



An **APPLE** for the Administrator

Volume 3 No. 1

Fall, 2010

Section 1: Introduction and Welcome!

This is the third volume of the Administrator's APPLE and the first for the 2010-2011 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 Carol Ayres, Section 619 coordinator and Janet Newton, Parents As Teachers' coordinator. Their contact information is below:

Carol Ayres: cayres@ksde.org

Janet Newton: jnewton@ksde.org



Section 2: State Overview and Update State

The School Readiness Data Initiative

The Kansas State Department of Education Early Learning staff conducted both a face-to-face School Readiness Listening Tour and an electronic listening opportunity via a survey that was sent to many of you last spring. The results of the Listening Tour and electronic survey were presented at the "Making Decisions Count for Children" meeting in July to help inform intentional data collection planning that will help direct future state level decision-making.

The vision for this Initiative is informed decision making on behalf of young children's healthy development and school readiness. Focused on young children from birth to the start of kindergarten, this Initiative will lead to increased availability of valid and reliable data that can inform effective state and community policy decisions on children's behalf.

The KSDE is committed to this Initiative being inclusive, collaborative, and comprehensive. The leadership being exercised on behalf of this work is not for the sole benefit of the KSDE. The overarching goal is a coordinated, comprehensive early childhood data system that is connected to the K-12 data system, permitting everyone who is engaged in promoting children's school readiness and tracking their school success to make evidence based decisions on behalf of policy and practice.

The July 9th meeting: Making Decisions Count for Children

Meeting participants were asked to review the results of your input before the meeting—along with the summarized results of their interviews around the same subject. The results of the day's discussion resulted in a set of prioritized questions that addressed each of the four elements of the State's school readiness framework (ready families, ready communities, ready schools, ready children). The eight policy questions selected to drive development of a longitudinal school readiness data system are listed below. The eight questions are sequenced in order of priority. A copy of the full report can be found under Early Learning on the KSDE website, www.ksde.org

"We found out through this process what was important."

- Meeting Participant

1. How prepared are all of our children for kindergarten, as a whole and by subgroups?
2. What are the most critical health, safety, and community factors that contribute to children's school readiness?
3. What is the impact of family education, involvement, engagement, and support services on children's school readiness?
4. What are best practices for engaging families?
5. How prepared are the State's schools for meeting the needs of entering kindergartners?
6. Who are children not being served and where are they?





An **APPLE** for the Administrator

- 7. What combination of early childhood experiences has the best return on investment?
- 8. What defines program effectiveness?

In contemplating which of these policy questions to tackle first, the group agreed that these eight policy questions would, as part of next steps, be tiered in terms of their “readiness” to be answered as defined below.

- Short term – within 3 years
- Long term – up to 5 years
- Longer term

Now it is your turn: what do you think of this set of questions? Do they, as a whole, capture ‘school readiness’? Do you have any thoughts as to the necessary concepts that need to be taken into consideration as a group looks at the School Readiness Framework for Kansas and redefines the data elements that will provide a strong support for our young children as well as answer these questions?

School Readiness Framework:

The Kansas Vision for School Readiness

School Readiness occurs when families, schools, and communities support and serve children effectively so that all children have the ability to succeed in various learning environments.

Early Childhood Advisory Council

The Early Childhood Advisory Council application was approved in late summer and the Governor has appointed its membership. The first meeting will likely take place in October or early November. See a copy of the press release below for an overview of the Council and a list of its members.

The Kansas State Early Childhood Advisory Council will be on-going. The council is directed by the federal Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007. According to the Governor’s statement, members of the council will conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry. The council will also make recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing federal, state and local child care and early childhood education programs.

FEDERAL

Many of the early childhood grant opportunities are focused on Head Start and Child Care. However, with the inclusion of a special Early Childhood Staff member in the US Department of Education, Dr. Jacqueline Jones, the focus on early learning is stronger than it has been in the past. Look for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to hopefully include early learning, at least the pre-k year(s).

Early Learning Challenge Fund: there is no new news on this grant. It may come back during budget discussions. We will keep you informed on any new information that comes our way.

Section 3: Birth to Three Parents as Teachers

The Parents As Teachers program is in place and going strong this year! From the Parents As Teachers National Center, the news is that the program has a new curriculum that will be out next year—after January, 2011. This will require training all current and new Parent Educators over the next three years. Janet Newton, the PAT Coordinator for the State of Kansas is working with state leaders and with Kansas Parents As Teachers Association to develop a plan for the training.

