



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

## RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND REQUIREMENTS TO THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION TASK FORCE

**WHEREAS**, data shows that education beyond high school provides a proven path to increased earnings for Kansas families; and

**WHEREAS**, individuals with an associate degree earn 25 percent more during their lifetimes than those with only a high school diploma and those with a bachelor's degree earn 75 percent more<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, education beyond high school is also necessary for our state's economic prosperity, as businesses increasingly demand workers with education beyond high school; and

**WHEREAS**, it is imperative that the Kansas public higher education system meets this demand with graduates who are equipped to drive economic growth; and

**WHEREAS**, the state faces several challenges in graduating more students ready to meet employers' evolving needs, with one challenge being that the college preparedness of high school graduates, as measured by ACT benchmarks, has been declining for six years<sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, the Kansas public college going rate has decreased by 10 percentage points in a decade, which has resulted in fewer students overall attending education beyond high school and a higher percentage of postsecondary students who require developmental education, which is costly and puts students on a slower and more challenging path to earning their postsecondary credential; and

**WHEREAS**, the Kansas State Department of Education has requested input from the higher education system to help Kansas meet the challenges noted above;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Board of Regents proposes the following high school graduation requirements to the Kansas State Department of Education High School Graduation Task Force:

- **The Board recommends that four units of math be required for high school graduation.** Math skills are critical for higher education preparation and success in the workforce. The Board resolves that as it develops math pathways, the public postsecondary system will work with the Kansas State Department of Education to support students in a variety of different types of math courses that best meet each student's needs and career interests.
- **The Board recommends that four units of English be required for high school graduation.** Communication skills are a critical component for both college and career readiness. Both ACT college readiness standards and higher education faculty have noted a decline in the foundational writing skills needed to succeed in early college-level coursework. Four units of English are necessary for many students to gain these skills and avoid remedial coursework.
- **The Board recommends that completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) be required for high school graduation and to use this requirement to educate students on the opportunities for higher education and financial support available.** Kansas ranks 36<sup>th</sup> nationally in FAFSA completion and the Class of 2021 left more than \$35 million in federal aid unclaimed. As FAFSA completion increases the likelihood a student will enroll in postsecondary education by 63 percent, the Board recommends this as a graduation requirement.
- **The Board strongly recommends that high schools work with the Kansas Board of Regents, universities, community colleges and technical colleges to aggressively expand concurrent enrollment program participation.** Data has shown that concurrent enrollment is linked with higher achievement on several short-term and long-term collegiate success measures. Expanding the collaboration between Kansas high schools and higher education will help more students succeed in their education after high school graduation.
- **The Board recommends that high school students take a computer science course.** Computer science skills are necessary for success in college and in many career paths in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Board further resolves that colleges and universities will work with the Kansas State Department of Education to support any effort to expand computer science offerings for high school students.
- **The Board recommends that high schools partner with the Kansas Board of Regents, universities, community colleges and technical colleges to identify ways to utilize the Individual Plan of Study to include postsecondary education academic advising and FAFSA support.**

---

Cheryl Harrison-Lee  
Chair, Kansas Board of Regents  
April 20, 2022

---

<sup>1</sup> Carnavale, Anthony P., *The College Payoff* (Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> ACT Data Visualization Tool, Kansas high school graduating classes 2016-2021.