Charge To the Kansas School Readiness Data Task Force

From the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council and Kansas State Department of Education

Introduction

It has become widely accepted that children's learning experiences prior to the start of kindergarten impact their success in school and beyond. As a state, Kansas is focusing on students' preparation for college and career and a longitudinal data system that connects the early learning years with later school and college learning. Tracking students' progress must begin well before kindergarten, and with this in mind, the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) launched the School Readiness Data Initiative in the spring of 2010.

The Initiative has as its purpose a collaborative statewide effort focused on collecting and tracking school readiness data. It anticipated (1) the onset of the federally supported Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council, and (2) the Kansas State Department of Education's internal efforts to strengthen the State's K-12 longitudinal data system and interest in connecting it to early childhood data collection. 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 that promote children's early development and learning and success in school.

Convened by the State's leaders in data collection and management, the Kansas School Readiness Data Task Force is being assembled 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 early childhood data system.

WORK PROCESS

The Kansas School Readiness Data Task Force will convene five (5) times between March and November 2011. The facilitated process will be tightly focused and results-oriented. State and national expertise will be engaged in reviewing the Task Force's emergent recommendations.

The work of the Task Force will be informed by the input of work groups virtually convened between Task Force meetings. The work groups, convened by Task Force members, will be associated with each of the four components of the State School Readiness Framework: child readiness, family readiness, school readiness, and community readiness.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Building on Past Efforts: Efforts in Kansas to improve children's school readiness are tied to a School Readiness Framework (birth to the start of kindergarten) developed almost ten years ago by a broad-based constituency group. This comprehensive Framework encompasses not only child readiness but also school, family, and community readiness. Each component has a specific goal plus indicators that are indicative of the goal's achievement. Child readiness addresses cognitive and academic domains, as well as children's social and emotional readiness and their mental, physical, and oral health.

This Framework captures the early childhood field's commitment to a holistic view of readiness and to a shared responsibility among families. schools, and communities in helping children achieve this milestone. Using the Framework as a frame of reference for school readiness reveals the breadth and scope of data that will have to be collected, forecasts the complexity of creating a coordinated and accessible system of data, and highlights the significance and critical nature of the data elements the School Readiness Task Force is being asked to identify.

Previous work on school readiness: 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 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.

Looking to the Future: With the current national and state focus on accountability and datadriven decision-making, the early childhood community in Kansas has a growing need to organize a data collection system so it can participate in this movement and can coordinate this system with the State's K-20 Longitudinal Data System work. A first step involves identifying the data elements associated with each of the components of the State's School Readiness Framework.

In addition, Kansas has several active initiatives that have data as a center piece of their work: The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), which was appointed by Governor Mark Parkinson in response to a federal mandate to create a coordinated early childhood system; KSDE's Longitudinal Data System development efforts; and a recently completed grant awarded to the Children's Cabinet by the National Governors Association to create a plan for developing a statewide comprehensive early childhood data system. Each of these three over-lapping efforts is dependent on identifying the data elements associated with each of the components of the State's School Readiness Framework.

CHARGE TO THE SCHOOL READINESS DATA TASK FORCE

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.

SCHOOL READINESS DATA TASK FORCE WORK PLAN

Approved March 23, 2011

The Early Childhood Advisory Council and Kansas State Department of Education have charged the School Readiness Data Task Force with three 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
- 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.

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Work Plan and Timeline March 2011 – October 2011

INTRODUCTION

The School Readiness Data Task Force work plan builds from previous efforts, including the work of the School Readiness Data Stakeholder Advisory Group. On July 9th, this group met and identified and approved 8 priority policy questions — which have since been widely vetted — to guide the State's efforts to develop a comprehensive early childhood data system. The early childhood data elements recommended by the Task Force to the Early Childhood Advisory Council and the Kansas State Department of Education are expected to help answer these priority policy questions.

The School Readiness Data Task Force has 3 phases:

- Phase 1: Laying the Foundation
- Phase 2: Drafting Early Childhood Data Elements for Kansas' Early
- Phase 3: Finalizing the Task Force's recommended data elements for Kansas' Early Childhood Data System

Childhood Data System

Priority Policy Questions

- How prepared are all of our children for kindergarten and beyond, 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 involving families?
- 5. How prepared are the State's schools for meeting the needs of entering kindergartners?
- 6. Who are the children <u>not</u> being served and where are they?
- 7. What combination of early childhood experiences has the best return on investment?
- 8. What elements define program effectiveness?

To assist School Readiness Data Task Force members in their preparation for the decision-making that will occur at each of their meetings, voluntary, 30-minute premeeting conference calls will be scheduled. These calls will be organized to focus members' attention on the upcoming meeting agenda, gather input on decision-making items, and, in general, help establish the conditions needed so each meeting of the Task Force is focused and results-oriented. E-mails will be sent to members well in advance to notify them of call times and provide them with dial-in information.

Additionally, briefing materials will be prepared prior to each Task Force meeting. Every effort will be made to mail these materials a minimum of one week in advance of the meeting. Task Force members are encouraged to review these materials as part of their meeting preparation.

In support of the work's transparency, the School Readiness Data Task Force's meeting agenda, meeting notes, and documents will be publicly available online on KDSE web site at [http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4295].

