**Closing the Achievement Gap Task Force**

**April 1, 2014**

Members Present: Diane DeBacker, Brad Neuenswander, Mildred Edwards, Jean Schodorf, Idalia Shuman , Frank Henderson, Adrienne Foster

1. Diane reviewed the information that had been presented/discussed in the previous two meetings of October 24, 2012 and December 4, 2012. The Task Force did not meet during the 2013 year.
2. Brad reviewed the 2013 state assessment data which showed a continued achievement gap in reading and math for fully paid lunch students to those on free or reduced lunch. An ethnicity gap also persists among white, Hispanic and African American students.
3. Jean asked if mobility rate might have an impact on the achievement scores/gap. Diane responded that KSDE had not done any research in this area.
4. Several members mentioned that as this work moves forward we need to include other agencies involved with working with children/students. The group briefly discussed the need for a statewide group such as the one that was in existence under the P20 Council established by Governor Sebelius several years ago.
5. The importance of teacher preparation and continued professional development on cultural competency/diversity was mentioned many times.
6. It was also expressed that schools may not be using the services of the Midwest Equity Assistance Center as much as they could (Dr. Charles Rankin is a member of the Task Force but was unable to attend).
7. Courageous Conversations by Gary Singleton may be a good resource for the group to examine.
8. Short term work included:
   1. Letter to Governor Brownback about re-establishing a P20-type of council (Diane)
   2. Investigation of what best practices are taking place in the districts that are having success in closing the achievement gap (Diane and Brad)
   3. Development of a survey to send to the field asking what they are doing to close the achievement gap (Mildred and Adrienne)
   4. Begin crafting a value statement that clearly articulates that all students are entitled to be successful (Mildred)
   5. Contact ECS to see what research they have done across the U.S. on closing the achievement gap (no one specifically assigned to this task)
9. Long-term work included:
   1. Continued support of all-day kindergarten and universal preschool
   2. Teacher preparation to include cultural diversity
   3. Effort to get minorities into the teaching profession

Note: Dr. DeBacker announced the following week that she was leaving KSDE in mid-May to accept a job in Abu Dhabi. Brad Neuenswander will serve as interim commissioner and will assume the work of the Task Force until a commissioner is named by the State Board of Education.