



An **APPLE** for the Administrator

Volume 5 No. 1

Autumn, 2011

Section 1: Introduction and Welcome!

This is the fifth volume of the Administrator's APPLE and the first volume for the 2011-2012 school year. The focus of the APPLE is early childhood—birth through Grade 3. Content will focus on current work being done at the state level as well as federal information, and hopefully some local stories if available.

We want your input, your thoughts, and your questions. If you want to have an update on anything in particular, please contact the editor. Gayle Stuber, Early Childhood Coordinator for KSDE, is the editor who can be contacted at gstuber@ksde.org.

Other supporters of the content will be Tiffany Smith, Section 619 coordinator and Janet Newton, Parents As Teachers' coordinator. Their contact information is below:

Janet Newton: jnewton@ksde.org

Tiffany Smith: tsmith@ksde.org



Section 2: State Overview and Update

Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge

Kansas Governor Brownback has indicated that Kansas will participate in the application process for the Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge. The final RFP is due out mid-August and will likely be due mid-October. The RTT-ELC is to support breakthrough work that dramatically improves the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs serving high-need children—ages birth to five. The focus is on key reforms, including aligning EC resources and systems and improving early learning and development standards and assessment, program standards, tiered rating and improvement systems, and early childhood educators. Applicants need to demonstrate: courage, commitment, capacity, and creativity. Other considerations may be to ensure that systems are developed in states with high percentages of high-poverty populations in rural areas.

More information will be shared as the requirements and timetable for the work are clarified.

School Readiness

School readiness is always a 'hot topic', but in the fall when school is starting the knowledge and skills of entering kindergartners is a critical piece of data that school administrators and teachers use to plan for the upcoming year. Kindergarten roundup data can help, but understanding the early learning experiences that young children have encountered during their first five years will help schools better prepare for all children who enter their doors.

The ability of young children to be successful in Kindergarten and in later years depends in large part upon their experiences during the first five years of life. Through the Kansas School Readiness Project, KSDE has

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An **APPLE** for the Administrator

collected data on more than 5,000 Kindergarten children and has followed them into 3rd and 4th grades.

Overall results indicate that early learning programs that use best teaching practices promote growth in literacy, numeracy, and social skills for Kindergarten children who attend these programs. Parents also make a difference in their child's readiness as do the schools and kindergarten teachers who are 'ready' for the children as they enter the kindergarten door. The one page flyer that describes the results of this three year study can be found on the KSDE website at www.ksde.org under Early Learning Services.

School Readiness Data Task Force

The School Readiness Data Task Force is continuing its work of reviewing the current School Readiness Framework and developing a list of Indicators and Data Elements that will define and clarify 'readiness' from the perspective of the four components: family, community, educational environments, and child. Reviewing and updating as appropriate the goals and indicators presently in place for each of the four framework components will ensure their alignment with current knowledge from research, evaluation, and practice.

This work will provide the foundation for the comprehensive early childhood data system that, once in place, will provide a means of determining the answers to many of the questions that policy makers, researchers, and practitioners have about what can help a child be 'ready for success' in school and in life.

For meeting documents, agendas, and notes, please go to: <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4700>

Birth to Five Regional Summits:

In order to reduce travel and to provide all parts of the state current information as well as the opportunity for local communities to meet and work together, early childhood staff from several state agencies (SRS, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas State Department of Education) have been working together for several years to go 'on the road' for regional meetings. **This year, the regional meetings will be replacing the Administrators Summit which has taken place in Junction City during September.**

SAVE THE DATE:

Birth to Five Regional Summits, 2011

Transition Planning through Teamwork

September 27—Dodge City

September 28 – Newton

October 4—Emporia

October 5—Topeka

Purpose: To optimize coordination across early childhood programs to promote smooth transitions for children and their families who access more than one program or move from one program to another. The morning session will be for community teams including Administrators of tiny-k Part C, Early Head Start, Parents As Teachers, Four year-old At-Risk, Early Childhood Special Education (Part B), Pre-K Pilot, Head Start, and other community partners. The afternoon will be for Part C and Part B transition requirements and is required for Part C and Part B providers. Their community partners are invited to attend. More detailed information will be made available in the summer.

An Equal Employment/Educational Opportunity Agency

The Kansas State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: KSDE General Counsel, 120 SE 10th Ave., Topeka, KS 66612 785-296-3201



An **APPLE** for the Administrator

Section 3: Birth to Three

Regional Foundational Training for currently certified parent educators is occurring across the state. Training opportunities are current on our website <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3295>. The newly revised Foundational Curriculum emphasizes effective approaches to working with families including parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting and family well-being and aligns well with the Part C primary coach model implemented in Kansas.

The regional trainings are going extremely well and are being very positively received. One participant “found the new curriculum very well written, well organized, and contain[ing] valuable up-to-date and well research information.”

Section 4: The Preschool Years

Pre-K Program & Four Year Old At-Risk Program:

The Four Year Old At-Risk Program and the Pre-K Pilot are up and running for the 2011-2012 school year. This year there is a new data collection process using the KELI-4R (Kansas Early Learning Inventory for Fours, Revised) as a web-based application for the Four Year Old At-Risk program. This is a part of the integration of early childhood programs into the Longitudinal Data System and we are calling the application: **Success in School**. Teachers in the Four Year Old Programs will be completing the KELI-4R on 10 of their children, randomly selected. The process for selecting the children and the training for the process will be available on the KSDE website after August 30, 2011. Look under Early Learning Services at:

<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3293>

WHY is this change happening?

