



An **APPLE** for the Administrator

Volume 5 No. 2

Winter, 2011

Section 1: Introduction and Welcome!

This is the second volume for the 2011-2012 school year. 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:

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Section 2: State Overview and Update

Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge

The Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge grant was open to all states for the purpose of supporting breakthrough work that would dramatically improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs serving high-need children—ages birth to five. The focus of the application was on key reforms at the state level to align EC resources and systems and improve early learning and development standards and assessment, program standards, tiered rating and improvement systems, and support the early childhood workforce. Thirty-seven states applied for the grants and nine states were awarded the funding. Kansas state officials were informed Dec. 16 that Kansas was not among these nine states selected to receive funds through the Race To The Top Early Learning Challenge Grant. More information about the grant and the states selected to receive the funds can be found on the U.S. Department of Education website.

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/awards.html>

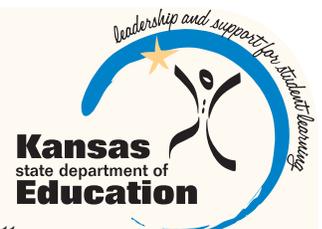
To read Kansas' complete application, Executive Summary and other relevant documents go to <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=2284> on the KSDE website.

Kansas is committed to moving forward on the following goals and will be working toward meeting the plan laid out in the Kansas Application for the Early Learning Challenge.

Overview of the Kansas Executive Summary

The State of Kansas accepts the federal early learning challenge and commits to building a coordinated early learning and development system that has Early Literacy as a focus and an ongoing capability to meet the needs of Kansas families and their young children through

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increased access to high quality early learning and development programs and services. This unified and focused statewide effort will enhance the abilities of early childhood professionals to provide the high quality learning experiences young children need, reducing the readiness gap during the early years and the academic gap in later elementary years. State level supports will enhance the ability of all Kansas communities to provide the necessary quantity and quality of comprehensive programs for young children and the necessary services and supports for their families, especially those with high needs. **OUTCOME:** **All young Kansas children with high needs will enter kindergarten thriving and ready to excel in the early elementary grades, reading on grade level by fourth grade.**

Kansas will meet the Early Learning Challenge through the achievement of the following five goals.

Goal 1.0: Build a cohesive statewide system to support continuous quality improvement of early learning and development programs through unified and coordinated state level leadership

Goal 2.0: Re-tool the current rating system and implement a single sustainable quality rating and improvement system that promotes continuous improvement of program quality through clearly defined levels using a system of tiered supports to meet needs of each early learning and development program

Goal 3.0: Promote improved early learning and development outcomes for young children, especially those with high needs, through the consistent use of the Kansas Early Learning Standards across all early learning and development programs, the effective use of a Comprehensive Assessment System, and development of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards to support families and enhance their engagement in their children's learning and development, resulting in high needs children acquiring the competencies and skills needed for school readiness and later school success.

Goal 4.0: Develop a statewide Kansas Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework to promote consistency of educator/provider expectations across all early learning and development programs

and to support an increasingly qualified early childhood workforce through coordination of services and professional development providers and focused professional development opportunities *((When implemented, literacy is targeted as the first content area, and includes the use of the updated Kansas Early Learning Standards, identified content areas and activities that promote expertise in the implementation of evidence based curricula, instructional practices, and specific interventions that support young high needs children's acquisition of skills, knowledge, and competencies in the areas of emergent literacy, early numeracy, and behavior, i.e. essential domains of school readiness.))*

Goal 5.0: Implement a comprehensive longitudinal data system that provides data for improving program practices, state and local services and policies, and enhances the abilities of program staff, families, and policy-makers to make data-driven decisions at all levels and that support efforts to close the readiness and achievement gaps of young children who have high needs.

Kansas Early Learning Standards: Revision

The Kansas Early Learning Standards were last revised in 2009. It is time to review the document based upon new research. A more focused section around children who speak English as a second language is needed as well as alignment work that will show the connection/alignment between the birth to five early learning standards and the Common Core standards now used in K-12.

The State Early Childhood Interagency Leadership team has determined that this work must go forward and will begin this spring. All stakeholders who work with children ages birth to five and into Kindergarten will be included in the process of revision—and will be asked to provide input so that the 2012 revision will be a strong and inclusive document. Families will also be an important part of the revision group. Look for more details later in the spring of 2012.

The standards are based upon research and have been used in the development of the KELI-4R (assessment for fours) and the KELI-R (kindergarten assessment). These instruments have been either piloted in 2011-12 or will be in 2012-2013.



