical colleges are advancing affordability, access, and workforce development across the state. President Nichols noted that technical colleges have demonstrated consistent growth in state-funded

resident enrollment over the past decade, despite recent enrollment challenges. He emphasized that institutions are investing in programs tailored to their regional service areas while contributing to statewide initiatives.

On affordability, President Nichols highlighted Flint Hills Technical College's Rathke scholarships, which help students cover tool costs, and Manhattan Area Technical College's recognition by WalletHub as the second-ranked two-year college nationally. He also mentioned Fort Hays Northwest's partnership with the University of Kansas to support medical assistant students in western Kansas. Several colleges, including Salina Tech and WSU Tech, have maintained tuition rates without increases, reflecting a commitment to keeping education affordable.

In terms of access, President Nichols shared that WSU Tech hosted over 1,500 middle school students to introduce them to technical career pathways. Salina Tech launched a part-time practical nursing program to accommodate students unable to attend full-time, offering a path to significantly increase their earning potential. He also noted institutional scholarships for rural students at Fort Hays Northwest and strong community partnerships at Manhattan Tech, including collaborations with Fort Riley and local school districts. Flint Hills Technical College reported record enrollment in its Adult Education Center, and Washburn Tech anticipates growth in enrollment as well.

President Nichols concluded by celebrating notable achievements, including a major donation to Washburn Tech resulting in the renaming of its Huntoon Campus to the Bruce and Teresa McPherson Campus. He also recognized Sheree Utash, President of WSU Tech, feature on Mike Rowe's podcast, *The Way I Heard It*, as a proud moment for technical college leadership.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

OTHER MATTERS

RECEIVE INFORMATION ON THE STATE OF KANSAS NURSING IN KANSAS REPORT, VOLUME 2

Barbara MacArthur, Director for Kansas Nursing Workforce Center, presented an update on the state of nursing in Kansas. She highlighted the Center's growth since its founding two years ago and its role as the 41st nursing workforce center in the U.S., now part of a network of forty-eight. The Center published its first report in 2024, offering a snapshot of nursing data from 2022. The 2025 report expands on this with a decade's worth of data, enabling trend analysis across education, employment, and public health outcomes. Key findings include a decline in the number of licensed RNs and LPNs in Kansas, an aging nursing workforce, and a projected 25% retirement rate within five years. These trends are especially concerning given Kansas's aging population and the critical role nurses play in improving public health outcomes.

Director MacArthur emphasized the importance of understanding not just licensing numbers but actual workforce participation and geographic distribution. She introduced a major initiative: a centralized nursing school application system, modeled after systems used in other disciplines and states. This system aims to simplify the application process, increase accessibility, and provide better data on applicant demographics and trends. The initiative is supported by a grant from the Kansas Board of Regents and is designed to reduce economic barriers for students while offering schools and employers valuable insights.

The Center has partnered with HOSA (Health Occupation Students of America) to engage high school students interested in healthcare careers. Surveys and focus groups revealed that students often feel overwhelmed by the application process and lack clarity on educational pathways. The centralized system will allow students to apply to multiple nursing programs with one application, track their progress, and receive guidance through navigators or coaches.

Discussion among TEA members raised concerns about readiness levels, support systems such as childcare and housing, and the need for alignment between student needs and institutional resources. Director MacArthur acknowledged these challenges and shared examples of employer-led solutions, such as Hays Med's investment in childcare to retain nursing staff. She also addressed the impact of negative messaging about nursing careers and stressed the importance of real-world exposure and mentorship to inspire future nurses.

Vice President White noted the potential of the centralized application system as a recruitment tool for Kansas colleges and highlighted existing scholarship programs that make in-state nursing education financially attractive. Director MacArthur confirmed that the system is managed by an external vendor and reiterated the importance of personalized support for applicants navigating complex career pathways. The pilot program is currently grant-funded, with future funding models to be explored based on its success and stakeholder engagement.

RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Member Clark, Assistant Director of Career, Standards and Assessment Services at the Kansas Department of Education (KSDE), provided an update on Kansas' education and career readiness initiatives. She began by outlining the Kansas School Improvement Model and the implementation of KESA 2.0, which focuses on four core fundamentals: structured literacy, standards alignment, balanced assessment, and quality instruction. These elements guide districts in selecting high-leverage actions to improve student outcomes. Clark introduced the updated Kansas Career Cluster Guidance Handbook for 2026–2027, noting that schools can begin applying for clusters starting November 15. Kansas has adopted thirteen career clusters aligned with national standards and labor market data, replacing the previous 14-cluster model to better reflect the state's workforce needs.

The updated model introduces industry-aligned pathways and NAICS codes to strengthen connections between education and employment. Career exploration begins in elementary school with industry awareness, expands in middle school with cluster identification, and culminates in high school with pathway specialization. Member Clark emphasized the importance of helping students identify interests and career goals early through tools like career interest inventories and cluster groupings. She highlighted new clusters such as Energy and Natural Resources and updated pathways in business, manufacturing, healthcare, and digital technology.

