



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Education Continuation Task Force

SUMMARY

MEETING DATE: APRIL 21, 2020

ATTENDANCE: Jon Akers, Melissa Bell, Melissa Biggerstaff, Rhonda Caldwell, Eddie Campbell, Trish Carroll, Tonya Crum, Jim Evans, Jim Flynn, Ronda Harmon, Jeff Hawkins, Nancy Hutchinson, David Johnson, Eric Kennedy, Brian Lovell, Leon Mooneyhan, Ronnie Nolan, OJ Oleka, Tony Peavler, Brigitte Blom Ramsey, Amy Razor, Mary Pat Regan, Jackie Risdén-Smith, Mary Ruble, John Settle, Benjamin Wilcox, Wayne Young

SUMMARY:

Agenda Item: Welcome and Update from Governor's April 20 Webcast

Presenters: Kevin C. Brown, Interim Commissioner
Karen Dodd, Chief Performance Officer
Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion and Feedback:

Interim Commissioner Kevin Brown reviewed the content of the call between the governor and superintendents. In-person learning in school buildings will not resume this school year. KDE has released an [education continuation plan](#) to help districts wrap up this school year and begin planning for the 2020-21 school year. Districts will still try to meet the requirement for 1,062 hours of instruction. Districts may count NTI days as seven hours of instruction, including those used before the COVID-19 crisis began. Most districts should meet the required hours of instruction in mid-May. Several questions have come up about graduation ceremonies. Districts are encouraged to think creatively to honor their students.

Feedback:

Feedback about the governor's announcement and the education continuation plan was positive. Participants feel this guidance is helpful to districts. Additional feedback included the following:

- Mental health must continue to be a top priority, as there are reports that teachers and students are feeling a lot of stress during this time. KEDC is working with guidance counselors on mental health resources.
- Our commitment should be to give seniors the best opportunity possible to experience a graduation ceremony under safe conditions. This is what students want and in time, we can look at creative approaches that are far better than a virtual graduation.

- Task force members expressed their hope that districts would use teacher contract days that extend beyond the instructional calendar for professional learning and planning for next year.
- We keep coming back to three big questions. What do we do this summer to address the slide? What do we do in the fall to address learning gaps? What do we do to better prepare for a possible resurgence of COVID-19?

Questions from task force members were addressed:

Question: How are required contract days to be fulfilled by staff after 1,062 instructional hours have been reached?

Answer: 1,062 hours of instruction does not satisfy contract requirements. After school is out, districts may schedule teachers' time for virtual planning for next year and professional learning. Districts also have the option to use emergency days to satisfy contract days. This is permitted by [SB 177](#).

Question: How will student retrieve their personal items from school buildings?

Answer: We don't have guidance on that yet, but we will. This issue will be addressed with the Principals Advisory Council on Wednesday to get feedback about how to close the school year and return personal items to students while adhering to the governor's orders and the recommendations of the health department.

Question: If districts use emergency days for staff for the end of the year, could federal funds be used for work over the summer to prepare for next year?

Answer: We are waiting on guidance, but we feel there may be some flexibility for those purposes where districts could possibly bring staff together or provide remediation to students in July or August if it's safe.

On April 29, the standards team is hosting the first of a series of webinars to address planning for learning gaps during this time we have now, meeting students' needs upon our return to school in the fall and providing equitable interventions based on current levels of knowledge. More information about the learning series can be found in the commissioner's [Monday Message](#).

Districts must make decisions based on their circumstances, but we encourage superintendents to use extra staff days for planning and professional learning. There are extreme needs for planning and resources will be available. Districts may amend their calendars to schedule staff days in a way that will address fatigue.

Follow-up Required:

None.

Agenda Item: Student Advisory Recap

Presenter: Toni Konz Tatman, Interim Director of Communications, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion:

KDE sought feedback from the [Student Advisory Council](#) about topics around graduation and how they would like to proceed. It is a "senior heavy" group, with 12 members who are seniors this year. The group also discussed how they're feeling about NTI and counseling services being provided. Feedback from the exit forms included the following feedback.

