



An **APPLE** for the Administrator

Volume 4 No. 1

Winter, 2011

Section 1: Introduction and Welcome!

This is the fourth volume of the Administrator's APPLE. 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 Budget

The Governor's budget was made available to the public mid-January. Many early childhood programs are supported by the Tobacco Funds administered by the Children's Cabinet and the Cabinet's budget is still focused on early childhood with some changes. Go to the Governor's budget website for current information. <http://budget.ks.gov/gbr.htm>

School Readiness

As we noted last time, there is a 'new look' to the school readiness work this year. The School Readiness Data Initiative has as its purpose a collaborative statewide effort focused on collecting and tracking school readiness data. The meeting in July, 2010 helped us move forward by developing 8 proposed Priority Policy questions that were shared in the last APPLE. These questions have now been vetted by teachers, administrators, parents, and other interested parties across the state and will be used to help determine what data need to be collected to frame 'school readiness' for Kansas. The result of this Initiative will be the availability of valid and reliable data on children from birth to the start of kindergarten that can inform effective state and community policy decisions on behalf of promoting children's early development and learning and success in school.

Here are the questions—in order of importance as recommended by stakeholders across Kansas:

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 the best practices for engaging families?
5. How prepared are the states' schools for meeting the needs of entering kindergartners?
6. Where are children not being served and where are they?
7. What combination of early childhood experiences has the best return on investment?
8. What defines program effectiveness?

A smaller group of state-level folks worked with the National Governor's Association to develop a set of policy questions. These are listed below and have been cross-walked with the Policy Questions to be sure that all concepts are included in the work.

1. Does every child have access to available and affordable high-quality services that meeting their developmental needs (health, social-emotional, early care/education, and family support)?
2. Are children on track to succeed at school entry and beyond?
3. Do children remain on track to succeed in college/career and beyond?
4. What policies/investments lead to an effective workforce? Does professional development make a difference?
5. What is the relationship between program and workforce standards, and child outcomes?

As was noted in the last APPLE, the School Readiness project has a somewhat different focus this year. Several different groups of teachers from several communities across Kansas are helping, both at the preschool (KELI-4) level and





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the kindergarten (KELI) level. Teachers from Holcomb, Garden City, Rossville and St. Mary's, Coffeyville, and Liberal will complete a new version of these two child assessments that are aligned with the Kansas Early Learning Standards for the four year old classrooms and with the current Common Core standards for the Kindergarten classrooms. This revised version will take place in March and will move us toward a web-based inventory/skills survey.

The Kansas Teacher Practices (KTP) and the Pre-KTP teacher surveys will be sent out to these same teachers later this month. A final spring completion of the current KELI and KELI-4 assessments will help wrap up the School Readiness Project.

Future Plans:

The School Readiness work is now focused around three major tasks:

- A School Readiness Task Force
- Completion of the School Readiness Project
- Continuation of the School Readiness Data Initiative in coordination with the Early Childhood Advisory Council

The **School Readiness Task Force** will be a small group of experts that have a high level of expertise and substantial knowledge in one of the four domains of School Readiness: family; community; school; and, child. Each of these will also need to be able to look beyond their individual focus to the larger picture of school readiness, understanding that all domains are interactive. The Kansas School Readiness Task Force is being convened to identify data elements associated with children's school readiness. Task Force recommendations will be submitted to the Kansas State Department of Education and the Early Childhood Advisory Council for approval. Once approved, these data elements will serve as the foundation for Kansas' statewide comprehensive and coordinated data system.

The **School Readiness Project** is being finalized this year by revising the KELI and the KELI-4 to better align these instruments with current Kansas standards. Other aspects of the work such as assigning KIDS numbers to participating children will help move the data collection to a more consistent use across the state. The data collection for the two grants (LAUNCH and Demonstration Learning Communities) will help design a new state-wide school readiness data collection.

The **School Readiness Data Initiative** includes the School Readiness Task Force and other work in coordination and collaboration with the KSDE Longitudinal Data Systems grant, the Early Childhood Advisory Council, and other state agencies and their data collection systems. Details of the work will be share in this newsletter and on the Early Learning Services Unit webpage on the KSDE website.

Early Childhood Advisory Council Update:

The Early Childhood Advisory Council application was approved in late summer and the Governor has appointed its membership. The first meeting has not yet taken place. With the change in administration complete, the Council will likely meet in early spring.