The contact for KSDE PAT is Janet Newton. You can contact her at jnewton@ksde.org for more information.



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 4: The Preschool Years

School Readiness Data Collection

This year, for the first time, first grade teachers will be asked to complete KELI (Kansas Early Learning Inventory) forms on children who participated in the Four Year Old At-Risk Program and the Pre-K Pilot Program in 2008-09. As for the Kindergarten teachers last year, all teachers will be provided a stipend as 'thanks' and asked to also complete an online survey about their typical classroom practices.

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 2010-2011 school year. The original 12 sites of the Pre-K Pilot are still in place. Funding for the Four Year Old At-Risk Program is tied to the school funding formula and is down to just over \$2,000 per child. There were no new programs allowed to start this year although several districts expressed an interest in setting up a new program. With the increase in the at-risk population, there are many districts wanting to add children to their programs, but this was not able to be approved for the 2010-2011 school year.

Both programs provided information on the curricula used in their programs and the child outcomes—based upon the Kansas Early Learning Standards indicators for four year olds—for which they collect data. This information will be used to support work on refining the child assessment instrument, the Kansas Early Learning Inventory for Fours (KELI-4).

Kansas Preschool Program

The two groups that have been working diligently to develop the look and specific details of the Kansas Preschool Program are moving closer to finalizing their recommendations. Below is the overview of the program plus the five major components. The two groups will be working on the details—which always take time!—and results will be shared with you all next spring.

Early Childhood Block Grant: Demonstration Early Learning Community

This grant includes three communities: Liberal, Coffeyville, and Rossville. All three communities have collaborative preschool classrooms of four year olds (three year olds only in Rossville, USD 321). These classrooms include children who have special education needs. Data collection of the first year of implementation will be completed in late spring 2010. A website is being developed—it is currently a link on the Kansas Head Start Association website -- www.khsa.org. This project is funded through CIF and administered by the Children's Cabinet.

Section 619 (Submitted by Carol Ayres)

The state level program coordinators, including the Parents As Teachers program, Part C Infant- Toddler Services, Early Head Start, Head Start, Child Care Programs, Pre-K and 4 Year Old at Risk Programs and the Early Childhood Special Education (Part B, Section 619) continue to develop joint guidance and a Memorandum of Understanding to support local programs working collaboratively and cooperatively with one another.

Head Start, SRS , KSDE, KDHE state agency coordinators and the Technical Assistance Providers from Head Start and KITS are meeting regularly to strengthen understanding and develop guidance to support children and families enrolled in these programs in Kansas.

The Regional Meetings took place August 23-25 and were well attended. Approximately 200 educators from Section 619, Part C (early intervention/tiny k), Parents As Teachers, and Head Start came to learn and share information.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) will be in Kansas during the week of November 15 on a verification visit for Part C and Part B –preschool through grade 12. Both programs are working hard to prepare and have all documentation ready for review.





An **APPLE** for the Administrator

Section 5: Kindergarten through Third School Readiness Project

Children who were in Four Year Old At-Risk Program in 2008-09 and in the Pre-K Pilot at 2008-09 were followed into Kindergarten last year and will be followed into first grade this year to continue the examination of the impact of school readiness skills of children who participated in these programs. Fourth grade assessment scores of Kindergarten children from 2005-06 will be examined and the third grade scores of Kindergartners from 2006-07 will be compiled with results from last year (Kindergartners from 2005-06). Future data collection will depend upon availability of funding. Reports are shared upon request and will be posted on the ELSU website later this fall or early next year.



Section 6: SEEDS of Knowledge and Resources

- (1) Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children (KAEYC) conference: October 23 at Manhattan, KS. Register at: www.kaeyc.org
- (2) KSDE Annual Conference: October 26-27 in Wichita Please go to www.ksde.org and look under 'Conferences' for registration information.
- (3) We will be having our second annual Administrator's Summit in Junction City on September 30. The Kansas Early Learning Standards will be the center-piece of the day.
- (4) Tri-State Regional Special Education Law Conference: November 4-5, 2010 in Omaha. This conference focuses on legal issues in special education.

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

Thank you again for all your help and support this year—Keep in touch!

Gayle Stuber
gstuber@ksde.org
Editor of the APPLE