



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Education Continuation Task Force

SUMMARY

MEETING DATE: JUNE 15, 2020

ATTENDANCE:

Melissa Biggerstaff, Tina Bojanowski, Rhonda Caldwell, Eddie Campbell, Jacqueline Coleman, Jason Detre, Jim Flynn, Brooke Gill, Ronda Harmon, Jeff Hawkins, Regina Huff, Nancy Hutchinson, Eric Kennedy, Brian Lovell, Brent McKim, Leon Mooneyhan, Martin Monson, Ronnie Nolan, Stephen Pruitt, Amy Razor, Mary Pat Regan, Susan Rieber, Jackie Risdin-Smith, Mary Ruble, Julian Tackett, Reginald Thomas, Max Wise

SUMMARY:

Agenda Item: Welcome and Governor's Task Force Update

Presenters: Kevin C. Brown, interim commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)
Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman, secretary, Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

Summary of Discussion:

Brown informed the group that the meeting is being recorded and will be posted on KDE's website. He welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda. Brown reminded the group to provide feedback in the Teams chat.

Coleman reviewed the purpose of the guiding coalition, which is making recommendations about every educational issue that has arisen since in-person classes were canceled. She discussed the two components of the task force. One component is public health providing input based on science and medical advice. The other component is determining how public health guidelines are incorporated into the public education system. State and district leadership are working to create the safest environment for students and communities when there is no right answer and the circumstances are constantly changing. As Kentucky moves into the phase of returning to school, this task force is to provide as much support as possible. Coleman thanked new legislative members for joining the task force and helping the group think about this from every angle possible.

Feedback:

None.

Follow-up Required:

None.

Agenda Item: Kentucky Department of Public Health Update

Presenters: Dr. Steven J. Stack, commissioner, Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH)

Dr. Connie Gayle White, DPH deputy commissioner

Summary of Discussion:

Stack reviewed the facts currently known about the COVID-19 virus and detailed the five health practices in place to protect community members: social distancing, cloth face coverings, screening and temperature checks, hand and surface hygiene and contact tracing. Stack discussed how the community must balance public health concerns with other concerns. It is likely that this difficult, disruptive situation will continue for the next twelve months, but society must find ways to reduce the spread of the illness enough so social institutions such as public education and the economy can continue.

Question: Should schools install plexiglass structures around each desk as part of social distancing?

Answer: That is not a pragmatic approach. Distancing and wearing masks are more realistic safeguards. Students may be able to remove masks when everyone in the classroom is stationary and 6 feet apart.

Question: Is the use of masks non-negotiable?

Answer: The evidence is clear that masks have a dramatic impact on reducing the spread of infection. It's not non-negotiable, but essential when people will be together. There are instances when wearing masks is dangerous, such as student athletes running in extreme heat.

Question: What are Dr. Stack's thoughts on being more firm with adults on masking than students?

Answer: Adults will set the example and students will follow suit.

Question: As districts survey their communities, families are responding that their children will not wear a mask. How can districts help families understand that COVID-19 is an eminent threat?

Answer: Empathy and sympathy. There is no easy answer, but this issue affects all of society and not just education. Those who trust the scientific evidence must be kind and patient with others and model the desired behavior. People can keep themselves safe from those who do not believe in the danger by keeping their distance. Some believe this is a serious threat and some do not, which is a societal challenge the state continues to face.

Question: Under these circumstances, where it is clearly beneficial as disease control, how is requiring masks for school attendance different from requiring vaccinations for other diseases as a requirement for school attendance?

Answer: The message is that wearing masks should be the expectation. There is no risk elimination; this is risk reduction.

Question: How is social distancing accomplished on the school bus?

Answer: It is recommended that students wear masks on the bus, so they do not have to practice social distancing.

Question: Is it recommended to maintain 6 feet of social distancing with or without masks OR is it allowable to have less than 6 feet with masks or when moving?

Answer: They are both necessary and beneficial, especially indoors. The further away people are the less dense the gathering, the less masks are needed.

Question: How should temperature checks be handled when riding the school bus?

Answer: In the business sector, the expectation is to check temperatures once every 24 hours, so students should have a temperature check every morning before school. It is recommended that temperatures are taken when students are about to board the school bus, which is school property. Students would not have to have their temperature taken upon arriving at school.

Question: Can a child be isolated on the bus if they have a fever, but no adult is present?

Answer: There is a protocol in place for that situation. Isolate the child on the bus and transport him or her to school, then follow regular school protocols for contacting the families of children who are ill.

Question: Educators work with populations of students who are medically fragile. What are the recommendations for students who are medically fragile or fall within the high-risk categories?

Answer: There are no special recommendations for medically fragile students in the guidance, as the staff working with those students are more aware of their needs. A guidance document is being prepared by the Office of Special Education and Early Learning which will address issues around students with special needs.

