

**SUMMARY MINUTES ARE DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED AT THE JAN. 25, 2024,
MEETING**



**KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PRESCHOOL COORDINATORS ADVISORY GROUP (PCAG)
SUMMARY**

OCT. 17, 2023

PRESENT: Whitney Stevenson, Kristy Lewis, Carlena Sheeran, Jennifer Walrod, Ashla VanHoose, Chris Westerfield, Kim Whitt, Susan Matthews

ABSENT: Cymbre Crisologo, Whitney Fowler

SUMMARY:

Agenda Item: Roll Call

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

Summary of Discussion: Roll call was completed. Eight members were present, two absent.

Agenda Item: Welcome

Presenter: Thomas Williams, Ph.D., Early Learning Unit Administrator, Office of Special Education and Early Learning, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Williams welcomed everyone and thanked the members for attending the meeting and for their participation in the group.

Agenda Item: Review of Purpose and Review of Norms

Presenter: Kristy Lewis, PCAG Co-Chair, Paducah Independent Schools/Paducah Head Start

Summary of Discussion: Lewis reviewed the purpose of the group and the group norms.

Agenda Item: Review Approval of Last Meeting Minutes

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

Summary of Discussion: Stevenson shared time for the group to review the last meeting minutes. The minutes were approved upon the motion of Westerfield, seconded by Matthews. All members agreed.

Agenda Item: Pyramid State Initiative

Presenter: Alisha Reeves, Assistant Early Learning Unit Administrator, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary: Reeves shared information about the work that is happening in the state with the Pyramid Model. Kentucky is the 41st Pyramid Model State. The state team consists of members from the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood Education, the Kentucky Head Start Association, the Kentucky Regional Training Centers and more. The state leadership team will develop a professional development network, and demonstration sites and obtain data to improve social-emotional competencies in young children.

Agenda Item: PCAG Priorities

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

Summary: Stevenson reviewed the priorities from the last meeting:

1. Obtain feedback from programs statewide on the new Quality Control piece that KDE is developing; and
2. Obtain feedback from programs statewide on Child Outcome Summary (COS) implementation.

Feedback from Members: Lewis shared that administrators of preschool programs across the state should not lose focus on the continuum of development from birth to preschool and developmentally appropriate practices. Support needs to be in place for both administrators and principals who may not know what is developmentally appropriate in preschool classrooms. The PCAG continued to discuss Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) and how to support preschool staff in these ways. Williams agreed that needs to remain a focus for the department as well.

The group also discussed what districts are continuing to do to ensure quality and that regulations require both parent and teacher surveys each year as a tool for improvement. Bartholomew noted that as a group we need to continue to push for inclusive practices. It was noted that there is an article where Kentucky was highlighted as an exemplar of inclusive practices. This article will be shared with the group.

The Child Outcome Summary process was also discussed. Members mentioned that they have heard positive feedback and are eager to see the data. It was noted that changing it in Infinite Campus from a form to a module would be beneficial. Bartholomew clarified that for federal reporting there has to be an entry and exit for every child. Entry would be when they enter the preschool program and exit when they leave the preschool program to enter kindergarten.

Agenda Item: Open Discussion

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

Summary of Discussion:

- There was a discussion on All Stars and Williams noted that Jennifer Hagan has been hired as the new preschool quality coordinator.
- Bartholomew noted that the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) would be visiting the department in 16 days for a review of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) implementation. Williams stated that it has allowed them to identify ways to improve their office as well as across the state.
- Stevenson recalled that the advocacy pieces of improving communication between First Steps and Preschool as well as preschool teacher caseloads remain important.
- Identified as an agenda item going forward will be concerns from the field so that teachers who are doing the work can be heard.
- Walrod stated that she is advocating for an increase in pay for instructional assistants in preschool. It was noted that due to Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (IECE) teacher shortages, many paraprofessionals are stepping into the lead teacher role.
- The number of preschool students was discussed with many stating their districts preschool numbers were increasing while some others who have bussing difficulties numbers have decreased.

Follow-up Required: At the Regional Training Centers (RTC) Preschool Coordinator meetings the following items will be shared by PCAG members and feedback obtained:

- The COS system
- The new quality control system that KDE is developing and new coordinator Jennifer Hagan
- Any concerns from teachers or other stakeholders of preschool
- Other ideas for priorities or concerns from coordinators

Agenda Item: Closing Remarks and Exit Slip

Presenter: Andrea Bartholomew, School Readiness Branch Manager, Office of Special Education and Early Learning, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Bartholomew thanked the group for its work and dedication. Williams wanted to be sure to elevate the sharing of best practices for preschool to OSEEL so that it can be shared with other districts. He also noted that future meetings will be an all-virtual platform.

Agenda Item: Adjourn

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

Summary of Discussion: The group adjourned upon a motion by Westerfield and seconded by Matthews. All members agreed. **The next meeting will be Jan. 25, 2024, from 10 a.m. to noon on a virtual platform.**