

KANSAS POSTSECONDARY TECHNICAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY MINUTES

The Kansas Postsecondary Technical Education Authority (TEA) meeting was called to order by Chair David Reist at 10:00 a.m. on January 22, 2026. The meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

MEMBER’S PRESENT:	David Reist, Chair	Debra Mikulka	Angela White
	Curtis Sneden, Vice Chair	Mike Beene	Dr. Tiffany Anderson
	Cindy Hoover	Natalie Clark	Ray Frederick, Jr
	Todd Zimmer	Keith Humphrey	

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Member Sneden moved to approve the minutes for the November 20, 2025, meeting. Member Mikulka seconded the motion. The motion carried.

INTRODUCTIONS & REPORTS

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The chair reported that there was little information to share during this meeting. He noted having a positive holiday season and expressed hope that others experienced the same. He acknowledged that the legislature resumed its session on January 12 and emphasized his respect for the work legislators perform.

REPORT FROM TEA MEMBERS

Member Beene reported he visited Fort Scott Community College, where he met with President Jack Welch and discussed several promising initiatives underway at the college. He expressed confidence in the direction of their work following a productive conversation. He also attended an event at Emporia State University announcing new articulation agreements with all Kansas community colleges. He noted that this initiative is not only significant for Kansas but also distinctive at the national level.

Member Clark reported on a successful Citizenship Day held earlier in the month, where representatives from the Board of Regents attended sessions featuring student leaders from all eight state-supported Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs). These students addressed the State Board of Education before visiting the Capitol to observe legislative committee meetings and speak directly with lawmakers. She also highlighted the Career Tech Vision National CTE Conference in December, where state affiliate, Kansas Association for Career Technical Education (KACTE), received bronze recognition for its organizational achievements. She noted that both secondary and postsecondary members were present for the honor and extended congratulations to KACTE.

Member Anderson reported ongoing collaboration with superintendents in the region to gather feedback on Career and Technical Education (CTE). She explained that she is collecting input to capture perspectives not only on the importance of CTE but also on aspects that may receive less emphasis in the K–12 environment. She plans to share this collective feedback with the Kansas Postsecondary Technical Education Authority (TEA) next month to ensure that emerging opportunities—such as new pathways, MOUs, articulation agreements, and successful collaborations—remain at the forefront of their discussions. While she can speak specifically to developments in Topeka, she emphasized her intention to include voices from across Kansas, particularly rural areas.

REPORT FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

April White, Vice President for Workforce Development, reported that staff recently completed the required federal report for the Adult Education and Family Literacy grant (Adult Ed), submitted on December 31, and have not received any compliance concerns to date. The team is now preparing the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (Perkins) submission, coordinated jointly with KSDE, with data submission scheduled to begin next week.

and a final deadline of January 31. She shared that indications reflect both the U.S. House and Senate currently support level funding for Adult Education and Perkins programs—an improvement from earlier expectations of potential cuts. The House vote is anticipated this week, followed by the Senate next week.

Vice President White also shared the Board is transitioning to a new online document system, Onboard, which will gradually replace the existing packet process. While printed packets will continue during a hybrid period, members can expect to receive training on the new system. Members will receive an email with more information soon.

She concluded with information about the upcoming Virtual Health Care Career Day hosted by the Kansas Hospital Association, Kansas State Department of Education, and the Kansas Board of Regents on February 18. Last year's participation included more than 4,000 students from two hundred schools ranging from kindergarten through adult education. She recognized ten colleges for their support and gave special acknowledgment to the seven institutions that contributed videos: Barton Community College, Cloud County Community College, Kansas City Kansas Community College, Johnson County Community College, Neosho Community College, Washburn University, and Wichita State University Campus of Applied Sciences and Technology.

REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Amber Knoettgen, President of Cloud County Community College, reported that Kansas community colleges have begun a strong and active spring semester while simultaneously engaging in the current legislative session. She noted that community college representatives recently attended the Board of Regents meeting, followed by a “Donuts with Legislators” event that allowed presidents to connect with local senators and representatives as the legislative session opened. This month's sector report centers on the community colleges' contributions to Kansas' talent pipeline and highlights key findings from the Lightcast economic impact study for fiscal year 2021–2022. According to the study, community colleges added \$6.7 billion to the Kansas economy, accounted for 3.3% of the state's gross product, and supported more than 106,000 jobs—demonstrating that one out of every eighteen jobs in Kansas is influenced by the community college sector.

President Knoettgen also asked each of the institutions to outline how the Kansas Promise Scholarship Act has strengthened their ability to grow and retain local talent. Several institutions emphasized that approximately 70% of their graduates remain within their service areas, underscoring the sector's essential role in sustaining regional workforce needs and dispelling assumptions that students leave after completing their education. The report concludes with recent news and partnership highlights across community colleges, including the Emporia State University agreement event. President Knoettgen also previewed Community College Day at the Capitol on January 26, during which institutions will showcase signature programs and bring students to share their experiences.

REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Greg Nichols, President of Salina Technical College, presented the report for the technical colleges, emphasizing their strong start to the spring semester and continued alignment with Board of Regents goals. He highlighted statewide successes supported by both public and private partners, including Flint Hills Technical College's Patterson Family Foundation grant to expand its dental hygiene program. He also noted that five Kansas technical colleges were named to the expanded Aspen Top 200 list, reflecting the high quality of technical education across the state.

President Nichols reported strong student performance, particularly among high school participants in technical programs, where success rates routinely exceed 90%. At Salina Tech, 92% of Excel in CTE students earned passing

grades, a trend consistent with systemwide outcomes. He emphasized that hands-on learning supports student engagement and contributes to high achievement levels.

Workforce outcomes remain a key strength for the technical college system. According to the KTIP report, 86.7% of graduates stay in Kansas, and five of the seven institutions exceed 90% job placement within the state. Among students who declare a major, 59% complete at least a one-year certificate or associate degree, while 71% of program concentrators complete their chosen field. Nichols acknowledged that some students enter the workforce before finishing a credential, which benefits employers even as it impacts institutional completion metrics.

President Nichols also shared notable regional highlights, including WSU Tech enrolling over 3,500 high school students in its JumpStart and Excel in CTE programs, and Washburn Tech's multi-state Scouting Merit Badge Day, which helped youth build practical skills and discipline.

KBOR LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Fred Patton, the Board's government affairs consultant, delivered a high-level update on the early progress of the Kansas legislative session, which began January 12. He reported that lawmakers returned with an unusually fast start, moving bills to the floor within the first week and holding numerous committee hearings and presentations. Mr. Patton noted that both the Legislature and the Governor released their respective budget proposals last week after legislators began developing their version earlier in the fall. Budget committees have already begun meeting, with more hearings scheduled over the next two weeks. He emphasized that he and his team will closely monitor these discussions to ensure the Board of Regents priorities are clearly communicated and incorporated into the final budget. Mr. Patton added that both branches aim to advance their budget bills by February 14, signaling a rapid timeline for decision-making. In addition to budget work, he highlighted three non-budget legislative requests from the Board related to state scholarship programs, which have been introduced and will receive hearings next week. Mr. Patton concluded by noting that new bills are being filed daily, and his team is tracking all proposed legislation to identify items that may require support or opposition.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Heather Morgan, Kansas Association of Community Colleges, provided a detailed legislative update, highlighting key bills affecting concurrent enrollment, Promise Act eligibility, program funding, and workforce preparation. She noted that Senate Bill 341, receiving a hearing today, aims to standardize concurrent enrollment payment practices, while Senate Bill 340 would prohibit Promise Scholarship funding for co-requisite courses—potentially removing eligibility for the five-credit hour corequisite composition courses that include developmental review. She also discussed Senate Bill 343, which would tie state program funding to federal gainful-employment standards, and a nursing-education bill allowing institutions to hire instructors with slightly fewer credentials. Ms. Morgan emphasized the urgency of extending expiring community and technical college tax credits that support capital improvements and reported that colleges are closely monitoring multiple DEI, course-content, and local-election bills, as well as potential legislation granting college credit for high ACT WorkKeys scores.