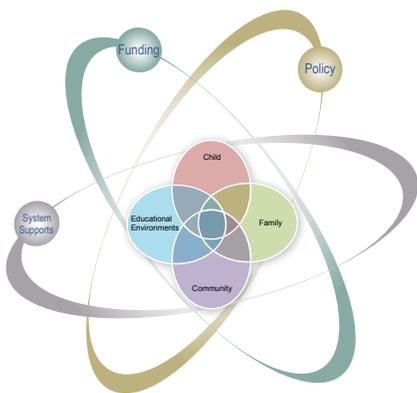
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School Readiness Data Task Force

The School Readiness Data Task Force continues to work hard to meet its three outcomes:

Outcome	Current Status
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;	The Kansas School Readiness Framework has been refocused and reframed. See below for a draft picture of the Framework. Final recommendations from the Task force will be available in the spring.
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;	The four components are defined and will be finalized along with the data elements by the February 2012 meeting. Documents will be available in the spring.
3. Identifying quantifiable and measurable 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.	This work continues and is quite difficult due to the complexity of the task. Reviewer suggestions are being examined by the task force at their January meeting and will be finalized in February. Documents will be available in the spring.

Kansas School Readiness Framework



The Task Force recommendations will be shared with KSDE leadership and the Early Childhood Advisory Council as noted in the Charge for the group.

All meeting documents are available at:

www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4681

Birth to Five Regional Summits

KSDE early childhood staff, along with early childhood staff from the Departments of Health and Environment and Social and Rehabilitation Services, renamed our annual regional meetings to "**Birth to Five Regional Summits**". Summits were held across the state in September and October. The topic this year was timely: Transition Planning through Team Work. Over 300 people representing local interdisciplinary teams attended the summits. We are excited to see continued growth in attendance at the Regional Summits and will continue our work together to increase coordination of our early childhood programs in ways that benefit children and families. Power Points and documents such as Requirement Grids and Self-Assessments on topics (Transition; Memorandums of Agreement; Screening, Referral and Follow-up; and Interagency Coordinating Councils) from this and previous Regional Summits, including newly added examples from local efforts, are available at: <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=4425>





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Section 3: Birth to Three

The Parents as Teachers program continues to grow and develop through Continuous Quality Improvement. Training on the newly revised PAT approach and Foundational curriculum was provided at nine locations across the state between March and October 2011. Three hundred eighty two (382) Parent Educators & Coordinators successfully completed training requirements and are hard at work implementing the revised curriculum and strengthening program requirements to ensure high quality PAT is provided in Kansas. For more information about PAT, go to: <http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3295>

In the beginning steps to incorporate early childhood into the longitudinal data system, Parents as Teachers is following the Four Year Old At Risk program in web-based data collection Spring 2012. Coordinators were provided drafted information including the instruments that will be included at the Coordinators' meeting in September. Additional updates will be provided as the project rolls out these next few months.

The PAT Grant RFP for 2012-13 will be available in March with a due date of April 27, 2012. Level funding is expected at this time. More information will be available in the next APPLE.

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



Section 4: The Preschool Years

Four Year Old At-Risk Program: Success in School

The Four Year Old At-Risk Program piloted a new web-based data collection process this year, with the fall data collection including the KELI-4R (Kansas Early Learning Inventory for Fours, Revised) and a Home Practices survey (parent survey). Teachers were asked to do a lot—randomly select 10 children from their classrooms and then complete a KELI-4R for each of them—plus ask the parents of these children to fill in a survey on parent/home practices.

This process was a new experience for everyone! This was the first time teachers had been asked to input data into the web-based application system. With the need to have student/class lists--'SCRS' records-- uploaded into the system before teachers could enter data and a host of other requirements from the IT and program parts of the application process, the Success in School application was a new frontier for many of us.

Information was included in the RFP and was also sent out to the official contacts for the Four Year Old At-Risk

programs several times, beginning in August with training on the content of the KELI-4R and continuing in October with a training around registering for the application and then entering the data. Some of this information did not reach the teachers until quite late so it caused some angst to say the least! However, almost all programs were able to complete the fall data entry by the closing date of December 16th. The next part of process—the Classroom Practices survey—will be up toward the end of January 2012. More information will be sent to teachers and program coordinators/superintendents in early January.

THANK YOU for your patience and your perseverance! KSDE appreciates all that you do—and this process has provided us with quite a few 'tweaks' for the upcoming portions of the data collection. **We have quite a few 'lessons learned' and will be asking those of you who participated to give feedback on the process and on the content of the KELI-4R in the spring.** Look for information via the Success in School List Serve* plus other list serves for specifics.



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***NOTE:** Everyone who registered is now on a list serve so that all information on the data collection will be sent directly to those who have entered the data. Hopefully, this will help the process go more smoothly. Look on the following website for all documents and training related to this application:

<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=3293#training>

Pre-K Pilot Program – and the Kansas Preschool Program

The original 12 sites of the Pre-K Pilot are still in place. As was noted in the last APPLE, funding was reduced at the end of the 2010-2011 year due to a reduction of the Tobacco funds administered by the Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund. Hopefully, the current funding level will be maintained. We will keep you updated.

