

Curriculum Leaders Meeting

January 21, 2011

Washburn Institute of Technology, Topeka

Networking Session – The networking session was facilitated by Steve Spichal, Hiawatha, for KASCD. Approximately 40 were in attendance for the beginning of the session. As a result of suggested topics from the listserv, the group broke into small groups and discussed the following topics:

- Algebra Sequencing – facilitated by Sherry Reed
- Pathways Outside of the Traditional Vocational Subjects – facilitated by George Abel
- Common Core Standards Discussions – facilitated by Kim Rasmussen

KASCD Awards -- Recipients of the following KASCD awards were recognized:

- Destiny Award: Christine Potter, Washburn Rural Math Teacher
- Outstanding Assessment Coordinator: Kim Barndt, DeSoto
- Outstanding Educational Service Center: Dr. Kelly Gillespie, Executive Director, Southwest Plains Regional Service Center, Sublette
- Outstanding Curriculum Leader for 2011: Steve Spichal, Hiawatha, KASCD President

Welcome and Introductions – Brad Neuenswander, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Learning Services, welcomed everyone. This is his first meeting in his current role. Brad said that we need to hear from you regarding what you need. There is so much going on and at the same time there is so much we don't know. We may not always do a good job at communicating with you, but we're going to try to do our best to communicate with you regarding the newest and greatest.

Commissioner's Update-- Commissioner DeBacker said this is Brad's debut. He's very fortunate to have you to work with. Diane asked, "What is on the top of your mind?"

- Common core standards
- New assessments

These are two of the biggest items we'll be dealing with and both are under Brad's division. We need your input. We want to take your advice, criticism and try to do what's right. A lot of classroom teachers have not have been through new standards and may not know how to adjust from one set of standards to another.

Diane shared there are others that are just as important. She predicts the State Board will look at the accreditation of schools. QPA may change. Many of you are familiar with the old QPA system and they may go back to more of the system like it used to be. The old system had a little bit more meat to it and it was felt schools benefitted from that.

Also, there are groups that would like to take over accreditation in the state and several groups have presented before the State Board. Think you may see the State Board exploring whether accreditation has to come from the state level. We've done similar things in other areas – assessments (CETE), schools on improvement (KLN), and also MTSS.

The other thing the State Board will deal with is graduation requirements. They have been looking at graduation requirements for the last 1 ½ year to try to make it more uniform. Right now, the minimum number of credits is 21. They've found there is anywhere from the minimum of 21 to over 30. The Governor's Commission on Dropout and Recovery presented their report to the State Board last week. They felt it is not fair to kids – students who move from one district to another or come from an out-of-state school, and especially for students who are in a court ordered arrangement. The State Board will be looking at the commonalities. This comes on the heels of the Board of Regents increasing qualified admission requirements. The other thing the board is interested in is not to put any additional requirements on schools.

These are major topics for schools and especially this group. Most of these topics fall under the Division of Learning Services, under Brad's leadership. As we look at these issues over the next couple years, we need your input.

The State Board has a new chairman -- Dave Dennis from Wichita. Mr. Dennis is a former teacher, former military and has a lot of experience. The Board's new Vice Chairman is Carolyn Campbell from Topeka. Ms. Campbell works for Senator Hensley and served on the Board of Education for Topeka Public Schools. Diane shared that this is the first time in 20+ years that we've had the same board members for 4 years in a row. The State Board has a retreat on February 7, during which they'll be working through recommendations from the Governor's Commission on Dropout and Recovery and the Kansas Education Commission. There were 90+ recommendations from these two reports. They'll also be dealing with Blueprint and reauthorization of ESEA. In addition, the agency has it's current work that has to be done; it's a balance act for us.

What questions do you have?

