

## **Strong Start Meeting – April 2021**

### **Full-Day Kindergarten**

- House Bill 382 was amended to include \$140 million for full-day kindergarten by the Senate Appropriations and Revenue Committee in 2021-2022. The bill was passed by the Senate (36-1) and the House (90-3) and signed by the Governor on April 7.
- As you may know, Kentucky currently provides funding for half-day kindergarten. However, most districts use local taxpayer money to offer full-day options. Action by the General Assembly should free up local funds for districts to support teaching and learning programs and services.

### **Preschool Coordinator Advisory Group**

- The KDE's Preschool Coordinator Advisory held its first meeting on January 28, choosing officers and setting priorities for its quarterly meetings.
- Dr. Whitney Stevenson, Fayette County, was elected Chairperson. Kristy Lewis, Paducah Independent/HS, was elected Co-Chairperson. Monica Heavrin, Grayson County, was elected Secretary. The group consists of 10 members representing districts from all 5 Regional Training Center (RTC) areas: Whitney Fowler, Harrison, Anderson RTC; Jennifer Walrod, Scott County, Anderson RTC; Carla Malone, Boyd County, Ashland Ind RTC; Anna Shepherd, Floyd County, Ashland Ind RTC; Barry Lee, Casey County, Berea Ind RTC; Whitney Stevenson, Fayette, Berea Ind RTC; Kristy Lewis, Paducah, Calloway RTC; Miranda Reed, Mayfield Independent, Calloway RTC; Monica Heavrin, Grayson, Simpson RTC; Carlana Sheeran, Hardin, Simpson RTC.
- The advisory group identified the following preschool issues as priorities for the agency: data quality, quality programming/preschool through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, curriculum alignment, equity and diversity, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), teacher preparation and certification (recruitment and retention), family engagement and parental support, creative ways to address communication and transition, virtual town hall meeting(s)
- The next meeting is set for April 29, 2021, and the agenda will focus on communication, transition, quality programming, P-3 alignment, equity and diversity, and data quality.

### **COVID-19 Guidance**

- Changes to the social distance recommendations were made in March per CDC and DPH guidance. Social distancing between students may be reduced from 6 to 3 feet while in the classroom so long as all other mitigation strategies remain in place (masking, screening and exclusions, etc.). Students are still expected to maintain 6 feet of social distance in areas such as hallways, auditoriums, cafeterias, and gymnasiums.

- Temperature screening expectations have changed per CDC and DPH guidance. Only symptomatic students need to be screened for fever. Routine temperature screenings prior to school or bus entry are not required. However, students who exhibit symptoms of illness while at school should have their temperature taken as part of a physical assessment completed by school staff.
- KDE consolidated COVID-19 related guidance in a new document, [KDE COVID-19 Guidance 2.0](#). The document is updated regularly, and these updates can be found near the front of the document (on or around page 7, under the heading “Updates”).
- Guidance may continue to change as the pandemic evolves, and as it does, KDE and DPH will continue to update Kentucky’s Healthy at School guidance and other COVID-19 guidance as needed.

### Commissioner’s Listening Tour

- Commissioner of Education and Chief Learner Jason Glass will conduct a virtual listening tour April 6-May 6 to gather input on long-term aspirations for the Commonwealth’s education system.
- Nine sessions will be held virtually across the state. The sessions will be in the evening and last approximately 90 minutes and feature breakout rooms facilitated by Kentucky high school students and Team KDE staff.
- Questions will focus on several key areas: teaching, learning, engagement, mental health, testing, equity, civics and career and technical education.
- Tentatively the schedule is as follows:
  - April 6: Greater Louisville Educational Cooperative
  - April 8: West Kentucky Educational Cooperative (Murray)
  - April 15: Green River Regional Educational Cooperative (Bowling Green)
  - April 20: Southeast/South-Central Educational Cooperative (Richmond)
  - April 22: Central Kentucky Educational Cooperative (Lexington)
  - April 27: Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Education Services (Cold Springs)
  - April 29: Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (Shelbyville)
  - May 4: Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative (Hazard)
  - May 6: Kentucky Educational Development Cooperative (Ashland)
- Information to register is available [here](#).