Turning to the budget, Ms. Morgan explained that the governor's proposal includes \$16 million in new higher-education funding, which goes to community and technical colleges, while the Legislature's version lapses all reappropriations, eliminating \$8 million from the Kansas Promise Scholarship and omitting major funding categories beyond Senate Bill 155 and tiered/non-tiered aid. Community colleges are advocating to maintain prior-year funding for business and industry, student success, capital outlay, and technical college operations, and requesting \$8.9 million in new tiered and non-tiered support based on recent delivery patterns. She added that limiting Senate Bill 155 courses to juniors and seniors is expected to reduce costs.

Several TEA members and Ms. Morgan had a broader discussion about strengthening CTE pathways, addressing concerns from K–12 leaders about Promise Act restrictions, and ensuring students can complete industry-recognized credentials. They agreed on the need for clearer, better-aligned courses and credential maps between high schools and colleges, improved advising, and more consistent tracking of student progress from high school coursework to credential completion. Ms. Morgan affirmed that colleges are working with K–12 partners and KBOR to improve pathway mapping and highlighted ongoing efforts, such as dual advising and degree-map alignment. She concluded by noting upcoming events, including Community College Day at the Capitol and a new partnership announcement with the 184th Airborne at McConnell Air Force Base, demonstrating the sector’s ability to quickly respond to workforce and national-security needs.

TECHNICAL COLLEGE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Steve Kearney, Kansas Association for Career & Technical Education, delivered a legislative update, noting that much of the early-session activity had already been covered by previous presenters. He affirmed that technical colleges share the same budget concerns outlined for community colleges, particularly regarding items omitted from the initial legislative proposal and the need to restore or add essential funding. Mr. Kearney highlighted repeated messages from legislative leadership about pursuing an additional \$200 million in statewide budget cuts. While this reduction represents a relatively small proportion of the state’s overall general fund, he emphasized that it is occurring during an election year, when the political environment—shaped by numerous House members and several Senators seeking higher office—will heavily influence decision-making.

He cautioned that lawmakers are simultaneously pursuing significant tax-cut initiatives after receiving criticism for not enacting major tax legislation last year, adding complexity to budget negotiations. Mr. Kearney stressed that the Legislature intends to work at an accelerated pace, faster than the already-rapid schedule of the previous year. With plans to adjourn the veto session by late March—earlier than traditional timelines—he warned that stakeholders must remain highly vigilant, as the condensed calendar leaves little room to catch or correct errors once decisions are made.

CONSENT AGENDA

Member Beene provided background on two Wichita State University Campus of Applied Sciences and Technology (WSU Tech) programs—heavy equipment operation and masonry construction—presented for approval on the consent agenda. He explained that these programs originated from a transition at the Southeast Kansas Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC) in Pittsburg, which serves multiple school districts. In February 2025, CTEC dissolved its long-standing partnership with Fort Scott Community College, placing approximately two hundred students at risk of losing program continuity. In response, the CTEC advisory board engaged WSU Tech, which agreed in April 2025 to offer support to the affected students and the region’s schools. WSU Tech partnered with PSU to facilitate the transition, although it initially lacked approval to offer heavy equipment operation and masonry construction. KBOR granted temporary authorization for WSU Tech to operate these programs while pursuing full approval. Member Beene noted that the Program and Curriculum committee has since reviewed and approved both programs, which now appear on the consent agenda alongside updates related to the Kansas Promise Act.

Member Beene moved to approve the consent agenda. Member Hoover seconded the motion. The motion carried. The following items were approved:

ACT ON REQUEST(S) FOR DEGREE AND/OR CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS FROM COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES: WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY (WSU TECH):

WSU Tech received approval to offer the following degrees and/or certificate programs:

- 35-credit hour Technical Certificate program and a 60-credit hour Associate of Applied Science degree in Heavy Equipment Operation (49.0202)
- 38-credit hour Technical Certificate program and a 60-credit hour Associate of Applied Science degree in Masonry Construction (46.0101).

