



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION Parents' Advisory Council (PAC) SUMMARY

MARCH 10, 2021

Present: Sarah Barrett, Katie Bentley, Judith Bradley, Sara Brown, Carol Cecil, Brooke Gill, Douglas Jones, Rhonda Logsdon, Lisa Meiman, Lauren Mitchell, Rachel Noyes, Mandy Sapp, Leslie Spears, Stacie Strotman, David Weisenhorn, Megan West, Cyndi Wrenn

Absent: Kristen Brown, Cherie Dimar, Mary Ann Jennings, Carie Kizziar, LaMonique Mason, Kathy Smiley

Agenda Item: Welcome/Commissioner Comments

Presenter: Jason E. Glass, commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)

Summary of Discussion: Commissioner Glass discussed House Bill (HB) 208, which establishes a system of attendance tracking and NTI (non-traditional instruction) for this school year. It allows schools to serve students full time in NTI, ending March 29, 2021. After this date, schools must offer a minimum of 2 days, with a maximum of 4 days, per week of in-person instruction. This also allows for students who request to continue virtually, to do so. Funding and attendance calculations used throughout this school year will be used through the end of the year instead of expiring in March.

The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) Acting Secretary of Education sent a letter requiring testing of students this school year, but it allows for some flexibility with the data. Test data will need to be reported at an aggregate level and will be decoupled from accountability. This means the data cannot be used to rank schools or move schools up or down in the rating systems. The KDE has been working on our testing system in anticipation of this decision from the USDOE. The KDE will provide a shorter test as well as expanding the testing window to give schools longer to offer testing.

Agenda Item: Approval of Minutes

Presenter: Leslie Spears, educational program consultant II, KDE Office of Continuous Improvement and Support

Summary of Discussion: Lauren Mitchell moved to approve minutes from the Dec. 9, 2020, PAC meeting. Motion was second by Judith Bradley. Council voted to approve the minutes.

Agenda Item: Proposed Changes to 703 KAR 5:100-SBDM

Presenter: Kelly Foster, associate commissioner, Office of Continuous Improvement and Support

Summary of Discussion: Foster reviewed proposed changes to 703 KAR 5:100-SBDM. The KDE has proposed language that will make it easier for sites to add non-voting members to their Site Based Decision Making (SBDM) councils without having to bring the request to the KBE.

The discussed proposed changes are as follows: Section One defines Parent and Teacher as defined in KRS 160.345. Section Two: Alternative Models for School-based decision making by creating a timeline for the development and submission of an alternative model application, creating a 30-day timeline for the referral, establishing the date for the implementation of new alternative SBDM models as of July 1, 2021, and clarifies that applications for alternative SBDM models are not required for changes that maintain the statutorily required membership ratios or add non-voting members. Section 3: Exemptions from School-based Decision making by creating a timeline for application for exceptions. (applications accepted January 1-March 1) This requires requests for exemptions to SBDM to be referred to the KBE, establishes a date for the implementation of exemptions to SBDM as of July 1, and requires schools to re-apply for SBDM exemptions annually. There were no proposed changes to Sections Four, Five, or Six.

Feedback:

Q: Are there any changes with respect to school types?

A: No

Q: SBDMs seem to miss several things specific to students with disabilities and special needs in their policies. A parent stated that when her son was a student, she checked whether the SBDM had policies regarding certain things, and they did not. How can families, parents and educators know that the SBDM will create policies that they need to? Will there be any auditing of SBDMs for compliance?

A: The department does not audit the SBDM policies. We do, however, work to enforce and support each schools SBDM coordinator. The KDE works with SBDMs to make sure they have the correct policies in place. The KDE is working on updating required annual trainings, which include reminding them about needing policies and needing them updated annually.

Agenda Item: KDE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Efforts for Our Schools

Presenters: Dr. Thomas Tucker, chief equity officer & deputy commissioner, KDE Office of Teaching and Learning

Damien Sweeny, program coordinator for Comprehensive School Counseling, Office of Teaching and Learning

Summary of Discussion: The KDE has identified four priorities in its strategic plan: Equity, Achievement, Collaboration, and Integrity. Education leaders must embrace diversity, assure

equality and shape the future of all Kentucky's children. Educators, schools and districts must commit to listening to those seeking to be heard and to ensure young people of color feel valued and safe in school and the community. In order to care for the social and emotional needs of our students, staff and administrators during this time, we are ensuring that we are utilizing the resources of professional staff as well as community partners, that we build true comprehensive school counseling programs that are preventative versus reactive, and that we are working with the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities to educate schools on Integrated Mental Health (which includes an interconnected systems frameworks) along with asset mapping. The Kentucky Department of Education recommends that all schools and districts in the Commonwealth acknowledge that diversity, equity, inclusion and social-emotional learning are all drivers within our curriculum, and build awareness that societal issues that impact our communities also impact our schools.

