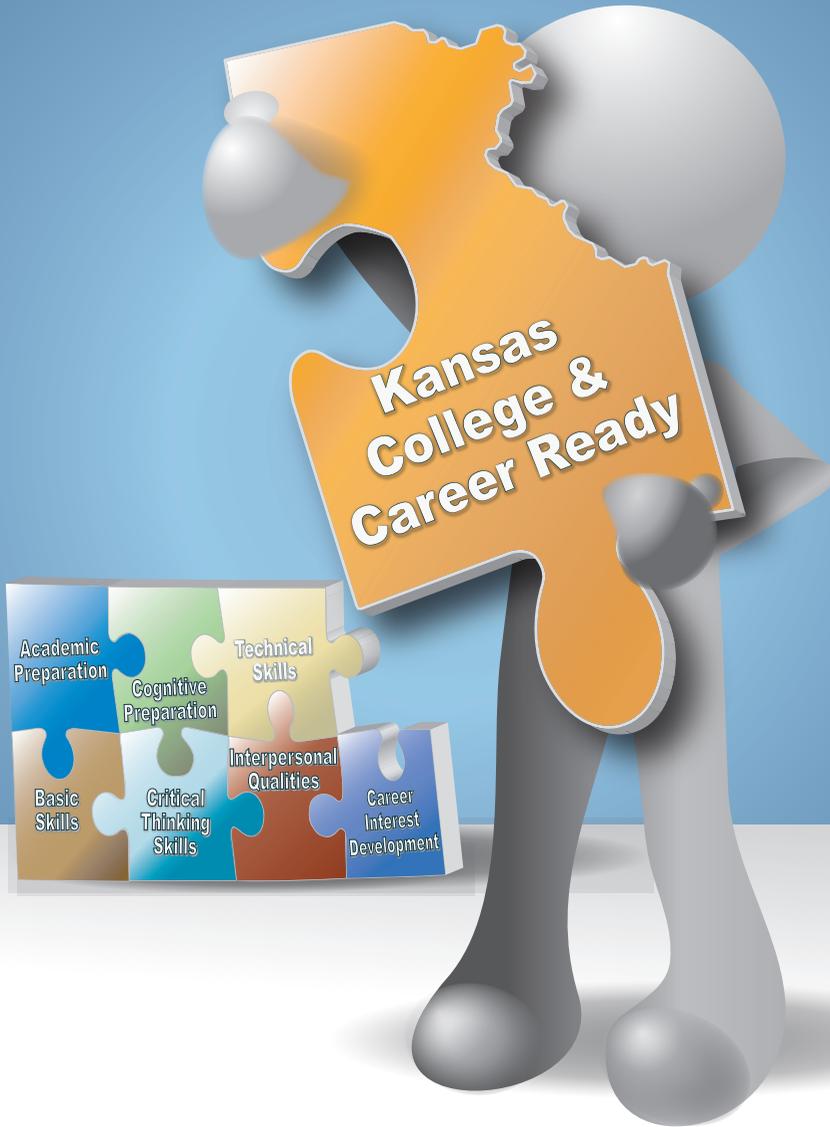


Vision for Education





If you have ever worked a jigsaw puzzle, you understand that sometimes the best strategy for achieving the larger vision is focusing on smaller pieces of the puzzle that come together to complete the full picture.

In Kansas, we have a grand vision of achieving college and career readiness for all public high school graduates. With the adoption of a definition for college and career readiness in December 2012, our State Board of Education has identified the puzzle pieces that will make up that vision. Our job now is to focus on those pieces in a way that will facilitate their coming together to create a cohesive whole.

Already, we are engaged in a number of initiatives that support our college and career ready vision. As we focus on the work of implementing and advancing those initiatives, it's easy to forget that they are just pieces of a larger puzzle and must be viewed as part of the whole before their true significance can be appreciated. This document is an attempt to identify the pieces of the college and career ready puzzle and connect the work we're doing with the achievement of our larger goal.

I am well aware of the demands placed on our local schools and districts, particularly at this time when we are confronting so many changes in education on a state and national level. The work ahead of us can seem overwhelming at times. I am hopeful this document will serve as a reminder of why we are doing the things we are and of the significant impact each piece of the puzzle will have on the future of Kansas students.

Thank you for your continued commitment to ensuring all Kansas students graduate from high school prepared for a world of opportunities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Diane DeBacker
Kansas Commissioner of Education
September 2010 - May 2014



College and Career Ready means an individual has the academic preparation, cognitive preparation, technical skills, and employability skills to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.



Academic Preparation:

What is it: Foundational knowledge in core subjects with the ability to understand key terms and link ideas and concepts across content areas.

How are we getting there:



In Kansas, everything we do relates back to this point. Adopting more rigorous content standards, developing assessments to gauge knowledge as well as application of knowledge and implementing an accountability system that provides multiple views of student performance all help us ensure Kansas students have effective academic preparation.