The application process for 2012-2013 will be similar to previous years. The current sites will be allowed to apply for funding. There will be some modest changes in the requirements based upon the recommendations that were finalized this fall by the Kansas Preschool Program steering committees. Specifics will be out in late January/early February. Information for the 2013 year will be available later in the year. Changes in the process as well and the requirements are anticipated and will be made available to the Pre-K Program participants and the public by late summer and early fall, 2012.

As a reminder:

The major components of the Kansas Preschool Program are:

1. Community-based collaboration: a local early childhood consortium
2. High quality programs and programming: High quality staff & Comprehensive services
3. Meaningful Family involvement & Engagement
4. Braided and Blended Funding from multiple sources
5. A monitoring and accountability system that provides data to guide decisions for continuous quality improvement.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE):

The Office of Special Education (OSEP) oversees the general supervision activities by each State, and the State's progress in a State Performance Plan (SPP) which shows its overall efforts in implementing the IDEA. The SPP helps the State evaluate its efforts in implementing the requirements and purposes of the IDEA, and describes how it will improve its implementation over a period of six years. Each state must report annually to the U.S. Secretary of Education on the progress it has made that year in meeting the measurable and rigorous targets established in its six-year SPP. This is known as the Annual Performance Report (APR). KSDE will provide the APR by February 1st, 2012. After reviewing each State's APR and assessing its progress, the Secretary is required to issue an annual determination letter—essentially, a report card—which documents the State's overall progress in meeting the requirements of the IDEA. This annual report card, called a "determination," is an important tool in helping States in their ongoing efforts to improve education for children with disabilities. The SPP/APR aids States to make informed, data-driven decisions, while managing their schools or programs effectively and to obtain improved outcomes for Infants, toddlers, children, and youth. The SPP/APR has three indicators that are focused on early childhood special education.

Tiffany Smith, Part B ECSE Section 619 coordinator, has been working with the Kansas Inservice Training System (KITS) early childhood team to provide guidance to programs for indicator 7 for the SPP/APR. This includes a data drilldown guide to support Part B ECSE preschool programs in understanding their early childhood outcome data, evaluating their current early childhood outcome reporting process, and identifying patterns in their data that can lead to improved services to Kansas children and families.

Data as a topic is critical to all early childhood professionals—keep your eyes open for training and for information related to collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data.



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Section 5: Kindergarten through Third

The Kansas Early Learning Inventory (KELI) is in the process of being revised and validated for piloting with kindergarten classrooms in the fall of 2012. The revised version, the KELI-R, is aligned with the Kansas Early Learning Standards and the Common core standards and includes items that are research-based and predictive of later academic success—particularly in the area of literacy and language.

Kindergarten teachers will be asked to complete a KELI-R on 10 or fewer children. They will be also asked to work with parents to complete a parent survey similar to the Home Practices survey used in the fall 2011 Four Year Old At-Risk web-based application. Finally, there will be a Classroom Practices survey to be completed in January 2013.

The information provided through this process is extremely helpful—and is, in fact, essential!—to supporting both Early Learning Programs and Kindergarten. Knowledge of the skill level of entering kindergartners is presented to the Early Childhood community, the K-12 community, and policy makers across the state. In past data collections, it has been VERY CLEAR that Kindergarten Teachers make a difference in their children's learning! This data-based information also helps support

Section 6: SEEDS of Knowledge and Resources

- (1) The KDEC conference is typically for teachers and providers who work with children ages birth to five who have disabilities. However, the conference is an exceptional experience for all teachers and providers who work with young children. The Kansas Division of Early Childhood (KDEC) conference provides excellent professional development and an update on current research and evidence-based practices. The Conference is on Feb. 23-24 at the Airport Hilton in Wichita. Please check www.taese.org or www.kdec.org for registration information.
- (2) NAEYC website: www.naeyc.org This website is a wonderful resource for early childhood information and is particularly good for teachers and administrators who work with young children and their families.
- (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.

what administrators do to enhance the Kindergarten experiences as a KEY to success in school. As we follow kindergarten children through the primary grades and on into upper grades, the knowledge gained will help promote best practices in years to come.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT in this process! Please contact Gayle Stuber at gstuber@ksde.org with questions and comments. Teachers will be given the opportunity to attend a **KINDERGARTEN LISTENING TOUR in late March** where they can give input and ask questions about topics such as School Readiness, Common Core Standards, and Transition between Early Learning and Kindergarten. Kindergarten is the gateway to formal schooling for young children and, as such, is critical to a child's success through his or her school years.

First through Third: These grades are often not considered to be a part of the early childhood/early learning continuum. However, research does suggest that children up to the age of 8 need different instructional strategies than older children. There are many educators who believe that a pre-K through 3rd grade educational continuum can provide a strong support for learning for the young children in our schools.

- (4) A good resource for Principals: Getting it Right from the start: The Principal's Guide to Early Childhood Education (2009) by M.J. Kostelnik and M.L. Grady. This is a joint publication by NAESP and Corwin publishers at www.corwinpress.com
- (5) Resources for birth through third grade can be found at <http://earlyedforum.newamerica.net/resources>
- (6) