



**KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (KDE)
SCHOOL CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND
ACCOUNTABILITY COUNCIL (SCAAC)
MEETING SUMMARY
NOV. 19, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Artavia Acklin, Heather Aldrich, Deborah Atherton, Carrie Ballinger, Martha Emmons, Chuck Fletcher, Jana Beth Francis, Frank Hall, Leslie Jeffries, Brenda McGown, Josh Trosper, Alan Young

MEMBERS ABSENT: Houston Barber, Renee Boss, Jason Reeves, Allison Tamme

SUMMARY: The Nov. 19, 2024, virtual School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council (SCAAC) meeting was called to order at 9 a.m. ET by Chairperson Jana Beth Francis. New SCAAC member, Frank Hall, was introduced and the council charge and member responsibilities were shared. Roll call was taken, and Melissa Chandler, program consultant in KDE's Office of Assessment and Accountability, informed the council of public meeting protocol.

A quorum of members was present. The open meeting was recorded and made available for viewing on the [KDE Media Portal](#).

All materials were made available in the [SCAAC Members Google Folder](#).

Agenda Item: SCAAC Chair and Vice-Chair Election

Presenter: Melissa Chandler, Program Consultant, Office of Assessment and Accountability, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Jana Beth Francis was nominated as the SCAAC Chair. Heather Aldrich made a motion to approve the slate and elect Francis as Chair of SCAAC. Chuck Fletcher seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Heather Aldrich was nominated as the SCAAC Vice Chair. Martha Emmons made a motion to approve the slate and elect Aldrich as Vice Chair of SCAAC. Chuck Fletcher seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Agenda Item: Approve Minutes from September 2024 Meeting

Presenter: Jana Beth Francis, Chair, SCAAC

Summary of Discussion: Chuck Fletcher made a motion to approve the September 2024 meeting minutes. Artavia Acklin seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Agenda Item: Chronic Absenteeism

Presenter: Florence Chang, Program Consultant, Office of Continuous Improvement and Support, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Chang presented data on chronic absenteeism, showing a significant increase post-pandemic, with the rate almost doubling from one out of six students to one out of three. The data indicated that the youngest students, particularly in kindergarten through second grade, experienced the largest increases in absenteeism.

Chang discussed various factors that contribute to chronic absenteeism, including barriers such as transportation challenges, chronic health conditions, family responsibilities and economic challenges. She also highlighted aversion due to increased anxiety post-pandemic, disengagement from online learning habits, and misconceptions about the importance of attendance.

Chang outlined strategies to address chronic absenteeism, emphasizing a tiered approach. Tier 1 focuses on creating a foundation of belonging, safety and connectedness, while Tiers 2 and 3 involve removing barriers and providing interventions for extreme cases. She stressed the importance of supportive school culture, relevant and meaningful learning, and effective communication with families.

KDE is launching a campaign in January to raise awareness about the importance of attendance. The campaign includes messaging from the commissioner, billboards, radio ads, and translated materials for Spanish-speaking families. The goal is to create awareness that students are missed when they are not in school.

Feedback: Chair Francis noted that the chart showing the percentage of chronic absenteeism by grade level was eye opening and inquired if similar charts could be developed for each district.

Alan Young highlighted the need for engaging and personalized learning experiences as well as the need to recognize the systemic barriers that contribute to chronic absenteeism.

Josh Trosper noted that attendance is often tied to test scores and funding, which can create a negative perception. He stressed the need for a positive campaign to change this perception.

Debby Atherton raised the issue of transportation challenges, noting that bus route cancellations can significantly impact attendance. She emphasized the need to address transportation issues to ensure students can get to school consistently. She stressed the significance of creating a sense of belonging for students and listening to what students want (e.g., food preferences).

Chuck Fletcher inquired as to what initiatives are being implemented to address the areas of social and emotional learning that impact absenteeism.

Carrie Ballinger shared her district's efforts to focus on middle and high school absenteeism and the importance of maintaining a positive message when communicating with families.

Frank Hall suggested involving community members in addressing absenteeism, as they can have a significant impact on students. He shared his personal experience of community influence during his school years and emphasized the need for community engagement in reminding parents and students about the importance of attendance.

Agenda Item: Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Presenter: Veda Stewart, Director, Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness, Kentucky Department of Education; Elly Gilbert, Assistant Director, Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Gilbert and Stewart shared that KDE is preparing for a communications blitz to recruit and retain teachers. The KDE Division of Educator Recruitment and Development is seeking input on strategies and messaging in preparation of the communications blitz.