- A question was asked about the 2014 waiver, the waiver for assessments during the transition time. Diane shared they had a conference call on Tuesday; however, it was not mentioned it. Through the Smarter Balanced Consortium the intent was to ask for it. Diane shared the State Board want us as a state to ask for a waiver from AYP, to hold it steady at the 09-10 AYP rates. The State Board will discuss this at their February meeting, with the belief that it will take effect at the end of this school year. Here's the tricky part to it, CCSSO is also writing a letter that would give states flexible. CCSSO wants to get their letter to the Secretary of Education before states send their letters. We expect CCSSO to send their letter in February.
- What are the AYP targets? We're asking for the state to go back to the 2009-2010 targets.

Division of Learning Services Update-- Brad shared that we have so much going – common core, new assessments, reauthorization, etc. and at the same time, we’re going to ask a group to define what suitable education is. Why? Because of money. There is a group that does not want to fund public education. You can change direction but do not change what you measure yourself by. If we change what we measure ourselves by, we’re going to hurt kids. We’re going to have to be intentional to make sure that we’re communicating with our parents, booster clubs, anyone who deals with education. As educators, we’re biased. No one is better at changing and adapting than this group. You don’t change your character, your priorities and the importance of what you put on kids. We’ve got to be at the table and involved in that discussion regarding defining what suitable education is.

There is so much transition going on and we need your input on how we can help you. We’re working on a newsletter, via listservs, from our division to get you the most updated information. In order to keep the listservs manageable, Brad asked members to forward information to staff in their district.

Brad shared that the agency is starting to provide statewide training. Greenbush North volunteered their facility to videotape and edit sessions. The first one scheduled for February 3 will be on the Common Core Standards. KSDE will start providing more of those trainings. We’re going to have to get better in how we communicate with you.

Funding of Public Schools – Mr. Dennis shared the latest information regarding school finance. Last year (2010), special education was reduced by 12.8%, with a reduction of 12.3% in general fund expenditures. This year, it was reduced 12.6%, a reduction of 8.7% in state general fund, with a difference of 3.9%. In the 2012-2013 school year we will feel it. There is going to be an effort made in the Senate to reinstate the money; however, there is not enough money in the general fund to do that. If a district loses state money, you have to make it up at the local level or reduce services.

Assessed valuation dropped this year. The 20 mill levy did not produce what they anticipated. It is equalized and everyone gets a share. As of right now, the base will go from \$4,012 to \$3,927 for this year, which will be tough to do. Although, it has not been approved and will probably happen within the next 2-3 months. The Governor is trying to get it on the fast track by the end of January.

Another thing that is happening is that we have the federal jobs money and they’re going to reduce appropriations by 85 million. The legislature will try to come in and reduce that about 17 million and give it to special education for this year. Right now, we’re short about 50 million, we’ll lose 199 million in federal stimulus money, 145 million in general fund, but we’re to gain 27 million. This is very confusing to schools and the community (and to this notetaker.) There will have to be reductions, either by closing building, letting staff go, running buses longer, etc. They say the cuts are not going to affect kids; however, every one of these will affect kids. It will be really, really difficult and it is important to convey to your communities so they understand the impact on kids. We all want money to go to the classroom. Legislators do not understand the mandates that are required. They do not understand the amount of hours a typical teacher spends.

The Adjutant General's office, who is in charge of Homeland Security, is providing training for Safe and Prepared Schools. Mr. Dennis asked that if your district has not signed up, please do so as soon as possible. The training is free.

Career, Standards and Assessment Services Update—Tom Foster said it's a tough situation when we're worried about our jobs and what we're going to do. On top of that is this is one of the most biggest times for change in curriculum. Sometimes we may get numb, which is not a good thing. The same thing happens with curriculum and assessment and it may not be numb, but fear. We want to give you as much information as we can. There is a lot of information we do not know.

Tom provided a quick overview of common core standards. There is a website: www.corestandards.org that has a lot of PPT's and handouts. The State Board adopted the common core standards in October. They are working on instructional materials and other resources to assist you.

