



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

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Kansas Initiatives to be Highlighted at White House Event

(Topeka, Kansas) - On Thursday, January 16, Kansas Board of Regents Vice President of Workforce Development, Dr. Blake Flanders, will attend a summit hosted by President Obama at the White House where the administration aims to highlight new commitments by the higher education community, philanthropic, city and state leaders, to help more low-income students reach college and ensure they succeed once they get there.

"It is an honor to be invited to this event to highlight the Kansas Board of Regents' commitment to increasing higher education attainment among Kansans to 60 percent by 2020," stated Dr. Flanders. "This goal will increase the prosperity of individual Kansans and accelerate the economic growth of our state."

Because the Kansas Board of Regents coordinates all postsecondary education in the state, the Board is uniquely positioned to drive required changes which will result in more Kansans prepared to meet the state's workforce demands and able to earn a living that increases their access to the middle class.

In 2010, the Kansas Board of Regents adopted a ten-year strategic plan, titled *Foresight 2020*, which aligns a series of strategies around three goals: increasing higher education attainment among Kansans to 60 percent by 2020, improving alignment of the state's higher education system with the needs of the Kansas economy, and ensuring state university excellence through improved outcomes and increased research. If we are to have 60 percent of Kansas adults holding a certificate, associate or bachelor's degree by 2020, we must increase the number of credentials awarded annually to 53,000, or an increase of 60,000 additional credentials awarded by 2020. To reach this goal, both access and completion must be addressed.

There are currently around 1.4 million working-age adults (25-64 years old) in Kansas, however more than 75,000 Kansans are unemployed while almost 38,000 jobs remain open – many due to a mismatch in applicants' skills. Over 182,000 Kansans (18-64 years old) lack a high school diploma, while another 60,000 have limited English skills. The Kansas Board of Regents is committed to transforming the state's higher education system to better provide opportunities for the state's low income and underprepared adults, resulting in economic prosperity for them and economic strength for Kansas.

Those attending the White House Summit have been asked to identify any new commitments they might make to improving and strengthening remedial education at their respective institutions. The Kansas Board of Regents has a number of initiatives currently underway which align perfectly with this request:

Accelerating Opportunity: Kansas (AO-K). With philanthropic support, this initiative targets over 237,000 adults without a high school diploma, delivering simultaneous career/technical and basic skills instruction, with wrap-around support services. A new partnership with the Department for Children and Families is now in place to use Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to provide tuition scholarships for TANF-eligible adults who enroll in and complete a 12-credit hour career pathway. Since January 2012, over 2,400 students have earned 683 college credentials and 2,397 industry credentials, in 27 career pathway programs, with 700 adults employed. These numbers will be doubled.

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Excel in Career Technical Education Initiative. In 2012, Senate Bill 155 became law, providing free college tuition for high school students in postsecondary technical education courses and incentives to school districts for students earning industry-recognized credentials in high-demand occupations. In the first full year, 6,101 secondary students enrolled in college-level technical education courses, generating over 43,312 credit hours. Following graduation in May 2013, the program awarded 711 secondary students industry-recognized credentials. These numbers will be doubled.

In the first full year, as a result of this initiative, Kansas experienced significant enrollment growth in postsecondary career technical education: a 58% increase in headcount and 57% increase in college credit hours earned over the previous year. Certification areas for the majority of these secondary student certifications are in career pathways for healthcare, manufacturing, construction, and automotive. This initiative has received national recognition as a "Top Ten Innovations to Watch" from the Brookings Institute.

Adult Education Performance Based Funding. Beginning in 2015, Kansas will distribute 70% of state and federal Adult Education and Family Literacy funds based solely on program performance. College readiness and enrollment/co-enrollment in postsecondary education are among the funded outcomes. Full funding will now require programs meet two specific postsecondary performance targets: 40% (1,517) of participants will be college ready and 27% (1,024) of participants at the four highest National Reporting System levels will enroll in postsecondary education within three years.

Transforming Developmental Education. In 2011, 38% of students entering two-year colleges in Kansas enrolled in one or more remedial courses. Remedial coursework multiplies financial and time barriers for students, reducing the completion rate of underprepared students in Kansas to 18%. These barriers are disproportionately present for poor and minority students: 56% of low income students, 52% of African-American students, and 45% of Hispanic students start in remedial courses. The Regents have charged a taskforce with assessing and, if needed, redesigning developmental education in Kansas.

The taskforce will assess state and local policies, including student assessment and placement, course/program design and student support. On completion of their assessment, the taskforce will make recommendations for best practices and policies for developmental education, including appropriate state level goals and local performance measures to ensure student success. The report is due June 2014.

For more information about the summit, please contact the White House Press Office at press@who.eop.gov.

For more information about the Kansas Board of Regents commitments, contact Breeze Richardson at (785) 291-3969 or brichardson@ksbor.org.

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About the Kansas Board of Regents:

The nine-member Kansas Board of Regents is the governing board of the state's six universities and the statewide coordinating board for the state's 32 public higher education institutions (seven public universities, nineteen community colleges, and six technical colleges). In addition, the Board administers the state's student financial aid, adult education, GED, and career and technical education programs. The Board also authorizes private proprietary schools and out-of-state institutions to operate in Kansas, and administers the Kan-ed network, a program for facilitating and promoting distance learning and telemedicine in schools, libraries and hospitals. Visit the Kansas Board of Regents online at www.kansasregents.org.