

SESSION OF 2025

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2402

As Recommended by House Committee on
Appropriations

Brief*

HB 2402 would create the Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education (Commission) to study, discuss, and make recommendations on higher education in Kansas.

Appointments

The bill would establish the Commission and require the Commission to consist of 17 members, as follows:

- One member appointed by the Governor;
- One member of the majority party of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- One member of the majority party of the House of Representatives appointed by the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives;
- One member of the minority party of the House of Representatives appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives;
- One member of the majority party of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate;
- One member of the majority party of the Senate appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate;

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <https://klrd.gov/>

- One member of the minority party of the Senate appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate;
- One member to represent the regional universities jointly appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- One member to represent the three research universities jointly appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- One member appointed by the Kansas Association of Technical colleges;
- One member appointed by the Kansas Association of Community Colleges;
- One member who is a student attending a postsecondary educational institution appointed by the Speaker *Pro Tem* of the House of Representatives;
- One member who is the parent of a student attending a postsecondary educational institution appointed by the Vice President of the Senate;
- One member who is a higher education expert jointly appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- One member of the public appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and
- One member of the public appointed by the President of the Senate.

The bill would require the chairperson of the Commission to be jointly appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The bill would require staff members of the Kansas Board of Regents, Office of Revisor of Statutes, Legislative Research Department, and Division of Legislative Administrative Services to provide assistance to the Commission as requested.

Terms and Meetings

The bill would require members' terms to expire on January 1, 2027, and any vacancies to be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

The bill would allow members of the Commission to meet at any time, at any place within the state, and through any means upon call of the chairperson. The bill would require all actions taken by the Commission to be made by motion and adopted by a majority of members present when there is a quorum. A quorum would consist of nine members.

The bill would require members of the Commission attending meetings authorized by the Commission to be compensated by the Kansas Board of Regents for expenses, mileage, and subsistence as provided by law.

The bill would require the Commission to study, discuss, and make recommendations on the following:

- Long-term goals and priorities for higher education;
- Governing structure, financing, cost, savings, and consolidation of Board of Regents schools, community colleges, and technical colleges;
- Accessibility and affordability of higher education;
- Strengths and weaknesses of higher education and postsecondary educational institutions;

- Strategies for enrollment and degree completion; and
- Strategies for right-sizing and streamlining higher education for the future with a student focus.

Reports

The bill would require that, on or before January 1, 2026, the Commission submit a preliminary report to the Legislature on findings and recommendations for higher education in the State of Kansas.

The bill would require that, on or before January 1, 2027, the Commission submit a final report to the Legislature on findings and recommendations for higher education in the State of Kansas.

Background

The bill was introduced by the House Committee on Appropriations at the request of Representative Rahjes.

House Committee on Appropriations

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Representative Rahjes and a representative of the Kansas Association of Community Colleges. Representative Rahjes stated that the bill would put the Legislature back in charge of the future of higher education in Kansas and noted the landscape of higher education has changed and this bill would set up the structure to bring everyone to the table.

The representative from the Kansas Association of Community Colleges generally stated that they appreciate the work that went into creating the bill and they are excited to be part of the Commission.

A representative from the Kansas Board of Regents (Board) provided neutral testimony, stating that the Board would support the Commission.

No other testimony was provided.

Fiscal Information

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of Budget on the bill, the Board estimates enactment of the bill would result in additional State General Fund expenditures of \$76,000 in FY 2026 and \$38,000 in FY 2027.

Of the FY 2026 amount, \$58,000 is for mileage, \$7,000 is for subsistence, and \$11,000 is for lodging. The Board's estimates assume the Commission would meet 18 times during FY 2026 for 12 one-day meetings and six two-day meetings. Of the FY 2027 amount, \$29,000 is for mileage, \$3,500 is for subsistence, and \$5,500 is for lodging. The Board's estimates assume the Commission would meet nine times during FY 2027 for six one-day meetings and three two-day meetings.

Legislative Administrative Services indicates enactment of the bill would not have a fiscal effect on the Legislature's budget as Commission members would be reimbursed by the Board of Regents.

The Kansas Legislative Research Department (KLRD) indicates that because the Commission may meet anywhere in Kansas, additional expenditures would be incurred by KLRD for mileage, food, and hotel accommodations, which cannot be estimated. Any fiscal effect associated with enactment of the bill is not reflected in *The FY 2026 Governor's Budget Report*.

Education; higher education; postsecondary education; Blue Ribbon Commission on Higher Education