The KDE's ongoing equity-related initiatives include: Kentucky Academic Standards Implementation, Council of Chief State Officers' High-Quality Instructional Resources Professional Learning Project, multi-tiered system of supports, equitable practices/policies scan, and funding for the Kentucky Academy for Equity in Teaching (KAET). Initiatives will also ensure that the KDE is speaking to district and school leaders about addressing disproportionality in special education and ensuring access to high-rigor courses along with common obstacles that prevent this access. The KDE will engage in its own continuous improvement through professional learning and will investigate how to marshal and reallocate KDE assets and expertise to ensure that every child has the resources, teachers, interventions and support they need to be successful in school and life.

The Statewide Equity and Inclusion Scan has been sent to everyone in the state and the KDE is encouraging everyone to complete it. The purpose is to receive feedback from all community stakeholders and to help identify existing equitable practices, with an emphasis on racial equity, inclusion and diversity, and to determine whether your district has an Equity and Inclusion Action Plan or if it is included in your district's strategic plan. Based on the responses received so far, we show that stakeholders want more exposure to diversity and assistance with unintentional bias, models of best practices, including more than just race or ethnicity, guidance and real resources to help make an equitable and rigorous leaning environment a reality for students, and to continue to have discussions and take feedback on this issue.

The KDE is also committed to providing sample language that schools and districts can adopt and use, creating surveys/scans for district/school employees, students and families about equitable practices, encouraging equity to be embedded in all school districts' strategic plans, facilitating professional development opportunities, pointing to innovative research, and providing access to high-quality standards aligned instructional resources to ensure equitable access to learning. The KDE encourages more courageous conversations in our schools and districts to create common ground and support for all students. The KDE also encourages all stakeholders to broaden their definition of diversity.

By ensuring the understanding of what equity, equality and inclusivity mean we are respecting each student's culture. The KDE is working to provide schools and districts the resources they need to be successful, ensuring that our students and stakeholders, irrespective of differences, have a voice in the educational process.

Racial trauma and implicit bias conversations are needed across Kentucky, regardless of the racial makeup in our schools, districts or communities, because such events impact us all and we

must address their emotional and traumatic consequences. The Student's Advisory Council, along with Commissioner Glass, are working on a project to expand conversations across our districts about racial trauma and implicit bias.

The KDE is creating an Equity Tool-kit, which will provide districts and schools with resources like: support on how to utilize a multi-tiered system of support, equity data assessments, guidance on how district and schools can facilitate courageous conversations about race, guidance about the connections between social and emotional learning and conversations about race, resources to help educators choose inclusive curriculum and help ensure policies do not oppress or discriminate against traditionally marginalized students, as well as unconscious bias training.

Feedback:

Q: Will students with IEPs be required to relinquish them in order to participate in accelerated learning course work?

A: No, the school Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) would need to work with the student and his/her family to document the least restrictive environment on the IEP for the student. We also encourage case load managers, when developing the IEP, to discuss program modifications (on IEP) needed to assist student in accessing the general curriculum; which in this case may include collaborations of the general education teacher and the special education teacher on modifications and accommodations needed.

Q: Is there a way to work together to continue to work on this to address not one issue, but all issues, irrespective of the student's race, gender, gender identity, religion, lack of religion, ESL status, etc., including disability/ability status?

A: This goes beyond race and ethnicity. Any exceptionality that is out there will be addressed.

Agenda Item: Training Opportunities related to SEL, Trauma Informed Care, and Youth Mental Health First Aid

Presenter: Deborah Sauber, branch manager, Office of Continuous Improvement and Support

Summary of Discussion: The Safe and Supportive Schools branch of the KDE is responsible for a variety of initiatives including school safety concerns, school mental health/wellness, suicide and bullying prevention, substance abuse, human trafficking, child sexual abuse and emergency operations planning. They accomplish this through training and technical assistance, support and information for school districts and regional educational cooperatives, as well as promoting positive school climate, encouraging mental health awareness and building awareness.

The Safe and Supportive Schools branch offers the following trainings: social-emotional learning and wellbeing, mindfulness practices, Sources of Strength, Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, trauma-informed practices for educators, resilience strategies for educators, positive behavioral interventions and support/interconnected systems framework, and Youth Mental Health First Aid.

Participants in these trainings learn the risk factors and warning signs of mental health and substance abuse problems. They also receive information on depression, anxiety, trauma, psychosis and substance use. They can also learn a 5-step action plan to help someone who is

developing a mental health problem or someone who is in crisis, as well as, learn of available evidence-based professional, peer, and self-help resources.

Feedback:

Q: Do you think the Youth Mental Health First Aid program could be of use for pretty much everyone coming back to school after such a long time?

A: Yes, schools should look closely and think about using this program before their students come back. When students re-enter school there will be emotional problems while readjusting. Adults will have to readjust as well.

Q: Can we take trainings a step further and provide them to various agencies that currently do not have a program, in order to spread information more widely and ensure we have the right people in place and reach many more families?

A: Certified teachers can go out and do that. We currently have contracts with several agencies to get the word out. Regional Co-Ops have completed trainings and are now training others. We have an extensive number of trainers who can do this as well.

Q: Are there “train the trainer” opportunities?

A: Yes, but there is a cost. Grants are available to assist, and are dependent upon funding availability.

COMMS: JGG