In accordance with Kansas' Sunshine Law, all meetings of the School Readiness Data Task Force are open to the public.

PHASE 1: LAYING THE FOUNDATION March 2011 Encompassing the School Readiness Data Task Force's first meeting [March 23]

During its first meeting, the School Readiness Data Task Force will focus on organizing for its work. Following this first meeting, Task Force members will be prepared to fully engage with the work outlined by the Charge. At its first meeting, the Task Force will:

- Review its Charge
- Learn the relationship of its task to the work of the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and the State Department of Education's Longitudinal Data System grant
- Review the 2003 Kansas School Readiness Framework
- Develop 3-sentence descriptions for each school readiness component
- Review and if appropriate update the School Readiness Indicators
- Inform the composition of Task Force work groups

Phase I Outcomes

By the conclusion of its first meeting, the School Readiness Data Task Force will have:

- Reached a clear understanding of its Charge.
- Understood the relationship between its work and the Early Childhood Advisory
 Council and the Kansas Department of Education Longitudinal Data System grant
- Approved guiding principles for working together.
- Approved the work plan for its 5 meetings.
- Affirmed and/or revised the State's School Readiness Framework.
- Organized itself by Work Groups using components of the Kansas' School Readiness Framework.

- Developed draft descriptions for each school readiness component.
- Provided input to membership for the Task Force's work groups.
- Made an initial decision on the State's School Readiness Indicators.

PHASE 2: DRAFTING PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE LEVELS AND COMPETENCIES April – September 2011

Encompassing School Readiness Data Task Force meetings two through four [May 18, June 29, August 17]

During the second phase of its work, the Task Force will deliberate the emergent data elements coming from its four Work Groups. By the conclusion of this phase, the Task Force will have a draft set of data elements organized by each school readiness component and its Indicators. This work will be accomplished through the steps outlined below.

- 1. Work Groups will meet virtually three (3) times between Task Force meetings 1 to 4 to propose priority data elements for each school readiness indicator. A toll free conference number will be provided for these calls.
- 2. The Task Force Facilitator (Stacie Goffin) will provide an annotated agenda to work group chairs for the first work group meeting, which has as its intent orienting work group members to the task, timeline, and expected results. Work group chairs will have responsibility for creating agenda for the remaining conference call meetings.
- 3. Task Force and work group members will do their work on a standardized template to ease workload and create an efficient mechanism for tracking suggested changes across meetings by work group and Task Force members.
- 4. Work Group chairs should forward their meeting dates to Stacie Goffin, the Task Force Facilitator. A minimum of ten (10) days prior to the next scheduled Task Force meeting, Work Group chairs should send an updated template with their work group's emergent recommendations. This will permit Task Force members to receive this information at least one week prior to each meeting. The Task Force Facilitator will contact work group chairs prior to Task Force meetings to ensure that briefing documents for each School Readiness Data Task Force meeting incorporate the most current version of each group's work.
- 5. Ideally, each work group should have 10 12 members, up to one-third of whom are School Readiness Data Task Force members.
- 6. Coordination across work groups, when needed, will occur in two ways: (a) through processes that are implemented during task force meetings and (b) if needed, convening work group chairs between meetings.

Phase II Outcomes

By the conclusion of Phase II, the School Readiness Data Task Force will have

- Well-functioning work groups.
- Input to its thinking, via its work groups, which represent a broad range of key constituents.
- A draft of recommended data elements organized by the Indicators associated with each school readiness component.

Phase 3: Finalizing the Recommended School Readiness Data Elements August – October 2011

Encompassing PLC Task Force meeting five

[October 12/final meeting]

During Phase 3 of its work plan, the School Readiness Data Task Force will finalize recommended data elements for submission to the Kansas State Department of Education and Early Childhood Advisory Committee. Prior to its final meeting, the Task Force's draft recommendations will be reviewed by a select group of state and national experts, whom Task Force members will help identify. The School Readiness Data Stakeholders Group will also be provided a copy of the draft recommendations for review and comment. The Task Force facilitator will provide an overview of the feedback received, in addition to distributing copies of the actual feedback, for member consideration at its final Task Force meeting.

Following the Task Force's last meeting, facilitator Stacie Goffin will submit a final version of the recommended data elements to the Kansas State Department of Education, along with a narrative that describes the Task Force's work. The final recommendations, which are due on or before December 1, 2011, will be edited for consistency in grammar and tone across the data elements. *No changes will be made by the facilitator to the content of the Task Force's work.* Interested members may request a copy of the edited version when it is submitted to the Kansas State Department of Education.

Next steps with the recommendations will be determined by the Kansas State Department of Education and the Early Childhood Advisory Council. Task Force members will be informed of next steps in a timely fashion.

Phase III Outcomes

By the conclusion of Phase III, the School Readiness Data Task Force will have

 Approved its recommendations of the early childhood data elements to be used in forming a longitudinal data system beginning at birth, created a comprehensive birth to five early childhood data system aligned with the State's K-12 data system, and linked its recommended data elements with each of the State's priority school readiness policy questions.

• Fulfilled its charge to the Kansas State Department of Education and the Early Childhood Advisory Council.