

# The Workforce



Fall 2013

## Employer Engagement Initiative: A Message From the Vice President

Strong career technical education programs include a curriculum aligned to business needs, highly qualified faculty, state of the art equipment, and strong administrative leadership. However, to realize the greatest returns for students and the Kansas economy, our education and training programs must also be closely connected to the business community.

Education must forge a deeper connection to business, including consistent and early engagement. Traditionally, companies increase involvement with education as students get closer to graduation. However, business involvement could come much earlier in the process. For example, career tech program faculty could ask business partners to assist in recruiting students. Unsuccessful applicants for company positions could be referred to the college career technical education program for additional training which would supply goal oriented students with a desire to work in the industry. Company representatives can also serve as guest lecturers to give students a perspective of the industry where they expect to build a career.

To have a true partnership, each partner must give and receive, and business/education partnerships are no different. The partnership needs to be deeper than just providing a supply of skilled graduates to business. Progressive employers need to be consistently engaged with education and value the skills of the program graduates.

As a first step, employers can sign the Kansas Department of Commerce's Skills Pledge which indicates the employer recognizes industry credentials. If career tech programs are of value, employers can provide support by guaranteeing successful program graduates an interview with their company. They can also assist and inform program faculty of new innovations in the industry, and can even offer externships to instructors so program faculty can keep their skills up to date with current business practices.

Taking a few of these initial steps will deepen the connection between career tech and business and help us meet the talent needs of the Kansas economy.

**Blake Flanders, Ph.D.**  
Vice President for Workforce Development



### *TEA Mission:*

*Drive the advancement of a robust technical education system to meet the needs of Kansas business and industry*



by Steve Larrick

Kansas businesses can now sign the "[Hire a Veteran Pledge](#)" to connect with and assist veterans in transitioning to in-demand civilian occupations. Through [www.kanvet.ks.gov](http://www.kanvet.ks.gov), businesses can publicly show their commitment to hiring veterans and will be linked to qualified veterans as job openings are posted.

This is a great opportunity for business and industry to connect with heroes that have defended our nation and link to a valuable, highly skilled and trainable workforce. Businesses pledging their support will be highlighted on the KanVet site and receive printed certificates and posters to display and demonstrate their commitment to assisting veterans.

KanVet, developed in partnership with multiple agencies, serves as a central, comprehensive information resource regarding services that Kansas provides to veterans, their spouses and family members. This includes connecting veterans with higher education resources and job searching tools designed specifically for their needs.

[Take the pledge](#) and connect with prospective employees!

### *TEA—Postsecondary Technical Education Authority*

Kathy Howell, Chair  
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### *Dates To Remember:*

#### Kansas Workforce Summit

January 22nd - 23rd, 2014  
The Capital Plaza Hotel  
Topeka, KS

#### Technical Education Authority Meetings

October 31      December 12