Kansas is one of 30+ states in SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. Kansas has more consultants working on consortium committees than any other state. Since Kansas is a governing state we have input on how the consortium is moving forward. They met yesterday with CETE staff on the transition to new assessments and what we need to think about most is how we cushion the blow for students. It is designed primarily to get students where they need to be in terms of assessments. All of the assessments will be adaptive. In Kansas, we have the advantage of being ahead of a lot of states. It will be a new look and new item types. There will be performance tasks, performance events and other constructive responses. These will create a different experience for students. The 2nd thing that will be different is the cognitive way. The demand for cognitive load around the items is going to get a lot harder. The items the kids see will be a lot harder; a different impact of how they take the test. It will be a more balanced look at assessments. In Kansas, we've put most of our weight on summative assessments. There are a few who use interim assessments, but the majority use formative assessments. The belief is that assessments should vanish from a student's perspective; it will not be an event in time. With the common core standards we have to figure out what we're going to test. We expect that to come out later on in 2011.

Tom shared the Kansas Common Core Standards Transition Timeline from the 2010-2011 school year through the 2014-2015 school year. It is divided into three phases – standards, assessments and professional development. There will be an ability to align or link the old assessments with the new standards, as well as a cross walk and bridging document. By 2013 we'll be entirely in the new standards. In 2012, we'll work on modifying the current assessments by removing anything from them that are not taught in the common core standards. It would make the current assessments smaller and it would become our new accountability assessment. It depends upon what USED will allow. If we do not get a wavier, we'll have to go with the accountability system as it is. Individual states will get individual consideration. Think we can do something under the wavier, but different than what we've done. We're also working on a growth model for the state.

Professional development will be a critical component of it. They're working on the transition plan to include professional development. The question for you is, "What is it around the common core standards that you need?" What can we build, create, provide? It could be a video, document, computer program, etc. What do we need to do know to get your teachers, board, etc. ready? Visit with your staff about how they imagine transitioning to the new standards and assessments. What kinds of tools will they need? Tom shared you can use the PPT or go out to the Common Core website, for further information to be used as part of professional development in your district. We need to develop support for moving forward. We need to get them excited to be on board with a winning team.

Dr. Laura Kramer, CETE, was introduced and briefly shared her background.

Robin Harris briefing shared the following:

1. The state has approved 31 career cluster pathways, which are now going from implementation to transition.
2. Industry-recognized credentials – Robin encouraged districts to take advantage of industry-recognized credentials.
3. Information regarding the Carl D. Perkins reserved competitive funds has been sent out to districts. \$250,000 in Perkins funds will be awarded to design and implement a Rigorous Program of Study (RPOS) in at least one cluster/pathway using emerging technologies, for use as a state-wide model. Each proposed RPOS will follow the Program of Study Design Framework ten (10) components.

MTSS -- Susan Sipe, Director of the MTSS Core Team, shared the latest information from the MTSS Core Team. Four MTSS briefs have recently been developed:

1. The Integration of MTSS and RtI
2. Special Education with a MTSS
3. Consideration of Replacement Core
4. School-wide Behavioral Support within the Kansas MTSS

KSDE has contracted with WestEd to conduct an external evaluation of MTSS to help determine whether they're meeting their goal, which: *To create a statewide system of support to local schools and districts in order to increase school capacity to use resources in ways that enable every child to be successful.*

They're also developing training to assist district leadership in making structuring decisions prior to engaging buildings in MTSS. This training will be available next school year: 2011-2012.

In regarding to MTSS training delivery, training materials will be developed into modules. Currently, training is defined by days. The module training is similar; however, it will be divided into modules instead of days. They are currently revising them and they'll be ready in August.