- When asked how counselors can support them and their peers, most said counselors are doing a good job staying involved with students and would like to see that continue throughout the summer.
- Preparing to transition to the next grade level is causing some anxiety.
- Students are concerned about being prepared for final and AP exams.
- The group members are worried about being prepared for college coursework.
- The quality of education via NTI was mentioned as a concern.

Dr. Damien Sweeney talked with the group about counseling services and checked in with the group about how things are going. Two members of the Prichard Committee's [Student Voice Team](#) attended to discuss ways the council members can elevate their voice during this time. Four council members have volunteered to write student voice columns for [Kentucky Teacher](#).

The Student Advisory Council will meet again on May 5. This experience has given us a new way to interact with this group and we plan to work with them more frequently going forward.

Feedback:

Task force members gave positive remarks about seeking student feedback.

Follow-up Required:

None.

Agenda Item: Student Advisory Survey

Presenter: Dr. Amanda Ellis, Associate Commissioner, Office of Teaching and Learning, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion:

The council members were surveyed about options for graduation, and they were adamant that it be personal. They don't want a virtual graduation if there are safe and creative ways to honor their wishes.

The council wants to talk more about transitioning into college, as well as kids who are moving to high school and middle school. We are working with Dr. Damien Sweeney to address these needs.

Feedback:

None.

Follow-up Required:

None.

Agenda Item: Teachers Helping Teachers

Presenters: Rob Akers, Associate Commissioner, Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness, Kentucky Department of Education

Dr. Melissa Bell, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Council on Postsecondary Education

Dr. OJ Oleka, President, Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities

Summary of Discussion:

Information about supports being put in place to help students and educators was shared by each presenter. Dr. Bell began by updating the group about how higher education is preparing for the new group of freshmen coming who may need remediation. Highlights from surveying the institutions:

- EKV - waiving test score requirement for admissions, accepting unofficial high school transcripts for admissions, extending scholarship offer deadlines and other deadlines for graduating seniors this year
- Most institutions have gone test optional for admissions purposes in the fall
- Morehead State University – offering one-on-one virtual onboarding and peer coaching for students who are admitted conditionally
- Murray State – provided extensive list of services being offered, effective fall of 2020 they have hired student success coaches for students who had a GPA of 2.0-2.49 in high school, there will be mentoring for managing learning contracts required of students within the GPA range
- Northern Kentucky University – providing spring and summer outreach to admitted students to build community and financial literacy, offering a wide range of summer registration programs, several programs reaching out to students

Dr. Oleka shared two unique things being offered by University of the Cumberlands and Bellarmine University:

- University of the Cumberlands – partnering with [Knox Promise Neighborhood](#) to offer virtual student success workshops and meet and greets for students from surrounding counties, developing virtual summers sessions to promote transition to college topics
- Bellarmine University - extended deposit refund deadline, offering a Pandemic 101 course, offering financial incentives for first year students to enroll in summer courses online, providing wraparound services through various learning communities, deferring scholarships for a semester or a year, as needed

Rob Akers shared waivers approved by EPSB to help educator preparation programs and pre-service teachers.

- Admissions assessments and student teaching hours have been waived
- Waivers have been offered for those who are seeking additional certifications

Supports offered for in-service teachers include:

- [Teachers Helping Teachers](#) virtual mentor program
- GoTeachKy Twitter chats focusing on NTI
- OELE will expand the virtual mentorship program next year, but it will not supplant mentoring that takes place within the district
- OELE hosting virtual office hours with experts in the field

For school leaders:

Through our partnership with the [Urban Schools Human Capital Academy](#) and our P3 team, we've been working on a toolkit for three main areas:

- Teacher recruitment
- Teacher inductions
- Teacher retention

Details can be found in the [presentation](#) that was shared.

Ongoing conversations between OELE and educator preparation programs are taking place to share what programs are doing to assist new teachers and districts. Our local districts will need extra support from educator preparation programs as we begin the 2020-21 school year.

Feedback:

None.

Follow-up Required:

None.

Agenda Item: Review and Adjournment

Presenter: Kevin Brown, Interim Commissioner of Education

Summary of Discussion and Feedback:

Commissioner Brown thanked everyone for their participation in this task force and for their work to support their groups.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 4, 2020, 1-3 E.T. Group members should send feedback or questions to [Commissioner Brown](#) or [Karen Dodd](#).