

SUMMARY MINUTES ARE DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED AT THE JAN. 27, 2022, MEETING



## PRESCHOOL COORDINATOR ADVISORY GROUP (PCAG) SUMMARY

Meeting minutes Oct. 28, 2021

**PRESENT:** Whitney Stevenson, Kristy Lewis, Monica Heavrin, Carla Malone, Carlena Sheeran, Jennifer Walrod, Miranda Reed, Cymbre Crisologo

**ABSENT:** Whitney Fowler, Greta Stanfield.

### SUMMARY

**Agenda Item:** Welcome, Introduction of New Members

**Presenter:** Whitney Stevenson, PCAG Chair, Associate Director of Early Childhood Fayette County Public Schools

#### **Summary of Discussion:**

New members Cymbre Crisologo and Greta Stanfield were introduced to the group. Crisologo replaces Barry Lee in the Berea RTC Region and Stanfield replaces Anna Shepherd in the Ashland RTC Region.

**Agenda Item:** Welcome

**Presenter:** Andrea Bartholomew, School Readiness Branch Manager, KDE Division of IDEA Implementation and Results, Office of Special Education and Early Learning

#### **Summary of Discussion:**

Bartholomew welcomed the group, thanked everyone for their participation and welcomed new members. **Agenda Item:** Review of Norms

**Presenter:** Whitney Stevenson, PCAG Chair, Associate Director of Early Childhood, Fayette County Public Schools

#### **Summary of Discussion:**

The group norms were reviewed by Stevenson. **Agenda Item:** Review and Approval of Last Meeting Minutes

**Presenter:** Whitney Stevenson, PCAG Chair, Associate Director of Early Childhood Fayette County Public Schools

**Summary of Discussion:**

Stevenson reviewed and approved the last meeting minutes, upon the motion of Kristy Lewis, seconded by Jennifer Walrod.

**Agenda Item:** Family-School Partnerships

**Presenter:** Shasta Hensley, KDE Family Involvement Consultant, Division of IDEA Implementation and Preschool, Office of Special Education and Early Learning

**Summary of Discussion:**

Updates were shared with the group by KDE's Kentucky Early Childhood partners using guiding questions to contemplate and guide the discussions. Bartholomew led a discussion with the group based on work from Hensley using the guiding question, *"How can we grow family-school partnerships in the preschool setting? What tools and resources are available to help us measure and improve our family-school partnerships?"*

The group was reminded that one of the missions of preschool is to strengthen families. She shared slides that gave insight into the research behind family engagement, including that students whose families were involved with their schooling had better academic outcomes.

Bartholomew also shared regulations and resources supporting strategies for improvement. She shared how effective the use of surveys can be for finding what families need and want from preschool. She also shared a chart called 4 Versions of the Family-School Partnerships. This chart can be used as a rubric to progress monitor the success of the partnership team.

Different members of the group shared things they were doing in their district to grow partnerships while districts are still dealing with COVID-19 risks. Among the ideas shared were parent cafes and preschool trick-or-treating activities.

Kristy Lewis shared that her district was looking to get more adult males involved with the preschool program. She shared the district was offering meal kits along with a book to be shared. Carla Malone shared her district is pursuing a fatherhood initiative to get more involvement. Stevenson shared that her preschools are giving a monthly book along with a calendar that has different activities that go along with the book. It was mentioned that everyone should be cognizant of digital opportunities to support the Family-School Partnership and to remember that there are many different family makeups.

**Agenda Item:** PCAG Priority Work

**Presenters:** PCAG Members

**Summary of Discussion:**

Family engagement was the first topic discussed based on the guiding question, *"How can state-funded preschools continue to engage families in authentic and unique ways during the pandemic? What can KDE do to support these efforts?"*

This topic went along well with the discussion of the Family-School Partnership. The conversation highlighted that while things were different during the COVID-19 pandemic, there were some great things that came from it.

Families “Zoomed” in to participate in class, which gave parents the opportunity to join their child in learning. It gave teachers the opportunity to work more closely with families and ask for their needs and wants for activities and information. Jennifer Walrod shared that her district held Admission and Release Committee Meetings (ARC) online via Zoom, and this is a continuing option for families. A common thread throughout the talk was getting resources and support to the families.

There are several “populations” of families that need supports, such as families with English language learners (ELL), students with autism, and those who need GED or college entry supports.

The group then discussed the second topic based on the guiding question, *“How can we increase preschool enrollment in a pandemic environment, specifically for “at-risk” children? Since the last meeting, how has your district’s enrollment changed?”*

Most districts have seen a decrease in enrollment, while some are starting to see an upward trend in reaching prior numbers. Outside programs have a large impact on enrollment. Many behavioral centers with options for therapies have opened throughout the state. Also, some parents continue to be hesitant to send their children to school with the COVID-19 pandemic still a factor.

The group discussed having a push from KDE in January to remind the public that the department is open and available to serve more children. The idea of the slogan, “When you are ready, we are here,” to make parents aware of KDE services was discussed.

Bill Buchanan shared that November is Family Engagement Month, with the week of Nov. 15 being Family Engagement Week. He also shared the reminder from previous discussions that respect of culture and equity work starts when children are young - reminding the group of the impact of its work.

**Agenda Item:** Closing Remarks and Exit Slip

**Presenter:** Joe McCowan

**Summary of Discussion:**

Closing remarks were shared and Joseph McCowan shared the exit slip.

Next year’s meeting dates were agreed upon and will be held Jan. 27, 2022, April 28, 2022, July 28, 2022, and Oct. 27, 2022.

The group adjourned upon the motion of Jennifer Walrod and was seconded by Carla Malone.

Next meeting date: Jan. 27, 2022, from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. ET.

