



## KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

### Senate Committee on Education Testimony in Support of SB 336

February 13, 2020

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**President & CEO, Kansas Board of Regents**

Good afternoon Chair Baumgardner and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and present testimony in support of SB 336, the RISE Act.

SB 336 would offer recent high school graduates a scholarship to attend a postsecondary educational institution or obtain job training with a for-profit or not-for-profit business entity. The new RISE scholarship program would be administered by our agency and would add some administrative responsibilities to monitor student compliance with the bill's requirements. We are pleased that the Legislature is considering an expansion of the state's investment in student financial aid. State investment in student financial aid in Kansas has not kept pace with surrounding states. The regional average for student financial aid per full-time equivalent (FTE) student is **\$334** for 2018, while Kansas has only **\$91** per FTE student.<sup>1</sup> Total dollar amounts awarded in FY 2018 for the region are noted on the next page.

#### Total Aid Awarded by State (Dollars in Millions)



Source: National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP), 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Survey, 2017-18.

<sup>1</sup> State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, State Higher Education Finance Report, 2018, <https://sheeo.org/project/state-higher-education-finance/>.

The Board of Regents sees this legislation as a complement to our need-based initiative Kansas Access Partnership and we are eager to work with you on how best to promote postsecondary pathways for Kansans and develop our state's workforce to meet the needs of our state's employers. We are proud of our system of postsecondary educational institutions that offer Kansans a wide array of credential options—from short term technical certificates, associates and baccalaureate degrees to highly ranked professional graduate programs and with an array of cost options our system offers is also.

We know our state's employers are struggling to locate qualified employees. I heard about this concern when I traveled the state discussing our new strategic plan and the Senate Commerce Committee, on which a number of you serve, heard earlier this session from a representative of the National Federation of Independent Business who noted the challenges of Kansas small businesses in finding qualified workers.

In this record-breaking period of economic expansion, the tight labor market is clearly impacting workforce recruitment. We believe our System has solutions, both for generating talent and also in offering specialized workforce training solutions. When you put forth the call to generate more nurses and more engineers, our System successfully leveraged targeted state appropriations into program graduates. SB 336 could be another successful workforce story for our state.

The Center on Education and the Workforce published a workforce report on “Good Jobs That Pay Without a BA<sup>2</sup>” and included a state-by-state analysis. Although the trends vary across states, they found that the level of education matters in getting one of those good jobs. As the nation's economy has shifted, high school graduates' share of good jobs has declined in nearly every state, including Kansas. As state policymakers you know that our citizens need an education beyond high school to a greater extent than in our state's history, and our state's employers need a qualified workforce. Our System is working to serve both goals.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill. I am happy to stand for questions.

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<sup>2</sup> Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, *Good Jobs That Pay without a BA: A State-by-State Analysis*, 2017, <https://GoodjobsData.org>.