



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS
Joint Committee on Rules and Regulations
February 10, 2012

Testimony Regarding Qualified Admissions Regulations

K.A.R. 88-29-1, 88-29-5, 88-29-6, 88-29-7, 88-29-7a, 88-29-10, 88-29a-5, 88-29a-6, 88-29a-7, 88-29a-7a, 88-29a-10, 88-29a-11, 88-29a-18 and 88-29a-19

Julene L. Miller, General Counsel

Good afternoon Chairman Holmes and Members of the Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to provide background information and a brief summary of the Board of Regents' proposed amendments to the qualified admissions regulations.

During the 2009 Session, the Legislature amended K.S.A. 76-719 to give the Kansas Board of Regents authority to establish admissions standards for the state universities. In 2010, the Board reconvened the State University Admissions Task Force, comprised of 16 individuals from diverse geographic areas and professional or civic backgrounds, which originally had been established in 2007 to "advise the Board and make recommendations regarding optimal state university admissions policies for year 2010 and beyond."

During 2010, the Task Force conducted public hearings and gathered significant input from a wide range of stakeholders across the state and forwarded recommendations to the Board and the Board approved them in December 2010. The recommendations included revised admissions standards for high school students graduating in 2015 and thereafter.

At its June 2011 meeting, the Board adopted new and amended state university qualified admissions regulations that incorporated these revised admission standards. Additionally, the Board directed staff to begin the process to amend the regulations again to address concerns raised during the open comment period and public hearing that the Board felt could not be addressed at that time because they involved substantive changes that required initiating a new rule making process. The Board limited the scope of the new amendments to the changes suggested by the homeschool community and state universities during the open comment period.

The regulations approved by the Board in June 2011, were primarily focused on accredited high school graduates under the age of 21 who were applying beginning in 2015, and included the requirement that these applicants complete the precollege curriculum as a condition for admission. Furthermore, the precollege curriculum was narrowly defined.

The proposed changes, which were submitted by the homeschool community and state universities, focus on applicants with GEDs, homeschool applicants, and applicants over the age of 21, and create equivalencies to the precollege curriculum that are more or just as rigorous, so that otherwise qualified applicants are not admitted through the exception window.

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JCARR
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Attachment 1

To effectuate the substantive changes requested by the homeschool community and the state universities, the Board is proposing amending regulations in Article 29, which affect those applying before 2015, and amending regulations in Article 29a, which affect those applying in 2015 or later. The proposed changes have been sent to the homeschool community and state universities for review, and we believe those constituencies are supportive of the amendments.

ARTICLE 29

The proposed changes in Article 29 include:

1) amending the GED definition by eliminating language that references a specific score, and inserting language that refers to prescribed minimum scores (88-29-1);

Rationale: The terminology is outdated.

2) incorporating the changes in the GED definition terminology (88-29-5);

Rationale: The terminology is outdated.

3) creating a new admission category for resident applicants aged 21 or older who have high school diplomas from non-accredited schools and also incorporating the changes in the GED definition terminology (88-29-6);

Rationale: This equalizes the treatment of a non-accredited high school diploma, including a homeschool diploma, with that of an accredited high school diploma for residents aged 21 or older. These applicants will no longer be admitted through the exception window. The rationale for the GED changes was referenced earlier.

4) creating a new admission category for non-resident applicants under the age of 21 with passing GED scores (88-29-7);

Rationale: This equalizes the treatment of a GED with that of an accredited high school diploma and GED applicants under the age of 21 meeting the admission criteria will no longer be admitted through the exception window.

5) incorporating the changes in the GED definition terminology (88-29-7a);

Rationale: The terminology is outdated.

6) adding language that describes how admissions officers determine compliance with precollege curriculum standards to clarify who may calculate the precollege curriculum GPA and how it is calculated (88-29-10).

Rationale: These clarifications were requested by the homeschool community and state universities.

ARTICLE 29a

Many of the proposed changes in Article 29a mirror the changes in Article 29. The proposed changes include:

1) referencing the functional equivalents described in 88-29a-18, which create pathways for resident freshmen applicants to meet the precollege curriculum requirement and also incorporating the changes in the GED definition terminology (88-29a-5);

Rationale: This change references the creation of pathways, other than the exception window, for Kansas residents to complete the Kansas precollege curriculum. These changes and rationale are described later. The rationale for the GED changes was referenced earlier.