Feedback:

- There have been suggestions to add the requirement of masks to codes of conduct and dress codes.
- Education leaders should focus on masks, as the issue has captured the public's attention. Many parents will say they will not send kids to school if masks are required and many will say the opposite.
- Faculty and staff should be held to higher expectations than students to wear masks.
- There may be less opposition from parents about students wearing masks when it's a requirement from the local school district. National influences can make requirements from the state seem political to some people. Also, it is easy for people to answer a survey that they will not have their children wear masks, but when it comes time for school, there are few alternatives for parents.
- Kentucky education leaders need to provide consistent messaging, as conflicting messages from various sources lead to frustration within communities.
- Guidance for staff and students in vulnerable populations would absolutely be helpful.

Follow-up Required:

None.

Agenda Item: Member Updates

Presenter: Dr. Rhonda Caldwell, executive director, Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA)

Summary of Discussion:

KASA is seeking ways to support and engage members. Caldwell informed task force members about several actions taken to provide support and engagement opportunities.

- The Roadmap to Reopening think tank group hosted by KASA gives administrators the opportunity to share their plans and ideas while working through challenging topics.
- KASA has been working with members on getting comfortable with communicating the unknown.
- A webinar called Analysis Paralysis was conducted to help members understand the legal aspect of what districts are being asked to do.
- Meetings have been facilitated for new and current superintendents.

- KASA has been working with the Kentucky High School Athletics Association to clarify information that has been released to the public.
- Specific supports have been provided to principals to help them through the process of reopening with staff, families and students. Resources provided can help principals plan for operational and emotional issues surrounding the health crisis and its impact on learning.

Feedback:

None.

Follow-up Required:

None.

Agenda Item: Alternative Learning Models Guidance

Presenters: Marty Park, chief digital officer, KDE Office of Education Technology

Summary of Discussion:

Park discussed key points around alternative learning strategies and showed the audience how to locate the [guidance document](#) released by KDE. He reminded the group that this is not ideal and awesome teachers are always the preference over technology resources. Alternative learning design strategies are part of the “playbook” educators can use in ways that best supports their instruction. Park reviewed four strategies that are detailed in [KDE’s guidance document](#): scheduled rotation, synchronous opt-in hybrid, combination and online and virtual school. Details can be found in the [presentation](#) used during the [task force meeting](#).

The costs of reopening efforts and hybrid models is recognized by KDE and other state education leaders. Brown reminded task force members that KDE expects to have some relief on requirements to bridge the gap between reopening and the next session of the General Assembly. Relief will be sought through Kentucky Board of Education waivers and executive order authority.

Feedback:

- Several task force members reported receiving feedback that districts are extremely concerned about the costs associated with COVID-19 and reopening models. Districts want to do what is best for students, families and their communities, but expenses will be a barrier.
- This may be a good time for the state to examine the impact of moving from the ADA school funding model to the ADM model.

Follow-up Required:

None.

Agenda Item: Intermittent Closures Guidance

Presenter: David Cook, director, KDE Division of Innovation, Office of Continuous Improvement and Support

Summary of Discussion:

Cook reviewed KDE’s [intermittent closure guidance](#). Intermittent closures differ from the discussion of hybrid models because this topic is focused on districts’ readiness for sudden, total school closure and how non-traditional instruction (NTI) is managed during that time. Details can be found in the [presentation](#) used during the [task force meeting](#).

Question: Senate Bill 177 gave districts flexibility during the 2019-2020 school year to respond to COVID-19 closures. However; SB177 does not apply to the 2020-2021 school year. Will an

executive order and/or special session be needed to provide similar flexibilities for the 2020-2021 school year?

Answer: SB 177 is being used as a model, though there may be parts that are not relevant in 2020-2021. KDE is evaluating the topics that need to be addressed immediately and those that can wait until the General Assembly convenes in January. Task force members were encouraged to contact KDE regarding specific waivers needed to begin the school year.

Question: Can KDE share information on recommended platforms and resources for NTI and best practices for teaching new content? Several districts which are new to NTI have questions about the best way to move learning online for new content.

Answer: Most districts already have online learning management systems so they can design quality NTI experiences in advance. Statewide digital learning coaches can provide support to districts as well.

Feedback:

- Calendar relief provisions should be provided as soon as possible, regardless of start dates, as districts are creating their calendars now.
- KDE should examine SB 177 to determine which provisions will be necessary in the fall.

Follow-up Required:

None.

Agenda Item: Review and Adjournment

Presenter: Kevin Brown

Summary of Discussion:

Brown thanked everyone for their participation on this task force and for their work to support their groups. The next meeting is scheduled for June 29, 2020, 1-3 E.T. Group members should send feedback or questions to [Commissioner Brown](#) or [Karen Dodd](#).