ACT ON REQUEST(S) FOR NEW PROMISE ACT PROGRAM(S):

The following programs were approved to become Promise Act eligible:

- Wichita State University Campus of Applied Sciences and Technology: Heavy Equipment Operation (49.0202) falls under the Advanced Manufacturing and Building Trades category specified in legislation. SOC 47-2073 for Operating Engineers and other Construction Equipment Operators was identified as a High Demand/High Wage occupation on the 2025 High Demand Occupations list from the Kansas Department of Labor.
- Wichita State University Campus of Applied Sciences and Technology: Masonry Construction (46.0101) falls under the Advanced Manufacturing and Building Trades category specified in legislation. SOC 47-2021 for Brick Masons and Block Masons was identified as a High Wage occupation on the 2025 High Demand Occupations list from the Kansas Department of Labor.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Chair Reist moved item VB1 to accommodate the travel schedules of the student presenters.

Other Matters

RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM SKILLSUSA OFFICERS

Eric Tincher, SkillsUSA Kansas State Director, outlined plans for the upcoming state SkillsUSA competition, scheduled for March 2–4 in Hutchinson, where more than six hundred high school and college students will participate in eighty-seven technical and leadership events. He emphasized the organization’s strong partnership with the fairgrounds and recognized the critical support provided by advisors and board leaders. Director Tincher then introduced several SkillsUSA Kansas postsecondary officers, who shared personal accounts of how career and technical education (CTE) and SkillsUSA shaped their academic paths, career aspirations, and personal growth. Their testimonies highlighted the impact of STEM classes, internships, apprenticeships, college-level CTE courses, and leadership opportunities on building technical expertise, communication skills, confidence, and workforce readiness.

Students described how SkillsUSA competitions and officer roles taught them project management, public speaking, teamwork, and professional etiquette. They also shared future plans, including careers in app development, photography, web development, and IT, noting how SkillsUSA experiences strengthened their employability. Several TEA members engaged students with questions about their most influential high school courses and upcoming outreach activities. Students and advisors discussed planned efforts to promote SkillsUSA through national conferences, state officer duties, industry engagement, and community service. TEA members expressed appreciation for the students’ professionalism and representation of Kansas.

Budget and Finance Committee

INSTRUCTIONAL COST MODEL REVIEW AND CALCULATED STATE SHARE

Elaine Frisbie, Vice President for Finance and Administration, presented an overview of the state's calculated share of the instructional cost model, which determines tiered and non-tiered state aid for community and technical colleges. She explained that the calculation evaluates course-level instructional expenses—covering instructor, instructional support, institutional support, and, for tiered programs, extraordinary costs—and applies long-standing funding formulas that divides funding for those costs among students, local property taxpayers, and the state's taxpayers. Vice President Frisbee reported that institutions delivered 1.09 million credit hours in AY 2025, with community colleges producing 83.7% of the total and non-tiered courses comprising the majority for FY 2025. High school student enrollment continues to rise, now representing 20% of community college and nearly 40% of technical college credit hours.

Vice President Frisbie reviewed the Legislature's 2022 shift to a three-year rolling average to recenter the model after years of flat funding. For FY 2027, cost calculations show a need for \$71.7 million in tiered funding—\$5.3 million above the current appropriation—and \$92 million for non-tiered courses, requiring an additional \$3.6 million. Vice President Frisbie noted that the Governor's proposed budget funds less than half of the combined needs across tiered, non-tiered, and Excel in CTE, allocating only \$8 million versus more than \$16 million required. She emphasized that the Board of Regents will advocate for full funding and reminded members that updated enrollment and cost data are available through the system's KHEDS online tools.