2) eliminating the requirement that resident applicants aged 21 or older achieve a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale on all transferable college credit hours; creating a new admission category for resident applicants aged 21 or older who have high school diplomas from non-accredited schools; and incorporating the changes in the GED definition terminology (88-29a-6);

Rationale: The GPA requirement is new and was approved in regulation in June 2011. Upon further review, it conflicted with the Board's goal of recruiting more adult students back to college because it penalized them for any academic missteps they may have made in their youth. The new admission category mirrors the one created in Article 29. The rationale for the GED changes was referenced earlier.

3) deleting reference to 88-29a-18 and instead including the functional equivalents described in 88-29a-19 as a way that non-resident accredited high school graduates may meet the precollege curriculum requirement; clarifying that non-resident, non-accredited high school graduates may meet the precollege curriculum requirement by completing the equivalent of the precollege curriculum described in 88-29a-11 instead of that described in 88-29a-18; and creating a new admission category for non-resident applicants under the age of 21 with passing GED scores (88-29a-7);

Rationale: References to 88-29a-18 were deleted because that regulation applies only to residents. Those references were replaced with references to regulations that apply to non-residents (88-29a-19) or apply to both residents and non-residents (88-29a-11). The new admission category equalizes the treatment of a GED with that of an accredited high school diploma and GED applicants under the age of 21 meeting the admission criteria will no longer be admitted through the exception window.

4) eliminating the requirement that non-resident applicants who are age 21 or older achieve a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale on all transferable college credit hours and incorporating the changes in the GED definition terminology (88-29a-7a);

Rationale: The GPA requirement is new and was adopted in regulation in June 2011. Upon further review, it conflicted with the Board's goal of recruiting more adult students back to college because it penalized them for academic missteps they may have made in their youth. The rationale for the GED changes was referenced earlier.

5) adding language that describes how admissions officers determine compliance with precollege curriculum standards to clarify who calculates the precollege curriculum GPA and how it is calculated; and providing instructions on how to calculate the GPA for applicants that complete the Kansas Scholars curriculum or the functional equivalencies described in 88-29a-18 or 88-29a-19—all which are equivalent to the precollege curriculum (88-29a-10);

Rationale: These clarifications were requested by the homeschool community and state universities. The instructions on how to calculate the GPA for applicants who complete precollege curriculum equivalencies were necessary because the equivalencies are new.

6) modifying the precollege curriculum requirements by changing the social science requirement to equal the social science requirement of the student's home state, instead of the Kansas social science requirement (88-29a-11);

Rationale: The current social science requirement is unique to Kansas and would require universities to admit many non-resident applicants who are otherwise qualified, through the exception window.

7) creating a pathway for high school students who graduated from a Kansas high school, but did not attend all four years in Kansas, to complete the precollege curriculum; and allowing resident applicants who have precollege curriculum deficiencies upon high school graduation to rectify them by completing a college course before admission (88-29a-18);

Rationale: This change was referenced earlier in 88-29a-5 and creates a pathway, other than the exception window, for Kansas residents who have graduated from a Kansas high school, but haven't attended four years, to complete the Kansas precollege curriculum. It also allows resident applicants with minor deficiencies in the precollege curriculum to rectify those before admission, instead of admitting these applicants through the exception window.

8) designating the college prep curriculum of a non-resident applicant's home state as equivalent to the Kansas precollege curriculum if it is at least as rigorous as that required by K.A.R. 88-29a-11; and designating that, for non-residents, meeting all four ACT college readiness benchmarks is equivalent to the Kansas precollege curriculum (88-29a-19).

Rationale: This change equalizes the precollege curriculum of other states with that of Kansas, as long as that state's curriculum is at least as rigorous as the Kansas precollege curriculum. This allows the universities to admit non-resident applicants that have completed the precollege curriculum of their home state and who are otherwise qualified, instead of doing so through the exception window. This change also treats the ACT college readiness benchmarks as equivalent to the precollege curriculum and allows universities to admit non-residents who meet all four

ACT college readiness benchmarks and are otherwise qualified, instead of admitting these students through the exception window.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to address any questions that Committee Members may have.

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