

**SUMMARY MINUTES ARE DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED AT SEPTEMBER 2022
MEETING**



**KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COMMISSIONER'S STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
SUMMARY**

AUG. 23, 2022

ATTENDANCE: (29 members present) Gavin Breunig, Charleigh Browning, Hunter Combs, Joud Dahleh, Delaney Daugherty, Arnav Dharmagadda, Justin Dunning, Raima Dutt, Peter M. Jefferson, Nyla Johnson, Shraman Kar, Vijaykumar Karthikeyan, Loren Little, Kalli Oblander, Anastasia Panaretos, Spandana Pavuluri, Alexandra Perry, Tanvi Rakesh, Chloe Ralston, Sophia Retone, Amy Roblero-Perez, Luke Taylor, Malley Taylor, Sarah Umbarger, Bentley White, Sarah Yu

MEMBERS ABSENT: (3 members absent) Ollie Fegenbush, Ella Luking, Macy Spigelmire

SUMMARY:

Agenda Item: Welcome and Introduction of New Members (Roll Call of Members)

Presenter: Jason E. Glass, Ed.D., Commissioner of Education, Kentucky Department of Education; Toni Konz Tatman, Chief Communications Officer, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion:

Tatman opened the virtual meeting and called roll. Glass said Kentucky schools have opened, or have plans to begin new sessions soon, in what is anticipated to be the first uninterrupted year of learning for students since the 2019-2020 school year. He noted that there are still disruptions taking place, however, such as in flood-impacted districts in eastern Kentucky and in areas with COVID-related outbreaks.

Feedback:

None

Agenda Item: Eastern Kentucky Flooding Update and Feedback from Students in Impacted Areas

Presenter: Jason E. Glass, Ed.D., Commissioner of Education, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion:

Tatman said 25 Kentucky school districts have been impacted by recent flooding. Glass said that Breathitt, Letcher, Knott and Perry County school districts were the most impacted from a school operation or building standpoint.

“It’s been more disruptive to school operations than the tornadoes that impacted western Kentucky in December. ... The school buildings were largely left undamaged. In eastern Kentucky in the floods, you’ve got school buildings that were extensively flooded,” said Glass.

From water and drywall damage to destruction of furniture, equipment and electrical and ventilation systems, districts are facing a wide range of issues, Glass said. In more extreme cases, Glass said some schools are facing structural concerns and issues with sanitary sewer systems.

Glass said he is hopeful that a special session of the Kentucky General Assembly will provide financial assistance to the flood-impacted districts and flexibility in instructional hours. Glass also briefly updated the council about his address this summer to the Kentucky Legislature’s Interim Joint Committee on Education to discuss the teacher workforce and “concerning trends” about teacher shortages. He said the council’s work on school safety recommendations to Kentucky legislators will be valuable to legislators and education stakeholders: “Student voice has largely been a void – we need to hear more from students on this topic,” Glass said.

Glass invited students from eastern Kentucky to speak about their experiences and what issues their communities are currently facing.

Feedback:

Student Advisory Council Member Hunter Combs, an 11th-grade student at Knott County Central High School, discussed the impact of flooding to his friends and family. “A lot of people use school as a safe place. People go to school to get away from things; a lot of people find safety in school,” Combs said. “I love school because I get to see my friends. Knowing a lot of my friends don’t have houses is really scary.”

Combs said he appreciated the opportunity to share his perspective in a recent [“Kentucky Teacher” guest column](#) and for the support KDE has shown his community.

Agenda Item: Educators Rising Kentucky

Presenter: John Paise, Program Consultant for Educators Rising and Teaching and Learning Pathway, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion:

Paise presented an overview of [Educators Rising Kentucky](#), a Career and Technical Student Organization open to middle and high school students interested in education-related careers. There are presently 96 local chapters in Kentucky with plans to launch a state officer program this year. Paise said Educators Rising offers students leadership development, pre-service skills training and other tools to support future educators. Students can compete in 21 different skills categories at state-level competition, and Paise noted that Kentucky has always had strong student representation at national competition. Paise will offer a virtual student leadership

training on parliamentary procedure and ideas for Educators Rising Kentucky chapter meetings from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. ET on Sept. 16.