Member Clark also discussed the integration of labor market data and collaboration with industry partners like Textron, Garmin, and others to refine cluster content. She shared performance data showing that CTE concentrators consistently outperform their peers in graduation rates and academic proficiency in reading, math, and science. To support informed decision-making, KSDE developed a CTE Resource Guide for students and families, outlining multiple entry and exit points across educational levels and linking to relevant credentials, certifications, and career opportunities.

Looking ahead, KSDE plans to collaborate with the Board of Regents to align SOC codes with clusters, inventory postsecondary credentials by CIP code and pathway, and ensure resource guides remain current. Member Clark concluded by emphasizing the importance of early exposure to career pathways and the role of individual plans of study in promoting college and career readiness.

RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Emilie Doerksen, Labor Economist at the Kansas Department of Labor, presented an overview of the newly developed Occupational Employment Demand (OED) List, which replaces the previous high-demand list. The change was prompted by the discontinuation of short-term projections due to federal requirements. The OED List incorporates three key indicators: high demand, emerging demand, and high wage. High demand reflects occupations with the greatest number of projected openings, while emerging demand highlights those expected to grow significantly over the next decade. High wage occupations are those with earnings above the regional median or mean. The data sources include current job postings from Geographic Solutions, long-term employment projections, and the Kansas Wage Survey. The methodology normalizes data to ensure balanced scoring across indicators. The list includes all occupations, allowing users to filter by criteria such as demand level, wage, and education requirements. For example, occupations requiring a postsecondary non-degree award that meet all three indicators include truck drivers, licensed practical nurses, and automotive technicians. The Excel-based list is available on the department's website, with built-in filters and regional breakdowns. Additional resources and a monthly newsletter are offered for ongoing updates.

EXCEL IN CTE TASKFORCE UPDATE

Charmine Chambers, Director for Workforce Development, presented recommendations proposed by the Excel in CTE Taskforce. The first recommendation is to develop and implement additional guidelines surrounding policy to address students failing coursework. While institutions have individual policies addressing this issue, the Taskforce recommends systemwide guidelines to ensure greater system-wide consistency. Member Sneden moved to approve the first recommendation. Member Beene seconded. The motion passed.

The second recommendation is to partner with Academic Affairs to establish and apply consistent system-wide guidelines for implementing placement measures for Excel in CTE students. Member Beene moved to approve the second recommendation. Member Humphrey seconded. The motion passed.

The third recommendation by the Taskforce suggests using the Kansas Promise Act Scholarship eligible program framework to guide prioritization of Excel in CTE program eligibility and funding. Under this framework, only programs within the areas of study identified by the legislature as priority workforce sectors—and whose corresponding occupations which are classified as high-demand, high-wage, or critical-need—would be eligible for Excel in CTE funding. As a next step, the Taskforce will conduct further analysis and discussion of approximately 30 CIP Codes to determine their eligibility and alignment with the prioritization criteria. The Authority had an extensive discussion regarding its potential impact on business-related clusters, rural community participation, and with concerns about limiting student access to tuition-free courses in areas not currently covered by the Promise Act. Members emphasized the need for flexibility, alignment with K–12 pathways, and consideration of socioeconomic factors. Member Frederick moved to approve the recommendation as presented. Member Zimmer seconded, and the motion passed 5-4 by roll-call vote. Members Humphrey, Beene, Frederick, Zimmer, and Chair Reist voted in favor of the motion. Members Anderson, Mikulka, Clark, and Angela White (sitting in for Amber Schultz) voted against the motion. Members Sneden and Hoover were absent, as they were no longer on the call.

2025-2026 TEA GOALS

Vice President White presented the proposed goals for the TEA for the 2025–2026 academic year, developed through committee discussions and staff analysis of current needs and priorities. The first goal is to modernize and transition to the new cluster framework, which will impact Promise Act alignment, KTIP reporting, and program classification, particularly in relation to K–12 pathways. The second goal addresses military service articulation, aiming to assess current data and identify gaps or mismatches between occupations and educational pathways. The third goal revisits the statutory requirement to review new and existing programs, a process paused during the pandemic. The fourth goal focuses on identifying and sharing best practices from institutions with minimal or no student fees, with the intent to replicate successful models statewide. The fifth goal pertains to fulfilling obligations under House Bill 2195, which requires TEA collaboration with technical colleges on specific operational goals. The sixth goal includes follow-up actions from the Excel in CTE Taskforce, such as standardizing withdrawal and failure policies, refining placement score criteria, and reviewing additional programs. Lastly, the seventh goal seeks to diversify adult education funding in anticipation of potential reductions in federal support. Vice President White invited feedback and emphasized that these goals reflect both committee input and operational necessities.

Member Beene moved to approve the goals for the 2025-2026 academic year. Member Anderson seconded. The motion passed.

VI. NEXT MEETING REMINDER

Chair Reist closed by reminding members that the next TEA meeting will be held virtually on November 20, 2025.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Reist adjourned the meeting at 12:48 p.m.