One of the difficulties in the past years has been to collect state-wide data on the program because each program selects its own assessment(s). The 2011-2012 Program year for the Four Year Old At-Risk is opening up a new process for state-level data collection. The web-based data collection process will allow KSDE to collect data from programs across the state that is the same for all programs and teachers. The data collection will allow schools, districts and KSDE to:

1. Use the data to show improvement in child learning outcomes across the program year;
2. Use the data to promote the strength of the Four Year Old At-Risk program in meeting its major outcome of “Children will enter school ready to learn.”

It is clear that while change can be difficult, it often provides a new approach to curriculum delivery and content that is current and meets new requirements.

Janet Newton is the PAT coordinator. Please contact her at jnewton@ksde.org with questions.



3. Use the data to promote the quality practices that teachers are using to support and improve child outcomes.

The basic answer is that Early Childhood programs need to be able to prove that they make a positive difference in children’s lives. The Four Year Old At-Risk program is a critical component in the Early Childhood continuum of learning. Teachers and administrators in this program help children be successful in school—and this success continues past the Kindergarten year. KSDE is following children in Kindergarten on into fifth grade. This includes children who have been in the Four year Old At-Risk program. These children learn a lot in their four year old year—and are prepared for success in Kindergarten. An overview of the School Readiness Project results is included with this letter. This data collection will allow KSDE to expand this report and include the Four Year Old At-Risk Program data to promote and support the importance of the program.

Gayle Stuber coordinates these preschool programs. Please contact her with questions about these programs or other preschool questions at gstuber@ksde.org

Early Childhood Special Education:

There will be webinars around the Early Childhood Outcomes available for review in early fall. Go to the KITS website at www.kskits.org for more information.

Tiffany Smith is our Section 619 coordinator. Please contact her with questions at tsmith@ksde.org



An **APPLE** for the Administrator

Section 5: Kindergarten through Third

Since this is the beginning of school and many of you have parents whose children 'just' miss the August 31st cut-off date for Kindergarten entry—here is the Kansas Statute around school attendance.

72-1107. Age of eligibility for school attendance (a) Subject to the provisions of subsection (b), any child is eligible to attend the elementary grades in the school district in which the child resides or in a school district which has entered into an agreement in accordance with and under authority of K.S.A. 72-8233, and amendments thereto, with the school district in which the child resides if (1) for the 1994-95 school year, the child will attain the age of six years on or before September 1 of the school year and (2) for the 1995-96 school year, the child will attain the age of six years on or before September 1 of the school year and (3) for any school year commencing after the 1995-96 school year, the child will attain the age of six years on or before August 31 of the school year; (b) any child who has completed a kindergarten course entered and attended in this state in accordance with the provisions of subsection (d) or who was a resident in another state and who, while residing in such other state, had entered and was in attendance in first grade in such state or who had completed in such state a kindergarten course maintained by a public school district or by an accredited private, denominational or parochial school shall be eligible to attend first grade in this state, regardless of age; (c) subject to the provisions of subsection (d), any child is eligible to attend kindergarten in the school district in which the child resides or in a school district which has entered into an agreement in accordance with and under authority of K.S.A. 72-8233, and amendments thereto, with the school district in which the child resides if (1) for the 1994-95 school year, the child will attain the age of five years on or before September 1 of the school year and (2) for any school year commencing after the 1994-95 school year, the child will attain the age of five years on or before August 31 of the school year; (d) any child who was a resident in another state and who, while residing in such other state, had entered and was in attendance in kindergarten in such state

shall be eligible to attend kindergarten in this state, regardless of age

First through Third:

These grades are often not considered to be a part of the early childhood/early learning continuum. However, research does suggest that children up to the age of 8 need different instructional strategies than older children. There are many educators who believe that a pre-K through 3rd grade educational continuum can provide a strong support for learning for the young children in our schools. See below for some resources in **Section 6** around this topic.





An **APPLE** for the Administrator

Section 6: SEEDS of Knowledge and Resources

- (1) Birth to Five Regional Summits: these are described above and will replace the Administrators' Summit.
- (2) NAEYC website: www.naeyc.org This website is a wonderful resource for early childhood information and is particularly good for teachers and administrators who work with young children and their families.
- (3) The MTSS website is for all staff and all children—and includes the youngest ones as well. Go to www.kansasmtss.org for information on the September MTSS symposium in Wichita.
- (4) A good resource for Principals: Getting it Right from the start: The Principal's Guide to Early Childhood Education (2009) by M.J. Kostelnik and M.L. Grady. This is a joint publication by NAESP and Corwin publishers at www.corwinpress.com
- (5) Resources for birth through third grade can be found at <http://earlyedforum.newamerica.net/resources>

We hope that this APPLE will be helpful to you. Send questions, comments, and suggestions to Gayle at her email address below.

Gayle

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Editor of the APPLE

