



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
TEACHER ADVISORY COUNCIL
SUMMARY

DECEMBER 7, 2023

Members Present: Erica Deal, Chad Davidson, Carla Criswell, April Jackson, Jamaal Stiles, Amanda Klare, Susan Cintra, Rosa Cubero-Hurley, Donnie Wilkerson, Jane Modlin, Melanie Callahan, Carla Lawson, Charlene Martin, Jennifer Stewart, Amy Leasgang, Mandy Perez

Members Absent: Byron Wilson, Jen Davis, Misty Bivens, Kennita Ballard, Gregory Smith

Agenda Item: Welcome

Presenter: Dr. Thomas Woods-Tucker, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Equity Officer, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Dr. Woods-Tucker provided a review of the Kentucky Department of Education's legislative priorities.

Agenda Item: Approve Summary from Last Meeting and Roll Call of Members

Presenter: Jamaal Stiles, Teachers Advisory Council (TAC), Chairperson, Washington County Schools

Summary of Discussion: Charlene Martin made a motion to approve the summary minutes from the September 2023 meeting. Chad Davidson made a second.

Agenda Item: Search for a New Commissioner: Advisory Council Feedback

Presenter: Stacy Noah, TAC Liaison, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: An update regarding the search for the next Kentucky Commissioner of Education was provided. TAC members were encouraged to provide feedback to the Kentucky Board of Education using the following link [Commissioner Search Feedback Form](#). Dr. Byron Darnall, Associate Commissioner, shared that the search firm has been identified and the process will be moving forward. Darnall emphasized the importance of the TAC members completing the feedback form.

Feedback: None

Agenda Item: Kentucky Academic Standards for Visual and Performing Arts

Presenter: Jessica Greene and Thomas Clouse, Office of Teaching and Learning, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Greene opened the presentation with a guiding question. “How might the KDE support the field in Visual Performing Arts (VPA) standards implementation?” She encouraged TAC members to provide suggestions for support.

An explanation of the review process and timeline for VPA standards was shared. Currently, for 2023-2024, the VPA standards are designated for review. Implementation of the revised Kentucky Academic Standards for Visual and Performing Arts could be active during the 2024-2025 school year. Greene went on to explain the different issues that could affect the anticipated timeline. Greene noted that the committee is aiming for late winter for the release of a draft document for public review. After public review, refinements will be made, and the document will move forward and go through the regulatory process and be ready for implementation.

Feedback: Melanie Callahan inquired about the possibility of program reviews or student assessments being utilized for VPA. Thomas Clouse clarified that the assessment language noted was part of the statute and does not apply to VPA as it does for content areas like science or math. Chad Davidson expressed appreciation for the process and inquired about the plan to let stakeholders know about the feedback window being open. Greene detailed the numerous avenues to promote the public review process (i.e., social media, state level arts organizations, KDE press release).

Agenda Item: School Report Card Survey

Presenter: Dede Conner, Office of Education Technology, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: The Office of Communications is asking for feedback about the Kentucky School Report Card. The 2022-2023 School Report Card was recently released. The existing School Report Card is not going to be available as the organization who developed the platform will no longer be supporting the School Report Card design. Because a new vendor must be selected, a call for feedback regarding what stakeholders want to see in the School Report is going on now. TAC members were encouraged to share recommendations about key inclusions of the School Report Card. [School Report Card Feedback Survey](#)

Feedback: None

Agenda Item: Teacher Morale Feedback

Presenter: Jamaal Stiles, TAC Chairperson, Washington County Schools

Summary of Discussion: Jamaal Stiles, TAC chairperson and an educator from Washington County, said he took away three main ideas from the council’s discussions on data collection on teacher morale at their last [TAC meeting in September](#).

The first was on student behavior and the correlation with low morale of educators. The second was on salary and retirement, and the third was on “the workload and excess responsibilities on teachers not being compensated for their time, and especially those of us who aren't in a union and don't have that representation,” Tiles said.

To address the educator workforce shortage that is adding stress to current teachers, council members discussed how programs like [Educator Rising](#) and grow-your-own can help recruit students who are interested in teaching.

Feedback: Chad Davidson shared that in his part of the state there was contact being made with elected officials requesting mandated pay raises.

Agenda Item: Chronic Absenteeism

Presenter: Judi Vanderhaar and Michelle Wilson, Office of Continuous Improvement and Support, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Judi Vanderhaar, a program consultant in KDE’s Office of Continuous Improvement and Support, gave an overview of [chronic absenteeism](#) across the state.

Chronic absenteeism is defined as a student who misses 10% more of his or her enrolled academic year, which equates to missing a combined total of 17 days of instructional time if their school year is 170 days.

Vanderhaar said the department started to see an increase in chronic absenteeism pre-pandemic and believes the pandemic exacerbated the issue.

“In the 2016-2017 school year, we saw 17% of students in the state were chronically absent,” she said. “In 2022-2023, that increased to 30% of students in the state.”

However, Vanderhaar stated that this is not necessarily a trend for all districts.

“Looking at the data by district, there are some districts in Kentucky that are not moving in this direction. So, we do see some bright spots and we're going to be looking into what those systems are that they put in place,” Vanderhaar said.

She said the highest chronic absenteeism rates in 2022-2023 were among students who were homeless (50%) or economically disadvantaged (37%), who had an Individualized Education Program (36%), were in foster care (35%) or were Black (35%).

As to why the state is seeing this number go up, Vanderhaar said it seems to be due to several factors, such as different barriers in students’ lives, disengagement, misconceptions and aversion.

“There are obvious barriers, like basic needs, transportations, insecurity with housing, which is a huge problem, community violence,” she said, “and then also within the school practices of suspension.”

During the meeting Michelle Wilson, another program consultant in KDE's Office of Continuous Improvement and Support, provided strategies and resources for educators and staff to implement in their schools, one of which is fostering a welcoming and supportive culture for students and adults.

"Making sure that when students are in class, that they are engaged in meaningful learning activities," Wilson said. That gives them "a reason to show up and to not just do the work from home and providing frequent feedback as well."

Feedback: TAC member and Russell County educator Donnie Wilkerson said one of the things he tries to implement into his classroom is hands-on, engaging activities.

"As the classroom teachers, we must step up and realize that we have to make it to where those kids don't want to miss what's going on in that classroom," said Wilkerson, the 2024 Kentucky Elementary School Teacher of the Year. "You know we've got to be the salesman in the classroom in Kentucky."

Agenda Item: TAC Member Recognition

Presenter: Jamaal Stiles, TAC Chairperson, Washington County Schools

Summary of Discussion: On behalf of the TAC, Stiles bestowed congratulations to Donnie Wilkerson for being selected as the 2024 Kentucky Elementary School Teacher of the Year. Stiles shared that nominations are now open for 2025 Kentucky Teacher of the Year and encouraged the TAC members to review the details of the process.

Feedback: None

Agenda Item: Adjournment

Presenter: Jamaal Stiles, TAC Chairperson, Washington County Schools

Summary of Discussion: Susan Cintra made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Amy Leasgang.