Feedback: Atherton noted that many districts successfully retain teachers who have a strong connection to the community and the school's culture.

Young highlighted the need for schools to be talent development agencies, focusing on recognizing and nurturing the strengths and passions of both students and teachers. He suggested that teachers should be placed in environments where their strengths and talents are recognized and their voices are heard. He emphasized the need for teachers to have opportunities for growth and development within their roles.

Francis suggested that recruitment campaigns should focus on the mission-oriented nature of teaching, appealing to individuals who are passionate about helping students and making a difference. She emphasized the need to elevate the teaching profession and highlight the opportunities for lifelong learning and professional growth.

Ballinger shared her experience with teacher job satisfaction surveys and suggested focusing a campaign on the issues that teachers have identified as problem areas.

Fletcher shared recruitment initiatives taking place in his district including collaboration with

Kentucky State University and area high schools to provide experiences and incentives for students to teach in local communities.

Young raised the issue of barriers to entry for teachers, such as the difficulty of transferring teaching credentials from other states and the challenges posed by testing requirements (e.g., Praxis). He suggested that Kentucky should become a destination state for teachers by addressing these barriers and promoting the state's unique educational initiatives.

Martha Emmons suggested that a barrier for potential teachers entering the field is the lack of recognition for top producers.

Ballinger asked whether the Teaching and Learning Pathway might eventually be integrated into the Office of Career and Technical Education (CTE). Gilbert shared that the KDE is currently discussing the possible industry certifications that may be applicable for the Teaching and Learning Pathway.

Agenda Item: Kentucky United We Learn Update

Presenter: Jennifer Stafford, Director, Office of Assessment and Accountability, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Stafford provided an update on the United We Learn initiative, which aims to create a fair, transparent and equitable local accountability system. The initiative focuses on vibrant learning experiences, encouraging innovation in assessment and creating bold new futures through community collaboration.

Stafford discussed the importance of legislative awareness and support for a new assessment and accountability system. The goal is to propose legislation in the 2026 legislative session.

Stakeholder input has highlighted the importance of a local accountability system that reflects the priorities and values of the community while reducing the assessment burden by making social studies and writing assessments optional and introducing interim assessments in reading and math. These changes aim to provide a more comprehensive and aligned assessment system that supports local accountability.

Feedback: Young inquired about developing one system that incorporates local measures within the federal reporting methods. Stafford shared that a balance of autonomy is the goal while meeting the requirements of federal comparisons.

Ballinger commended Stafford and Sims on the efforts in working toward a local accountability system.

Agenda Item: Assessment and Accountability Updates

Presenter: Rhonda Sims, Associate Commissioner, Office of Assessment and Accountability,

Kentucky Department of Education; Jennifer Stafford, Director, Office of Assessment and Accountability, Kentucky Department of Education; Helen Jones, Academic Program Manager, Office of Assessment and Accountability, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Sims shared a brief history of student performance in the content of science from 2018-2024, detailing changes to *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Science*. She noted that the Kentucky Summative Assessment (KSA) is a criterion referenced test, not norm referenced. She shared some of the misconceptions surrounding cut scores, performance levels and percentiles. Sims acknowledged the decline in high school performance and provided some theories for the trend.

Stafford shared the process for the revision of the *KAS for Science*. Based on feedback from the field, goals have been established to refresh the design of the science assessment and newly developed items for science will be included in the spring 2025 KSA.

Jones provided an update on the School Report Card, explaining the temporary measures in place until the new report card is released by the end of the calendar year.

Feedback: Trospen shared concerns about the refreshed assessment design and the unknown. Sims explained that the refreshed design will still be grounded in the KAS but will have a minimized reading load with fewer clusters and more stand-alone items.

Aldrich also shared concerns that the KSA for science is not representative of student capabilities and suggested that end-of-course assessments aligned to standards may be a better representation.

Young asked for clarification on how the science standards and assessment are connected to the Portrait of a Learner (PoL). Sims and Stafford shared that the PoL should allow students to show skills and competencies at the local level from the standards that are taught and assessed for federal purposes.

Francis noted the importance of recognizing and addressing how domain specific courses are taught at the high school level.

Heather Aldrich made a motion to adjourn. Chuck Fletcher seconded the motion. Motion carried. The next SCAAC meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2025.