Work to improve teacher and leader evaluations to ensure educators are effective in helping students learn, and are provided the development opportunities needed to grow in that skill, will help ensure students have the instruction and guidance needed to achieve academically. Our focus on the Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) helps ensure learning environments that meet the instructional needs of each student. At the same time, we're working to revise our school accreditation process in a way that will foster more of the best practices that ensure high levels of student learning.

Cognitive Preparation:

What is it: The ability to formulate problems, conduct research, interpret and communicate information with precision and accuracy.

How are we getting there:



A focus on standards designed to advance application of knowledge, and assessments designed to measure that capacity, are critical to achieving this goal. Integration of Career and Technical Education is another means of providing students with opportunities to problem solve and apply knowledge to real-world situations.

Technical Skills:

What is it: The ability to earn an industry recognized certificate or credential that enables entrance to a career pathway with the potential for future advancement.

How are we getting there:



A focus on Career and Technical Education as outlined in the State Board of Education's CTE policy initiatives is key to ensuring students graduate with the technical skills that will facilitate their postsecondary endeavors. A move to career clusters and identified career pathways and the development of integrated assessments for career clusters, academic content areas and 21st Century Skills are part of achieving this goal for students.

Employability Skills including:

Basic Skills:

What is it: The ability to read, write, listen and speak effectively.

How are we getting there:



Ensuring basic skills in students is tied to the objective of ensuring academic preparation. All of the initiatives cited as support for academic preparation apply here – rigorous standards and performance based assessments, an accountability system based on multiple measures of achievement, teacher and principal evaluation systems based on multiple measures of effectiveness, learning environments designed to meet each student’s instructional needs and an accreditation system that focuses on strategies proven to improve student learning.

Critical Thinking Skills:

What is it: The ability to reason, think decisively, generate new ideas and solutions, and evaluate information to generate plans of action.

How are we getting there:



Standards written to emphasize the application of knowledge and performance based assessments are among the strategies for achieving this objective. A new accreditation system focused on implementation of best practices around learning and education will ensure these skills become an integral part of curriculum. In addition, pursuit of the State Board’s policy initiatives for Career and Technical Education, and incentives for students to participate in college-level CTE courses, will provide students an opportunity to develop these skills in real-world situations.

Interpersonal Qualities:

What is it: The development of character, social and personal skills to include the ability to establish relationships, responsibly make decisions and engage in effective self-management.

How are we getting there:



Our State Board was the first in the nation to adopt an integrated set of Social, Emotional and Character Development Standards to help schools integrate character development into their school climate and culture. The 21st Century Accreditation model, currently under development, incentivizes schools to address culture and climate issues, while a continued focus on MTSS addresses positive behavioral interventions. As we revise School Counseling Standards, a greater focus will be placed on social, emotional and character development, as well as on 21st Century learning skills. These efforts, together with a continued commitment to seeking and making available grant funding, will support schools in sustaining the integration of character development into the school culture and climate.

Career Interest Development:

What is it: The ability to engage in exploration and planning for career preferences and to access resources to facilitate those activities.

How are we getting there:



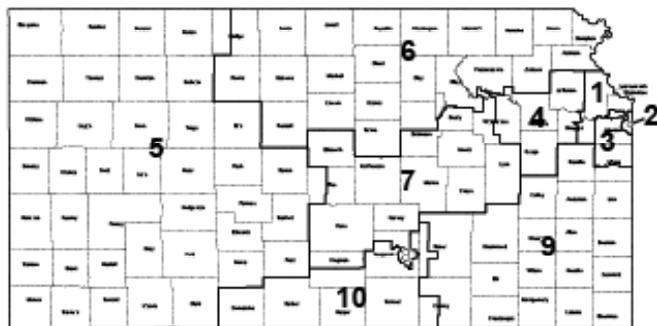
Pursuit of the State Board's policy initiatives for Career and Technical Education and revision and implementation of the Kansas School Counseling Standards will play a large part in achieving this objective. KSDE is committed to assisting schools in developing comprehensive career awareness and guidance curriculum, K-12. Our State Board has endorsed, and new legislation requires, exploration on the implementation of an individual plan of study for every student grade 9-12 based on career interests. School counseling standards include a career domain to encourage schools to address this area of student development. Newly developed Career and Technical Education pathways provide students with professional learning experiences.



The mission of the Kansas State Board of Education is to prepare Kansas students for lifelong success through rigorous, quality academic instruction, career training and character development according to each student's gifts and talents. To accomplish this mission the State Board has identified five goals. They are as follows:

- Provide a flexible delivery system to meet our students' changing needs.
- Provide an effective educator in every classroom.
- Ensure effective, visionary leaders in every school.
- Promote and encourage best practices for early childhood programs.
- Develop active communication and partnerships with families, communities, business stakeholders, constituents and policy makers.

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