



**KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (KDE)
COMMISSIONER'S STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

SUMMARY

AUGUST 29, 2023

Present: (36 members present) Ava Benson, Reese Blakeman, Owen Borden, Cameron Breier, Owen Cody, Hunter Combs, Joud Dahleh, Justin Dunning, Raima Dutt, Manas Garla, Nicholas Hazelett, Honette Irakiza, Trey Jackson, Peter Jefferson, Shraman Kar, Vijaykumar Karthikeyan, Seth Langford, Danica Love, Gabriella MacAdams, Constance Martin, Anopa Musoni, R.J. Osborne, Tanvi Rakesh, Daniel Ratley, Jocelyn Reddick, Amy Roblero-Perez, Caleb Robinson, Sophia Staples, Ian Swenson, Sarah Umbarger, Austin Vitato, Carley Watts, Bentley White, Aliete Yanes Medina, India Young, Joshua Zyzak

Absent: (1 member absent) Malley Taylor

Summary:

Agenda Item: Welcome (Roll Call of Members)

Presenter: Jason E. Glass, Ed.D., KDE Education Commissioner and Chief Learner; GlyptusAnn Jones, KDE Awards and Recognitions Coordinator

Summary of Discussion: Jones presented the agenda and called roll. Glass introduced himself.

Feedback: None.

Agenda Item: Approve Summary from Last Meeting

Presenter: GlyptusAnn Grider Jones, KDE Awards and Recognitions Coordinator

Summary of Discussion: Members approved the [summary from the May 30, 2023, council meeting](#). Motion made by Bentley White and seconded by Peter Jefferson.

Feedback: None.

Agenda Item: Mindful Minute

Presenter: Damien Sweeney, KDE Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Office of Teaching and Learning

Summary of Discussion: Sweeney discussed mindfulness and the importance of empathy in one's life and in schools. He asked council members: "How can you help create a school culture that hears the need of under-represented students?" Sweeney encouraged students to reach out to students who feel alone.

Feedback: Students shared examples of how they can help foster more empathy in school environments. White, a 12th-grade student at the Kentucky School for the Deaf, said students can "spend quality time with under-represented students and have meaningful conversations." Seth Langford, a 10th-grade student at J. Graham Brown School (Jefferson County), stated that teachers also have a role in fostering empathy in school environments.

Agenda Item: Overview of Council Structure and Goals

Presenter: GlyptusAnn Grider Jones, KDE Awards and Recognitions Coordinator

Summary of Discussion: Jones announced that council members elected Raima Dutt, a 12th-grade student at duPont Manual High School (Jefferson County), to serve as council chair, and White to serve as vice chair. Jones discussed meeting attendance expectations and opportunities for students to share their feedback with KDE.

Feedback: Members congratulated Dutt and White on their leadership roles.

Agenda Item: Input on EdRising and Apprenticeship Opportunities

Presenter: Byron Darnall, KDE Associate Commissioner, Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness

Summary of Discussion: Darnell discussed the goals of [Educators Rising Kentucky](#) and apprenticeship opportunities in Kentucky schools. He asked for council input regarding which programs might make it more likely to recruit students into the teaching profession.

Feedback: Members discussed various apprenticeship programs at their schools, as well as the need for more opportunities to explore career pathways. Nicholas Hazelett, a 12th-grade student at Paintsville High School (Paintsville Independent), described a successful program at his high school for seniors that involves shadowing local business professionals to improve career readiness and earn volunteer hours. Honette Irakiza, an 11th-grade student at South Warren High School (Warren County), said that it would be helpful to have more explorative apprenticeship programs for students.

Agenda Item: Update on the Kentucky United We Learn Council

Presenter: Karen Dodd, KDE Chief Performance Officer

Summary of Discussion: Dodd described the [Kentucky United We Learn Council](#) and asked council members to identify and share their “moonshot” or vision for the future of education in the state.

Feedback: Members shared their “moonshot” visions on a shared Google document, as well as in the meeting online chat. Manas Garla, a 10th-grade student at Western Hills High School (Franklin County), said that his moonshot would be that students could take any class they wanted. Shraman Kar, a 12th-grade student at duPont Manual High School (Jefferson County), said his moonshot would be that learning would be personalized for individual students. Joshua Zyzak, a 12th-grade student at Beechwood High School (Beechwood Independent) said, “I hope for schools to have more equal access to technological resources, core classes and opportunities.” Reese Blakeman, a 12th-grade student at Somerset High School (Somerset Independent), noted the lack of engagement from students and suggested that students should come together and empower one another.

Agenda Item: Update regarding the August 2023 Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) Meeting

Presenter: Jason E. Glass, Ed.D., Kentucky Education Commissioner and Chief Learner

Summary of Discussion: Glass discussed the importance of having both a student and teacher representative on the board and encouraged members to connect with R.J. Osborne, an 11th-grade student at Whitley County High School and the current non-voting student member on the KBE. Glass addressed his upcoming departure and how he plans to help in the transition to welcome an interim commissioner.

Feedback: None.

Agenda Item: Conversation with the Commissioner

Presenter: Jason E. Glass, Ed.D., Kentucky Commissioner of Education and Chief Learner

Summary of Discussion: Glass, who announced he will step down from his position on Sept. 29, asked council members to answer two questions to help inform the search for a new commissioner. He asked students to identify qualities they hope the Kentucky Board of Education will look for in the next commissioner. He also asked students, “What priorities would students like to see the commissioner focus on in their first year?”

Feedback: Students shared their feedback in the online meeting chat, which was compiled into a Google document. Students said they want a commissioner who actively listens to students' needs, prioritizes safety within schools and has the best interest of Kentucky students at heart. White said that he would like the new commissioner to be open to exploring new avenues and listening to the needs and wants of students, faculty, staff, communities and families. Gabriella MacAdams, a 10th-grade student at Williamstown High School (Williamstown Independent) said, "I'd like the commissioner to ensure all schools are being heard, no matter how small they may be."

Council members also discussed what they hope the new commissioner will prioritize in his or her first year, including student voice and supporting every role in education. "I would like the commissioner to be a person that educators and students can rely on as a person to go to. As the chief learner, they need to be the image of education and help promote whatever is best for students in the Commonwealth," said Vijaykumar Karthikeyan, a 12th-grade student at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School (Fayette County).

Agenda Item: Opportunities for Students

Presenter: GlyptusAnn Grider Jones, Awards and Recognitions Coordinator

Summary of Discussion: Jones noted that KDE oversees the selection process for Kentucky high school juniors and seniors to participate in the United States Senate Youth Program. Applications are due Oct. 2. Jones also shared other upcoming opportunities of interest to Kentucky high school students, which are posted on [Kentucky Teacher's Bulletin Board](#).

Feedback: None.

Agenda Item: Member Announcements

Presenter: GlyptusAnn Grider Jones, Awards and Recognitions Coordinator

Summary of Discussion: Jones invited members to share events or announcements of significance in their schools or districts.

Feedback: Hazelett discussed his role as a student representative on the KDE Office of Assessment and Accountability's Standard-Setting Committee. The group will meet in mid-September to recommend cut scores that will determine a school's overall performance rating. Aliete Yanes Medina, a 10th-grade student at Fern Creek High School (Jefferson County), described her efforts to obtain lunch tables compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for her school's cafeteria.

The meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m. ET.

The next council meeting will be held in person Sept. 26, 2023, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. ET at the Kentucky Department of Education (300 Sower Blvd, Frankfort, KY 40601).