Sunflower Literacy Project– Lynn Bechtel shared the latest information regarding the statewide literacy plan. They have a plan for what is literacy; literacy in all content areas. Kansas received \$150,000 from the U.S. Department of Education of Education Striving Readers grant. As part of the 1st phase of the grant, we had to establish a statewide literacy team, which has met several times since this fall, including having a meeting earlier today. They will submit by February 1 the state’s application. It will also be put out for public comment. Your feedback is needed regarding what you think should be incorporated into the plan. The 1st phase is best suited for district level administration. The next phase is the competitive portion. We anticipate the requirements to be published by mid-February and then we’ll have 60 days to apply. The minimum award could be \$10 million; however, if the state does not receive funding, they will move forward with the literacy plan. They will be looking at policies and best practices and it will be overlaid on top of what you’re already doing. The plan will be birth to grade 12. The draft of the literacy plan will be out for public comment by the end of the year. Your comments will be welcomed. The common core standards are included in the plan. The plan is aligned with MTSS materials. Be watching for the document to be put out for public comment.

4-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate – Judi Miller shared some of the decisions and the timeline regarding the 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. In 2008, federal regulations required states to calculate graduation rates using a "4-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate." States are now required to follow a 9th grade cohort and determine how many graduate in 4 years. Kansas will be implementing the new formula in 2010-2011 and the graduation rate goal has been increased to 80. The new formula will be used in determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) in 2011. Information will be displayed on the next report card and it will disaggregated by all the groups. They want to use an N size on graduation, the same N size as for state assessments. It will be calculated for you (less than 30 students), but will not be used in AYP determinations. They will be using the KIDS system for graduation data: EOYA (end of year accountability) for 2006-2007 data will determine the 1st cohort. If a student moves in as a 9th grader, then they’d go back to the EOYA records. They’re trying to be as consistent as they can. Race and ethnicity does not change that often will be based on what the student is reported as 12th grader. EXIT codes (D28) determine status of student at time of cohort graduation rate: graduates are the denominator and non-graduates (including those kids who transfer in and out) are the numerator. Judi handed out a chart of exit codes and how they apply to graduation. Judi asked that members review the information and to work closely with those entering KIDS data. Situations that may be part of the graduate rate are:

- Students grades less 4 years – counts
- Summer graduates count
- Conflict with IDEA allows IEP students age 21 to graduate but 4-year counts non-graduate

The goals and targets are:

- Single graduate rate goal applies to all high schools
- Annual targets that are continuous and substantial improvement from prior year toward meeting goal
- USED – peer review & determine approval.

Information and training will be provided, including posting information on the KSDE website and webinars.

Kansas Commission on Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery – Jessica Noble provided an update from the Kansas Commission on Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery. Governor Parkinson established the Commission in June 2010. The Commission began their work in July and completed their report which was presented to the Governor, as well as the State Board. America’s Promise reported that students who have access to the 5 promises are going to be more successful. The Commission presented 38 recommendations which were grouped into four categories:

1. New Statewide Expectations
2. Areas for Improvement
3. Research Opportunities
4. Moving Forward

Recommendation 5: *The Kansas Department of Education should develop an early warning indicator system for Preschool through 12 grade level indicators targeted at accurately predicting students likely to drop out. This system should focus on dropout prevention, utilizing school – and community-based intervention components.* KSDE is currently working on developing such a system to show which students are off-track and target interventions for those students.

The full report is available at www.kansasdropins.org.

TEAL Update – Diana Stephan shared that several sets of regulations are to go to the State Board in April for public hearing. There are a few pieces that effect licensure:

- Restricted license – Current reg’s require districts to exhaust all attempts to hire a licensed person for the position. The new language will change and does not require you to exhaust all attempts.
- One of the other changes being made is the transitional license, a one-time license to allow somebody to be employed in a district to fill in until a district finds someone. It is not for those who do not complete licensure renewal requirements. The new regulation states that a license has to be expired for six months before a transitional license can be issued.
- Fingerprint/background check currently only required for an initial license and for licenses expired for over six months; however, that will change in the new regulations and a background clearance will be required for renewal.

Once the regulations go through the process, they will probably go into effect in the fall, 2011.

Adjournment – Brad thanked everyone for attending today’s meeting. He shared that he’s glad we had this opportunity meet today, because there is so much ahead of us. We know that in the upcoming years we’re going to have to do the best we can as a team. If there is anything else you need, please let us know. Meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.