Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (KDE)
COMMISSIONER'S STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
SUMMARY
APRIL 11, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: (14 members present) Hunter Combs, Arnav Dharmagadda, Justin Dunning, Raima Dutt, Peter M. Jefferson, Shraman Kar, Loren Little, Anastasia Panaretos, Alexandra Perry, Tanvi Rakesh, Sophia Retone, Malley Taylor, Sarah Umbarger, Bentley White

MEMBERS ABSENT: (14 members absent) Gavin Breunig, Charleigh Browning, Joud Dahleh, Delaney Daugherty, Ollie Fegenbush, Nyla Johnson, Vijaykumar Karthikeyan, Ella Luking, Kalli Oblander, Spandana Pavuluri, Chloe Ralston, Amy Roblero-Perez, Luke Taylor, Sarah Yu

SUMMARY

Agenda Item: Welcome (Roll Call) and Approval Summary from Last Meeting

Presenter: Thomas Woods-Tucker, Ph.D., KDE Deputy Commissioner; and Toni Konz Tatman, KDE Chief Communications Officer

Summary of Discussion: Konz Tatman opened the meeting and thanked participants for their flexibility switching to a virtual meeting due to a water main break at the Sower Building. Woods-Tucker invited students to share about upcoming end-of-year activities at their schools.

Feedback: Students discussed spring break activities and the importance of taking a break before busy end-of-year activities.

Agenda Item: Mindful Minute

Presenter: Heather Bushelman, Program Coordinator for Comprehensive School Counseling, Office of Teaching and Learning, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Bushelman asked students to reflect on their upcoming three-day schedule of obligations. She reminded students to focus on coping skills to help minimize stress and burnout.

Feedback: Students shared coping skills and noted appreciation for the timely reminder to focus on self-care.

Agenda Item: Discussion on School Safety

Presenters: Ben Wilcox, State School Security Marshal; Jon Akers, Executive Director, Kentucky Center for School Safety; and Jennifer Taylor, Kentucky Office of Homeland Security

Summary of Discussion: Akers complimented students on their [project related to school safety](#). He discussed the work of the Kentucky Center for School Safety, particularly how the office uses an "all hazards approach" to assess school safety in Kentucky. He noted challenges to school safety also include bullying and vaping. Akers and Taylor discussed the history of the [S.T.O.P. Tipline](#)**,** how students can use the tipline to report concerns and current efforts to promote the tipline. Taylor noted that an app for the tipline is in production. Akers and Taylor mentioned, based on the council's school safety recommendations, that a pamphlet about the tipline is also in production for summer distribution to school districts. Wilcox discussed the role of School Resource Officers (SROs) in schools: "Your SRO is that trusted adult that is also your protector." Wilcox noted the required certification training for SROs includes active shooter training.

Feedback: Students shared suggestions on how to further promote the S.T.O.P. Tipline in schools. A few attendees asked questions related to immediate actions and reunification center sites in the event of a school shooting.

Agenda Item: Discussion on Council Projects

Presenter: Meredith Brewer, KDE Director of Education Policy; and GlyptusAnn Grider Jones, KDE Awards and Recognition Coordinator

Summary of Discussion: Jones asked students to share ideas on how to further promote their school safety project. Brewer announced that council members returning for the 2023-2024 term voted to pursue a project related to the role of student voice in Kentucky. Additional details about the design of the new project will be discussed at future meetings, she said.

Feedback: Peter Jefferson, a 10th-grade council member from Henry Clay High School (Fayette County), recommended sharing their school safety project with school administrators at the district level. Raima Dutt, an 11th-grade council member from duPont Manual High School (Jefferson County), suggested reaching out to individual counties and focusing on the "local impact" of the council's recommendations. "If more people are talking about it, then it is more likely that change will occur," Dutt said. Anastasia Panaretos, a 12th-grade council member from South Oldham High School (Oldham County), recommended creating several videos of their presentation and sharing it through social media. Mandy Perez, the 2023 Kentucky Teacher of the Year, shared how students' work and efforts on the council are used as a model for other state education agencies interested in developing a student advisory council.

Agenda Item: Communications Opportunities for Students

Presenter: Toni Konz Tatman, KDE Chief Communications Officer

Summary of Discussion: Konz Tatman highlighted opportunities of interest for students, including internships at the Kentucky Department of Education, travel scholarships with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and a virtual information fair for those interested in attending military academies.

Feedback: None.

Agenda Item: Kentucky Legislative Update

Presenter: Brian Perry, KDE Director of Government Relations

Summary of Discussion: Perry noted that the department tracked approximately 160 bills during this legislative session and provided updates to the council on recently passed legislation. He said that HB196 which focused on the Safe Kentucky app and school safety, as well as HB288 which focused on teacher misconduct, did not pass but he expected versions of those bills to be refiled in the next legislative session.

Feedback: Taylor mentioned that the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security is working to combine or connect related efforts in the state to the S.T.O.P. Tipline app.

Agenda Item: Presentation Honoring Council Members

Presenter: Thomas Woods-Tucker, Ph.D., KDE Deputy Commissioner; and Toni Konz Tatman, KDE Chief Communications Officer

Summary of Discussion: Woods-Tucker and Konz Tatman thanked senior council members for their year of service. Graduation cords honoring their senior year of service to KDE, as well as certificates of recognition, will be mailed to active members.

Feedback: None.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m. ET.

The next Commissioner's Student Advisory Council meeting is scheduled to take place virtually May 30, at 9 a.m. ET.