FEDERAL

Many of the early childhood grant opportunities are focused on Head Start and Child Care. However, as was noted in the last *APPLE for Administrators*, 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.

Early Learning Challenge Fund: This is not in current budgets as far as we know. It may be considered when the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is being reauthorized. We will keep you updated as we learn more.

Section 3: Birth to Three Parents as Teachers

The Parents as Teachers program is in place and going strong this year! The program has a new curriculum that is now available. Training will begin for all parent educators this spring and the training will be across the state. Times and description of training focus and sites will be up on the KSDE website under Parents as Teachers once all dates and locations have been finalized.

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





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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 will have RFP's ready by early February. These will be up on the KSDE website and notice will be sent out on all the various list serves. There is no new information as to the budget of each program. There was a notice in the fall that there could be a 2.4% cut in the current year's budget for the Pre-K Pilot program, taken in the final payment will be adjusted to meet this new funding allocations. ONCE WE KNOW FOR SURE, PRE-K PILOT programs will be notified.

Current Four Year Old At-Risk programs will be able to maintain their 2009-2010 approved number of child slots. However, there is no funding for new child slots or new programs.

Early Childhood Education:

There is a new Section 619 coordinator as of January, 2011. Tiffany Smith has replaced Carol Ayres as our coordinator for the early childhood special education program. Tiffany brings a wealth of experience to this position—she was the Part C-Infants and Toddlers early intervention program coordinator previous to accepting the Section 610 coordinator position.

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 on a number of topics.

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

Section 5: Kindergarten through Third

A number of reports have been completed that should be of interest to teachers in the primary grades. An article in the Phi Delta Kappa journal, the KAPPAN, was published in November and provides a review of some of the school readiness research. The article is online with this newsletter. Enjoy reading it—you provided the data that was used in the article!

Here is a short overview of several of the reports that show how the early Here is a short overview of several of the reports that show how young children's early learning experiences support their later learning.

The **Kansas School Readiness Project** has collected data on three cohorts (2005-08) consisting of over 5,000 Kindergarten children, during their pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten experiences.

Overall, results indicate that early learning programs promote growth in social, behavior, numerical and language skills.

- Children who participate in a formal preschool experience such as Four Year Old At-Risk programs, Head Start, and other community preschools enter Kindergarten with higher academic skill levels. These higher skills continue through the 3rd and 4th grade resulting in higher scores on 3rd and 4th grade reading scores.
- All children improve over the year, but the gap between those who come in with lower skills and those with higher levels of skills, while narrowing, does not disappear.
- Parent Education Programs such as Parents as Teachers provide families with child development education that promote effective parenting practices to support a higher skill level for children, particularly in the area of literacy, that appears to be maintained throughout a child's elementary years.

Early Learning Programs: 2005-08 Data Collection Results

- The more years a child attends formal preschool, the higher that child tends to score in academic areas such as Math, Written Language, and General Knowledge.
- Children who enter Kindergarten with higher math skills show higher results in both third and fourth grade reading and math assessments.
- Children who enter Kindergarten with high pre-literacy skills such as oral communication and symbolic language development

have higher scores in both 3rd and 4th reading scores.

- Children who are at-risk enter Kindergarten with lower scores. They improve greatly across the kindergarten year, but do not score as high in third and fourth grade as those who entered with higher skill levels.
- Children who have parents who participated in Parents as Teachers for at least two years have a higher skill level in academic areas when they enter Kindergarten than children with similar risk and developmental status.
- Children who enter Kindergarten having received special education services during their preschool years have a higher skill level in Kindergarten than those who began receiving services during their Kindergarten year.

Kindergarten experiences and teachers: 2005-08 Data Collection Results

- Children who enter Kindergarten with higher math skills show higher results in both third and fourth grade reading and math assessments.
- Children with more stable scores across the Kindergarten year—those who enter Kindergarten with higher skills and retain those skills throughout Kindergarten—have higher scores in third and fourth grade.

Third and Fourth Grade Reading Results Overview

Children who enter Kindergarten with higher skills continue showing higher scores on third and fourth grade reading assessments.

