

Charter and Virtual Education Advisory Council: March 4, 2015 Meeting

Present: Brooke Blanck, Bob D'Andrea, Cindy Higgins, Nicole Hodges, Bill Losey, Delon Martens, Leigh Miller, Sean Reilly, Pam Robinson, Killashandra Scheuring, Anita Scheve, Steve Ternes and Cody Whetstone

Absent: Lace David, Penny Hargrove, Tell Kirk, Tom Lawson, Gary Lewis, Steve Roberts, Keith Wilson and Christy Ziegler

KSDE Staff: Scott Myers, Jessica Noble and Barbara Hamernik

Meeting was opened by KSDE Consultant, Jessica Noble.

Approval of Minutes from the January 21, 2015 meeting and Agenda:

- Motion to approve: Pam Robinson
- Second Motion: Delon Martens
- Discussion: none

Approval of Amendments to the Bylaws:

- Motion to approve: Bill Losey
- Second Motion: Nicole Hodges
- Discussion: none

Alternative High School Education Summit Report

The summit was planned for alternative school staff and had a dedicated track for virtual directors. On the second day there was a virtual director networking luncheon which created an opportunity to share and discuss. It was agreed that the summit was good and could be improved to offer better opportunities for the attendees. Feedback about this event would be welcomed if there is interest in future summits.

Comments about the summit were positive. Some comments were: enjoyed sessions; useful time for staff and to make contact; and a networking opportunity. The summit could boost the presence of virtual schools.

Ideas for future summits were: breakout session for job-alike positions with networking activities; expand the round table sharing; explore the many facets of this niche in education.

State Board of Education Presentation

Jessica presented a Charter and Virtual update and report out about the Legislative Post Audit Report at the State Board of Education meeting in February. Jessica commented that the State Board of Education appeared open to ideas for improvement and changes to the requirements for virtual and charter schools.

Virtual Education Requirements

Jessica led a discussion on changes to the virtual education requirements which were last updated in 2008.

1. Change was made to require Virtual School Directors to meet appropriate licensure/certification requirements determined by the local board of education.
2. Recruitment/Advertising Guidelines: comments were made that the guidelines are outdated and need to be revised. A subcommittee was formed to review this requirement. Volunteers to serve on this committee include: Nicole Hodges, Bob D’Andrea, Brooke Blanck, Cody Whetstone and Gary Lewis.
3. Enrollment and Attendance: this section has been updated to match the Counting Kids Enrollment handbook. The only change proposed is that the communication between the school and students should be more specific by adding it should be weekly. Currently some communicate only monthly (mainly with adult learners). This would create a communication “target” to track the student’s progress and would help keep students engaged in the class. It was agreed this was a reasonable target.
4. Jessica led a discussion about the policy of accepting all students who wish to enroll.
 - Do virtual schools need to have a written policy for SPED, Migrant, ESL and Homeless services if the district already has a policy or should each area be outlined in the virtual requirements?
 - It was agreed that each area should be outlined specifically.
 - If a school accepts some SPED, Migrant, ESL and homeless students do they have to accept all similar students since virtual schools do not receive federal funding for these students like the districts do?
 - All agreed that federal guidelines should be followed and a blanket statement of denial by a school could be problematic.
 - One school said they take all students then orient them into the virtual frame work and monitor students if there are concerns.
 - Should virtual schools have the option to not accept a student because sometimes the district and/or parents do not know what the best fit is?

- Virtual schools need to be able to say a certain student is not a good fit because the school cannot provide the services the student needs.

All agreed that Jessica did a great job on rewriting the requirements.

Diploma Completion Advisory Council (DCAC)

Jessica asked if the Council would like to review the DCAC requirements and monitoring plan at the June meeting so they can compare what both councils have come up with. Then Jessica could take both Councils' changes to the Board of Education at the same time. All agreed with this proposal.

Miscellaneous

Jessica asked the Council to brain storm how KSDE could better support networking and technical information sharing for both charter and virtual schools. She would like more charter school items to address at Advisory Council meetings. A request was made to present at the June meeting an overview of the charter schools in Kansas so that the Council could have a better idea how KSDE could assist with networking and technical sharing. Other suggestions included surveying the charter school directors, holding a quarterly conference call with charter directors and spotlighting 1 or 2 charter schools each month via a webinar.

Jessica shared that there were eight intents to open new virtual programs this year. A training session for those intending to open a new virtual school will be held on March 11, 2015. There are no intents to open new charter schools and no charters schools are up for renewal this year.

Next Meeting Date is June 3rd

- Overview of charter schools
- Report out of spring virtual audits
- Subcommittee report on advertising
- Legislative update
- Charter directors ideas about networking and assistance

Bill Losey made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Nicole Hodges seconded it.