REVIEW AND DISCUSS HOUSE BILL 2195

Vera Brown, Director for Workforce Development, presented an update on the statutory requirements of House Bill 2195, enacted during the 2025 legislative session to establish the Kansas Technical College Operating Grant Fund. She explained that the law assigns KBOR responsibility for administering the funds and directs the TEA to set target objectives for each technical college's region and for the state. Director Brown outlined the statute's two expenditure categories—instruction and operations—and noted that neither term is defined in the law. To address this gap, board staff collaborated with technical colleges and finance staff and reviewed multiple audit and instructional models to create workable definitions. Instructional costs include salaries, instructional materials, lab supplies, and other direct teaching expenses, while operational costs encompass administrative functions, student services, facilities, infrastructure, and other expenses necessary for college operations, but not tied directly to teaching. After consultation with technical college leaders, the operations definition was broadened to ensure it aligns with the original legislative intent and allows the grant to support capital and infrastructure needs without enabling use outside the scope of college operations.

Director Brown also addressed the TEA's statutory requirement to establish measurable target objectives for use of the grant funds. She proposed a structured reporting process in which technical colleges would present planned activities and objectives to the Budget and Finance Committee beginning in March 2026, with remaining colleges reporting in April. The full TEA would review and approve proposed activities in May, followed by college reporting in July and TEA review of results in August. To streamline implementation, staff suggested using a standardized table to collect information on each activity's description, classification as instructional or operational, budgeted amount, measurable objectives, and results. Director Brown concluded by requesting TEA approval to move forward with the proposed process and timeline.

Member Anderson moved to approve the proposal as presented. Member Mikulka seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Other Matters

RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON ABILITY TO BENEFIT

Julie Clark, Associate Director for Workforce Development, provided an update on the Ability to Benefit (ATB) initiative, which expands federal financial aid access for adults without a high school diploma and strengthens

Integrated Education and Training (IET) and Accelerating Opportunity Kansas (AOK) programs. She explained that ATB addresses a key funding gap for non-tiered college courses that the AOK proviso does not cover. In 2025, Kansas was awarded technical assistance from the U.S. Department of Education's Dual Enrollment for Adult Learners (DEAL) office, enabling a multi-agency team to design a state-defined ATB process.

Associate Director Clark summarized the three federal ATB eligibility routes: qualifying test scores, completion of six credit hours or 225 clock hours, and a state-defined option, which Kansas is actively developing. Over the past six months, the team created procedures, monitoring tools, and an implementation plan. Seward County will lead ATB rollout for community colleges, Manhattan Tech will lead for technical colleges, and the Board of Regents will oversee policy, coordination, and compliance. The new process will support 101 approved AOK pathways by helping adult learners advance without delays when non-tiered courses are required. Next steps include finalizing the state process, piloting it with early adopters, building monitoring dashboards, and return to the TEA with an operational plan once pilot results are available.

ACT ON ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-2027 EXCEL IN CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) FEES

Charmine Chambers, Director for Workforce Development, provided a review of Excel in CTE fees for Academic Year 2027, aligned with TEA Goal 4 and informed by the recommendations of last year's Excel in CTE Fee Task Group. Following concerns about fee variation and reporting practices, KBOR staff implemented updated guidance, delivered a webinar, and issued revised FAQs to ensure institutions reported the full cost of all required items for approved courses—regardless of who pays those costs. Optional fees were removed from reporting. Institutions also submitted narrative explanations to clarify local fee practices.

Director Chambers described the multi-layered validation process: institutions certified their data in KHEDS, received detailed AY 2026 and AY 2027 change summaries on November 17, and were given the opportunity to make corrections. Ten institutions opted to revise and resubmit before final reports were compiled. The resulting materials include course and program level fee updates requiring TEA action, and comparative program totals showing fee differences between AY 2026 and AY 2027. She noted one correction from Cowley Community College involving duplicate book fees in food technology.

During the discussion, members examined fee discrepancies across institutions. Director Chambers and President Nichols and President Knoettgen explained that differences often reflect factors such as new programs, previously unreported fees, textbook changes, background check and licensure exam costs, decisions about collecting fees upfront, business and industry support, donated equipment, and foundation-funded scholarships. It was noted that high reported fees do not always translate to high out-of-pocket costs for students. Director Chambers emphasized that the updated process has improved transparency and accuracy, while acknowledging opportunities to explore greater consistency across institutions in future work.

