

Charter and Virtual Education Advisory Council: June 3, 2015 Meeting

Present: Brooke Blanck, Penny Hargrove, Cindy Higgins, Nicole Hodges, Tell Kirk, Tom Lawson, Gary Lewis, Delon Martens, Leigh Miller, Killashandra Scheuring, Anita Scheve, Steve Ternes, Cody Whetstone and Christy Ziegler

Absent: Bob D'Andrea, Lacey David, Bill Losey, Scott Myers, Sean Reilly, Steve Roberts, Pam Robinson and Keith Wilson

KSDE Staff: Jessica Noble and Barbara Hamernik

Approval of Agenda and Minutes from the March 4, 2015 meeting:

- Motion to approve: Brooke Blanck
- Second Motion: Nicole Hodges
- Discussion: none

Spring Virtual Audits

Twenty-two spring virtual audits were completed by 5/22/15. Approval and Finding letters have been sent. The finding letters were a recommendation from Legislative Post Audit and have actually worked well. The findings letters acknowledge requirements that weren't met, which were relayed verbally during the audit call in the past. Virtual schools and programs must respond to the findings and identify their plan to correct them within 30 days.

New and Closed Virtual Schools and Programs

Applications for eight new virtual schools/programs were received before the original closing date. However, due to the Block Grant legislation, the intent to apply period was reopened for districts that already have alternative schools and wish add a virtual component. Six additional applications were received, bringing the total to 14 applications.

Several existing schools and programs are closing this year. Greenbush decided to close some of their virtual programs and allow the diploma completion programs to operate them. Two existing programs were not approved because they didn't participate in an audit and two more closed due to funding. A total of 14 virtual schools/programs closed resulting in the same number of total schools and program as 14-15.

Directory

In the past, only the service center was included in the directory of virtual schools and programs. All of the separate diploma completion programs (DCPs) they operated with virtual programs were not included. This year, the DCPs will be included, instead of the service centers. Approximately 30 DCPs participated in the audit this year and will now be included in the directory and will identify which districts they operate in.

Conversation on One program per Grade Level

Jessica led a discussion on whether districts should be limited to one virtual school/program per grade level in the district. There has been interest expressed in having more than one program per grade level. Examples of reasons given for having more than one program were: having different programs for students at different learning levels and flexibility of different curriculum programs. The discussion points stated were: multiple programs would complicate the audit process and that current programs could be expanded rather than creating new ones. **It was agreed that moving forward each district would only be allowed to operate one virtual school or program per grade level, but that they could continue to contract with a service center to operate a DCP for similar grade levels.**

Advertising Guidelines

A box will be added to the audit form for virtual schools/programs to indicate whether they plan to advertise outside of their own district. Adding this box would make the following changes:

1. Notifies Jessica if a school plans to advertise outside of their own district
 2. If the box is checked, Jessica will know to ask school/program for a link to their promotional materials
 3. Removes the requirement that a letter must be sent to the superintendent if the virtual school/program plans to advertise in person in another district.
- Motion to approve: Tell Kirk
 - Seconded: Penny Hargrove
 - Discussion: none

Diploma Completion Program Requirements and Monitoring Plan

Kansas has approximately 50-60 Diploma Completion Programs (DCPs) serving adults and alternative high school students. These DCPs are operated by school districts or by service centers, in partnership with one or more districts. Most of the DCPs also have a virtual program, so it would be easier if requirements and monitoring were aligned to the virtual process.

The DCP advisory council suggested the use of the word “monitoring” instead of “audit.” These monitoring reviews will be on a three-year cycle and will include a risk analysis to determine if monitoring needs to be completed sooner than the three-year cycle. If a DCP has a new director or more than two other risk factors, they will receive a monitoring automatically that year. **Should virtual schools and programs change to the three-year monitoring cycle instead of annually? The council decided yes.**

One component of the DCP monitoring is three-year goal setting. A question was asked about using the 5 R’s in accreditation to tie it together with districts. Jessica said that it would be easier for larger virtual schools and programs to do this, but not smaller virtual schools and programs. She also clarified that the goal setting would not be a duplication of the accreditation process, which applied to the entire district, but rather just goals for the virtual school or program.

Providing opportunities for students to student interaction was also discussed. Should virtual schools and programs provide face-to-face and online opportunities for students to interact or should they be

left to chance? It was agreed that it is in the best interest of the student to provide interactive activities. It was also agreed that participation or attendance in these activities cannot be mandated.

Professional Development for teachers is a current requirement and Jessica asked if this should stay and how would it be tracked. The council agreed it should stay, but that there might be years in which no PD is needed. All agreed that professional development should be required for all new faculty members. The question was asked if this should be its own requirement and the consensus was no.

Funding

Rather than provide a synopsis of the funding changes here, please refer to the Power Point and webinar recording available at: <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=826> (under the 15-16 Funding and Auditing Documents heading).

Wrap Up

Jessica asked if the committee would like to plan an “emergency” teleconference in July to review final drafts of requirements and monitoring plan before Jessica takes them to the Board of Education meetings in August or should they wait until the September meeting then Jessica will take the recommendations to the Board of Education Meeting in October. Council agreed to meet in July. Virtual Directors will be invited to join the call to provide their input. Jessica will send out a notice when the Emergency meeting will be in July.

Overview of Charter Schools in Kansas is the one item on the June agenda that will held over to the September meeting.

The September meeting is scheduled for September 2, 2015.