

# Special Committee on Workforce Development

## REPORT

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### Conclusions and Recommendations

The Special Committee on Workforce Development recommends the 2023 Legislature:

- Assist adult learners who are seeking an online education to achieve college degrees in fields that are critical to the economic growth of the Kansas. This may include supporting actions that foster competency-based education so that students can finish their degrees in an effective and efficient manner, and promoting programs that expand the skills of existing staff utilizing micro-credentials and short-term training;
- Examine ways to provide financial assistance to more students, including those who decide to complete degrees through an online-based model;
- Ensure an increasing amount of scholarship funding provided by the State is tied to requirements to live and work in Kansas;
- Encourage the Kansas Department of Commerce to create a statewide marketing campaign about technical careers that encourages enrollment in short-term credential and degree programs to meet the needs of Kansas businesses for skilled workers. This campaign should highlight the well-paying jobs that can be obtained without four years of postsecondary education, without student debt, in Kansas, and encourage parents to urge their students to consider training for these careers;
- Develop and support innovative approaches and programs to address critical workforce shortages and attract new people to Kansas through means such as tax incentives, tuition forgiveness, a review of the state tax structure, and other creative means to grow the Kansas population to meet the workforce needs of Kansas businesses;
- Continue and increase support for workforce development programs that are effective, including the Excel in Career Technical Education initiative, the National Center for Aviation Training, Promise Act scholarships, work-based learning, and apprenticeships. The Legislature should also eliminate and cease support for any program that is funding careers that are no longer needed or that consist of low-income jobs;
- Advocate for enhanced re-entry programs that encourage ex-offenders to re-enter the workforce. The Legislature should also support programs that encourage work and help recipients of government assistance with obtaining employment. Additionally, the Legislature should examine all benefits that may be keeping able-bodied individuals from returning to work, and consider an automated process to streamline expungement;
- Support growing the Kansas and local economies through applied research and private-public partnerships, like the National Institute of Aviation Research; partnerships between universities and business to create innovation programs (like Wichita State University's Innovation Campus); and career pathways for high school students;

- Support and increase focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics learning initiatives, including support for computer science classes in school, as well as initiatives to explore leadership and business skills such as the Distributive Education Clubs of America, Future Business Leaders of America, and the Business Professionals of America;
- Support accountability measures for increased funding for need-based aid for postsecondary credentials;
- Support policies that expand access to affordable child care options, including a comprehensive review of regulations;
- Support changes that enable teachers from other states to obtain licensure more quickly and easily in Kansas and develop a Para-to-Teacher program;
- Have Kansas Legislative Research Department staff present answers to the workforce indicator questions from small businesses presented in testimony to the House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Commerce;
- Request a representative of the Kansas Chamber of Commerce present and review its Work Force Study and its recommendations to both the House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development and the Senate Committee on Commerce;
- Investigate the disability pay caps to understand how they affect workforce and benefits;
- Consider amending statutes to allow the Kansas State Department of Education to provide outside access to the State Longitudinal Data System compiled by the agency for the purposes of research and study;
- Proceed cautiously regarding the legalization of marijuana;
- Consider the creation or expansion of individual child care tax credits; and
- Have the appropriate House and Senate committees study and make recommendations regarding the child care shortage.