- Children who enter Kindergarten with higher academic skills have parents who reported reading to their children on a daily basis in the years before Kindergarten.
- Children who enter Kindergarten with a higher skill level have parents who talk to them about their daily activities.
- Children who are in full day Kindergarten with teachers who more frequently use a large number of developmentally appropriate best practices (evidence based) have higher scores in third and fourth grade.



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Section 6: SEEDS of Knowledge and Resources

- (1) Kansas Division of Early Childhood Conference: February 24-25 in Wichita at the Airport Hilton. Please go to www.kdec.org for registration information.
- (2) The Administrator's section of the Numeracy Conference is on March 2nd and takes place in Wichita. Go to www.ksde.org and look under conference for registration information.

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

Gayle Stuber

gstuber@ksde.org

Editor of the APPLE





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Volume 4 No. 2

Spring, 2011

Section 1: Introduction and Welcome!

This is the fourth volume of the Administrator's APPLE. 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.

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Section 2: State Overview and Update School Readiness

School Readiness Data Task Force

The **School Readiness Data Task Force** had its first meeting on March 23rd. Members reviewed the charge, the history of school readiness work in Kansas, and started the long process of reviewing the current School Readiness Framework and developing a list of Indicators and Data Elements. The School Readiness Data Task Force is charged with three (3) primary tasks:

1. Reviewing and if necessary updating the Kansas School Readiness Framework in light of new research, evaluation findings, and the State's experiences with this framework over the past almost ten years;
2. Reviewing and updating as appropriate the goals and indicators presently in place for each of the four framework components to ensure their alignment with current knowledge from research, evaluation, and practice; and
3. Identifying quantifiable and measureable data elements that can be used by the State's Early Childhood Data System to assess the status of family, school, community, and child readiness.

By the conclusion of its work, the School Readiness Data Task Force will prepare recommendations that address each of these three tasks, each of which is needed to develop a

comprehensive and coordinated statewide early childhood data system. The Task Force recommendations will be due to the Early Childhood Advisory Council and KSDE by December 1, 2011.

Previous work on school readiness was shared: The State convened a School Readiness Task Force in the summer of 2000. The Task Force's efforts were informed by participation in a 17-state consortium that met regularly to share information, learn about relevant research, and benefit from national expertise. In the fall of 2004, the School Readiness Task Force approved the State's present four-pronged school readiness framework— a framework that has now informed statewide work for almost ten years.

Short Summary of March 23rd meeting:

An introduction of the work was done by Brad Neuenswander, Deputy Commissioner (KSDE) and Jim Redmon, Executive Director of the Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund. After a short history and reminder of the charge, the group began the first phase of the work which will take

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place across five meetings, culminating in recommendations of Indicators and Data Elements that will be presented to the Early Childhood Advisory Council and the Kansas State Department of Education.

The Task Force reviewed the existing four components of the State's School Readiness Framework - Family, Community, School, and Child - in light of changes since its conception ten years ago. Following extensive discussion, the Task Force provided initial approval of four school readiness components: Family, Community, Educational Environments, and Child. The shift from School to Educational Environments was chosen to encompass the fact that

1. early care and education programs are a crucial component of children's early learning experiences,
2. early care and education programs prior to the start of Kindergarten often are part of local school systems, and
3. the type and range of early care and education experiences have expanded and need to be incorporated more explicitly as part of the School Readiness Framework components.

Task Force members chose one of the four School Readiness Components as the focus of their work on the Virtual work groups—one for each of the four components. The work of the Virtual work groups will be managed by the chair of each through conference calls and emails. The work will be used to inform the whole Task Force at each of the meetings.

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

School Readiness Project

The Kansas Early Learning Inventory for both the Kindergarten level and the Four Year Old level is being revised. These new versions are being completed by a small group of teachers and a statistical review will be done over the summer to help determine the valid, reliable, and appropriate items to include in the new web-based version.

The Four Year Old At-Risk program will be piloting the web-based version of the KELI-4R this next year, 2011-2012. The Kindergarten version is still in development form.

School Readiness Data Initiative

The current work is the School Readiness Data Task Force described above. Updates are sent out every few months to the original Stakeholders group that met last July.

Regional Trainings:

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. Please share this information with your administrator(s).

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



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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. PAT Grants are due at the end April.

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.”

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.

