

SUMMARY MINUTES ARE DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED AT DECEMBER 2023 MEETING



**KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (KDE)
COMMISSIONER’S STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

SUMMARY

OCT. 18, 2023

Present: (27 members present) Ava Benson, Owen Borden, Cameron Breier, Owen Cody, Joud Dahleh, Justin Dunning, Raima Dutt, Manas Garla, Nicholas Hazelett, Honette Irakiza, Trey Jackson, Shraman Kar, Vijaykumar Karthikeyan, Seth Langford, Danica Love, Gabriella MacAdams, Anopa Musoni, Tanvi Rakesh, Daniel Ratley, Jocelyn Reddick, Amy Roblero-Perez, Sophia Staples, Sarah Umbarger, Austin Vitato, Carley Watts, India Young, Joshua Zyzak

Absent: (10 members absent) Reese Blakeman, Hunter Combs, Peter Jefferson, Constance Martin, R.J. Osborne, Caleb Robinson, Ian Swenson, Malley Taylor, Bentley White, Aliete Yanes Medina

Summary:

Agenda Item: Welcome (Roll Call of Members)

Presenter: Robin Fields Kinney, Interim Commissioner of Education, Kentucky Department of Education and GlyptusAnn Grider Jones, Ph.D., Information Officer, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Jones introduced Kinney to the council and called roll. Kinney provided an overview of the meeting.

Feedback: Council members shared “bucket list” goals as part of their introductions.

Agenda Item: Mindful Minute Activity

Presenter: Michelle Sircy, Ed.D., KDE Program Coordinator for Comprehensive School Counseling, Office of Teaching and Learning

Summary of Discussion: [Sircy led the council in a discussion on stress and anxiety felt by teens and discussed how to talk to peers about mental health.](#) She also led council members in a

breathing exercise to help students check in with their emotions, slow down their breathing and think clearly.

Feedback: Student shared their perspectives on how parents, teachers and peers can help address teen stress. “Sometimes a teen’s stress is harder to see on the outside,” said Owen Borden, a senior at Highlands High School (Ft. Thomas Independent). “It’s important for parents, teachers and peers to come with an intention of understanding and supporting to help reach the needs of teens and students.”

Agenda Item: Conversation with the Interim Commissioner

Presenter: Robin Fields Kinney, Interim Commissioner of Education, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Kinney met with students for the first time since taking on the role of interim commissioner on Sept. 30. She posed this question to council members: “What would you do to be successful if you were placed as an interim principal at your school?”

Feedback: Student feedback included strengthening relationships and communication. Owen Cody, a 12th-grader at McCracken County High School, said “as an interim principal, I would bridge the gap between the views of students, teachers and administrators by establishing a council dedicated to compromise.” Council members also said they would make sure every staff member felt like they were being heard. “I would also make sure to listen to underrepresented staff like cafeteria workers and janitors because they are the backbone of our schools,” said Ava Benson, a 12th-grader at Henderson County High School.

Kinney said, “I really appreciate all the good advice that you have given, even though you’ve given it in the context of being your ‘interim principal.’ These are all qualities and suggestions that will be very helpful for me as I perform my responsibilities.”

Agenda Item: Goals and Priorities of the Kentucky Board of Education for the 2024 Session of the General Assembly

Presenter: Meredith Brewer, Ph.D., Executive Director of Education Policy, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Brewer discussed the [Kentucky Board of Education’s \(KBE\) 2024 legislative priorities](#). Along with the general operating budget submitted to the General Assembly, additional budget requests include: Increase the Supporting Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) base amount and the amount for SEEK transportation; fund universal preschool; provide supports for the education workforce; provide school improvement services to more schools through the Kentucky Educational Recovery Fund; more funding for Kentucky

Education Technology System (KETS); and funding for Read to Succeed. Brewer said that the KBE is requesting the General Assembly revise the Career and Technical Education (CTE) funding formula to create equity for every CTE student and program in the Commonwealth. She also said KBE is looking for more support for the Kentucky School for the Blind and Kentucky School for the Deaf to ensure sustained services for students.

Feedback: Council members asked questions about recommended supports regarding the education workforce, expansion of career pathways and the proposed flexibility for funding related to Advanced Placement (AP) tests.

Agenda Item: Council Project Activity

Presenter: Raima Dutt, Commissioner’s Student Advisory Council Chair; GlyptusAnn Grider Jones, Ph.D., Information Officer, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Jones and Dutt provided a summary of the council’s Student Voice project to date. Jones asked council members to develop: a list of stakeholders they want to speak with directly regarding Student Voice; shared talking points to use when speaking with stakeholders; and what council members want to learn from the identified stakeholders.

Feedback: Members shared their feedback on Google forms.

Follow-up: Dutt and Bentley White, vice chair of the Commissioner’s Student Advisory Council, will review submitted information and present a summary at the next council meeting.

Agenda Item: Opportunities for Students

Summary of Discussion: GlyptusAnn Grider Jones, Ph.D., Information Officer, Kentucky Department of Education

Feedback: Jones shared upcoming opportunities of interest to Kentucky high school students including a [call for entries for the 2023-2024 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. essay, artwork and poetry contests](#) due Dec. 1 sponsored by the Martin Luther King Jr. State Commission.

Agenda Item: Member Announcements

Feedback: None.

The meeting adjourned at 11 a.m. ET. The next council meeting will be held virtually on Dec. 5 from 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. ET.