Member Hoover moved to approve the AY 2026-2027 Excel in Career Technical Education fees as presented. Member Zimmer seconded the motion. The motion carried.

RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM EXCEL IN CTE TASKFORCE

Charmine Chambers delivered an update on Excel in CTE Taskforce, highlighting work aligned with TEA Goal six and outcomes from the taskforce's December 10 meeting. Building on the TEA's October discussion, the taskforce refined recommendations for statewide policy and procedures. The first recommendation affirms that Excel in CTE funds should not cover course retakes; students who repeat a course would be responsible for the cost and would receive guidance under institutional academic progress policies.

During discussion, TEA members emphasized the need for implementation beginning next year, as colleges will soon enroll students for fall programs. Members also supported a “teach-out” approach to ensure that students currently enrolled in programs losing Excel or Promise eligibility are not left without a path to completion. They stressed that honoring commitments to current students is consistent with long-standing expectations of the Board of Regents and the Higher Learning Commission. Members acknowledged challenges—such as differentiating funding for students within the same program and uncertainty around future legislative decisions—but agreed it is important to advocate for continued support for students already in progress. Additional comments addressed workforce relevance, potential impacts of forthcoming gainful-employment regulations, and concerns about equity for students in marginalized communities. Director Chambers noted that the recommendations focus on process, not fiscal policy, and that further clarification may be needed as legislative outcomes become clearer.

Member Anderson moved to approve the recommendations. Member Frederick seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Director Chambers provided additional information to clarify the task group’s comprehensive review of all system programs and their eligibility under Excel and CTE. Programs currently participating in the PROMISE Scholarship, along with those that meet academic discipline requirements and align with high-demand or high-wage occupations, will remain eligible. Programs previously granted Promise Act exceptions will also retain eligibility due to their demonstrated alignment with qualifying fields.

A separate group of programs will lose Excel and CTE funding eligibility—not because the programs are being discontinued, but because they fall outside eligible disciplines, do not align with two-year training levels, or are not connected to high-demand or high-wage occupations. The task group added several programs to this list following further review.

Director Chambers also provided supplemental analysis for the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) program, which lacks a distinct occupational code and functions as a cross-disciplinary skill set. Cloud County Community College and WSU Tech submitted additional employer and KTIP data to support evaluation. National work from the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Collegiate Training Initiative and the National Center for Autonomous Technologies helped identify related occupations. Only certain roles—such as electromechanical/mechatronics technologists and commercial pilots—align with eligible academic disciplines and high-demand, high-wage criteria. This national data offers an objective foundation for determining whether UAS training supports Excel and CTE eligibility.

REVIEW AND DISCUSS TIERED COURSE DESIGNATION

Director Chambers reported on the ongoing systemwide course bucket review and highlighted a related issue involving courses that cannot be accurately assigned to a single program based on available data. After reviewing 16,000 courses, staff identified several widely used general education courses that do not show applied technical competencies required for tiered classification under KSA 71-1802. Since the Authority has not revisited tiered versus non-tiered course classifications since 2014–2015, Director Chambers recommended that the Program and Curriculum Committee conduct a focused review to determine whether these courses align more appropriately with non-tiered criteria. She emphasized that reclassification would not eliminate the courses; institutions would continue offering them, but through the appropriate funding stream.

During discussion, questions were raised about whether other states use similar interpretations and whether comparative research could inform Kansas’ approach. Staff reiterated that CTE programs naturally include both tiered and non-tiered courses, and the issue centers solely on correct statutory alignment—not on limiting course

access or altering K–12 pathways. Some pathways may naturally align more with transfer or four-year outcomes than with technical programs, underscoring the importance of a careful review.

NEXT MEETING REMINDER

Chair Reist closed by reminding members that the next TEA meeting will be held virtually on February 19, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Reist adjourned the meeting at 12:44 p.m.