



KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS

House Committee on Education March 23, 2017

Blake Flanders, Ph.D. President & CEO

Good morning Chair Aurand, and Members of the Committee. This testimony is submitted in support of Senate Bill 174, which is modeled after the successful affiliation of Washburn University and the Washburn Institute of Technology.

The 1999 Legislature enacted SB 345, creating the Higher Education Coordination Act. With the framework established in that act, the Board of Regents has coordinated its efforts across the entire public postsecondary education system. Our students now benefit from 75 courses that are guaranteed to transfer throughout our entire system and public institutions are developing more 2+2 coordinated academic programs, such as the Shocker Pathways initiative between Wichita State University and Wichita Area Technical College.

The Kansas Board of Regents supports this legislation that has three provisions: change the operational governance of WATC from Sedgwick County Government to Wichita State University (while maintaining governance of the university under the Board of Regents), change the name of WATC to Wichita State University Campus of Applied Sciences and Technology, and transition WATC employees from Sedgwick County employment to Wichita State University (state) employment. Under this proposal, WATC will continue functioning as an independent technical college with unique federal status, but within the operational structure of WSU.

This affiliation will further bolster the longstanding partnership already in place between these institutions, and improve access and opportunities for students from both institutions.

With this affiliation, the Board encourages WATC and WSU to further leverage their resources to expand access and opportunity to Kansas students, and are pleased that this proposal has been brought forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.