

January 29, 2021

Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Education
Kansas State Capitol
SW 8th and SW Van Buren
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Chairwoman Molly Baumgardner and Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment on Senate Bill 63.

If passed, Senate Bill 63 would expand the opportunity for nonpublic schools to provide their students three ACT assessment programs that collectively comprise a college and career readiness framework to promote post-high school success: the PreACT at grade 9, and the ACT and ACT WorkKeys at grade 11 or 12.

These three programs provide numerous benefits to students and educators, which include:

- PreACT –current achievement, projected ACT score, career planning
- The ACT – scores for admission, scholarships, accurate placement
- ACT WorkKeys –ability to earn an ACT National Career Readiness Certificate

The PreACT currently provides all public school student equitable practice for the ACT, career planning tools and a baseline for measuring academic growth, while the ACT provides a consistent and objective measure of college readiness that is recognized and valued by Kansas students, educators and postsecondary institutions. With the disruptions to learning and even less objectivity of students' grades due to COVID-19, the diagnostic and prescriptive information provided by these assessments may be more critical than even before - to identify gaps and apply the correct interventions prior to graduation. Additionally, districts have shared with ACT that these two assessments are an ideal fit with the Kansas Individual Plan of Study initiative launched by KSDE. Finally, the opportunity for all students to prepare for the ACT and earn a college reportable score helps to equalize access to a postsecondary education for all students, especially underserved and first-generation students who may not have previously considered college as an option.

ACT WorkKeys provides students who attain certain scores with one of four levels of the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). ACT has issued more than 5 million NCRCs nationwide. Research shows that individuals who earn an NCRC earn higher salaries (short- and long-term), while reducing turnover and increasing productivity for employers by helping to ensure the requisite foundational skills among applicants.

In addition to benefitting jobseekers and current employers, providing all student the opportunity to earn an NCRC benefits the Kansas economy. *Site Selection Magazine* utilizes the number and percent improvement in ACT NCRCs earned by working-age adults as one of

six criteria that global corporate location decision-makers should consider when looking for a state in which to expand or relocate. The Kansas State Chamber of Commerce promotes increasing regional involvement in ACT's Work Ready Communities program, utilizing the NCRC levels based on WorkKeys scores as a "skills" common language among stakeholders, to serve existing employers and attract new ones to engaged counties within the state.

In the first two years that Kansas provided students the opportunity to participate on a weekday in their own school in order to receive the benefits of these programs:

- 79,209 were provided the ACT and a college reportable score
- 18,418 were provided the ACT WorkKeys and the opportunity for a NCRC
- 26,551 were provided the PreACT (added in year 2)

By extending these opportunities to all schools in the state, every student will have the opportunity to benefit from these programs. **No additional allocation is required to extend these opportunities to students in nonpublic Kansas schools.**

ACT greatly values its partnership with the state of Kansas. As a nonprofit research organization, ACT is dedicated to serving students, job seekers, schools, government agencies and employers with learning resources, assessments, research and credentials designed to help them succeed. Our mission, to ensure that all individuals have access to higher education and the opportunity for lifelong career success, hinges on collaboration and we stand ready to assist your efforts to ensure Kansas students are prepared to achieve their dreams of education and career success after high school.

For the aforementioned reasons, I hope you will support SB 63.

Respectfully,



John Clark

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