Section 4: The Preschool Years

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

All Four Year Old At-Risk Program applications and Pre-K Pilot grants have been approved by the State Board of Education at their April board meeting. Letters went out by April 15 and should have been received. For the Four year Old At-Risk programs, a new requirement is in place for the 2011-2012 school year. Programs will be required to completed the revised KELI-4R (child assessment) on at least 10 of the children in the classroom. This data collection will provide a statewide look at the skills of entering—and exiting children. Future plans include other pre-k programs. The 2011-2012 year is a pilot year for the web-based process. Training on the content and process will take place in August and September.

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:

Transition– Part B Indicator 12- KSDE has recently added a Contact List for the 3-5 ECSE Contacts in Kansas on our website at <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3293#619>

This includes the Name, School, Job Titles, Address, Phone, Fax, Email, and USD number for Early Childhood Contacts across Kansas. If you would like to add or update contact information, please contact Beccy Strohm at bstrohm@ksde.org

Early Childhood Outcomes- Outcomes Web System (OWS)- Part B Indicator 7- Public Reports were recently released regarding the Early Childhood Outcomes, Indicator 7. Please go to this link

<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=2291#Ind06> for some Questions and Answers regarding Indicator 7 and Early Childhood Outcomes.

ECSE Technical Assistance for Early Childhood Indicators - Please go to the Technical Assistance System Network (TASN) website to request Individualized Technical Assistance or to get information regarding the Kansas SPP Indicator Improvement Resources <http://ksdetasn.org/cms/>. There are many webpages and resources available regarding Part B Indicators for Early Childhood-Transition from C to B, Early Childhood Outcomes and Least Restrictive Environment.

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





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Section 5: Kindergarten through Third

This is the time of year for Kindergarten Roundup—and many families may be asking about their child who has a birthday that ‘just’ misses the cutoff date of being 5 by August 31st in order to attend Kindergarten. This is in state statute which was first adopted by the Kansas Legislature in 1919 and was amended several times. The last amendment occurred in 1994, and that amendment changed the date of eligibility to attend school from September 1 to August 31. So, currently, a child must be five years of age on or before August 31 to be eligible to attend kindergarten.

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

Making the Most of Kindergarten—Trends and Policy issues (2006)

The authors, Kagan and Kauerz, have both been involved in early childhood and in the K-3rd ‘end’ of early childhood for many years. This article provides a wonderful summary that helps the reader start to think about he—or she—will answer these questions:

What is it we want kindergarten to be and do? And how do we achieve it?

The authors agree with most teachers and administrators—and indeed most parents—who want kindergarten to a rich experiences that contributes positively to young children’s development and growth. Most kindergarten teachers want to also, as the authors say, retain “the uniqueness of kindergarten culture against a society demanding academic assimilation”. (p. 161). They offer the following guidelines:

1. **Kindergarten must remain ‘special’.** A nice quote: As children are not miniature adults, kindergarten is not miniature school. (p. 163). As educators know, this is not easy with the push to more narrowly focus on literacy and numeracy rather than all domains of learning.
2. **Kindergarten must still keep the child front and center, even with the new emphasis on content.** The suggestion focuses on teachers’ understanding of how children learn best and using that knowledge to promote high levels of understanding.
3. **Kindergarten must acknowledge and support difference in the needs of children and their families.** This is nothing new—we all know that one size does not and never did ‘fit all’!
4. **Kindergarten must foster relationships.** Teachers and other adults make a difference in children’s lives. The authors suggest that Kindergarten is an ideal time to build patterns of trust and communication to last a lifetime.

Policy often impacts kindergarten and the rest of the article looks at how policy can create the kind of kindergarten the authors recommend. This is an interesting article that gives some direction to future discussions that could occur among kindergarten and preschool teachers, administrators, parents, and policy-makers.

Kagan, S. L., & Kauerz, K. (2006). *Making the most of kindergarten: Trends and policy issues*. In D. F. Gullo (Ed.), *Beyond Kindergarten*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.



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Section 6: SEEDS of Knowledge and Resources

- (1) **Birth to Five Regional Summits:** these are described above and will replace the Administrators' Summit.
- (2) **KITS Summer Institute:** a great time for teachers to learn new information and get college credit at the same time. Go to www.kskits.org for more information.
- (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.

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

Gayle

gstuber@ksde.org
Editor of the APPLE