Feedback:

Luke Taylor, a senior at Daviess County High School, asked how to become involved with the organization. Paise said students can join a local chapter or through individual membership with teacher sponsorship.

Agenda Item: Overview of Kentucky’s School Safety and Resiliency Act

Presenter: Christina Weeter, Director, Division of Student Success, Office of Continuous Improvement and Support, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion:

Weeter discussed the background, purpose and current school safety measures outlined in Kentucky’s [School Safety and Resiliency Act](#) (SSRA). She noted how multiple stakeholders and agencies outlined in the SSRA, passed by the Kentucky General Assembly in 2019, work to strengthen school campuses by promoting both physical safety and students’ psychological well-being. In particular, she discussed how KDE’s trauma-informed toolkit, required as part of SSRA, offers school districts guidance, strategies and training on trauma-informed practices regarding, among others, discipline policies, active shooter trainings and how to ensure students who may have been exposed to trauma are provided appropriate supports at school. Weeter said KDE is currently looking to add more resources in the toolkit about how to respond and support districts facing natural disasters and crises. Weeter also highlighted the S.T.O.P. tip line, an anonymous tip submission system used by schools to offer students, staff, parents and community members a way to report concerning behavior, threats of harm, threats toward the school and other types of information.

Feedback:

None.

Agenda Item: Student School Safety Project Discussion and Breakout Groups

Presenter: Jason E. Glass, Ed.D., Commissioner of Education, Kentucky Department of Education; Meredith Brewer, Director of Education Policy, Kentucky Department of Education; Christina Weeter, Director of Student Success, Kentucky Department of Education; Brian Perry, Director of Government Relations, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion:

Council members discussed the current draft of their collective school safety policy recommendations with KDE staff. The project, which began at the council’s May 31, 2022, meeting in response to the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, includes student-driven policy suggestions to Kentucky legislators and other education stakeholders along three categories: proactive events before a school shooting; actions in the event of a school shooting; and recovery from the effects of a school shooting.

Brewer, who coordinated KDE support to students on the project over the summer, Perry and Commissioner Glass led group breakout sessions during the meeting, answering student questions and offering suggestions on additional resources.

Feedback:

All groups reported plans to continue to research, write and strengthen their collective policy recommendations.

Spandana Pavuluri, a 12th-grade student at duPont Manual High School (Jefferson County), called for the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security (KOHS) to be more transparent about the S.T.O.P. tip line process once they receive a submission, noting that the reporter is not aware if the tip is addressed.

Students also said trauma-informed practices regarding annual active shooter trainings should be a priority for communities if an incident were to occur. “Maybe they feel like they’ve healed and they have to go through the shooting drills again; it may bring everything back and it will be steps backward,” said Raima Dutt, an 11th-grade student at duPont Manual High School (Jefferson County).

Follow-up Required: Council members will continue to develop their recommendations with a full draft for internal review prepared by mid-September and recommendations completed by October.

Agenda Item: Communications Opportunities for Students

Presenter: Toni Konz-Tatman, Chief Communications Officer, Kentucky Department of Education; Audrie Lamb, Information Officer, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion:

Lamb invited student council advisory members to share their perspectives and voice as high school students through guest columns in KDE’s online publication, “Kentucky Teacher.” She also invited council members to follow council news and updates on Twitter (@KDEstuvoice). Tatman asked students to share ideas on how KDE can help students and staff impacted by recent flooding.

Feedback:

None.

The meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m. ET. The next Commissioner’s Student Advisory Council meeting is scheduled to take place virtually Sept. 27 at 9 a.m. ET. However, this meeting will likely be moved to a different time and date due to a conflict with the Commissioner’s schedule.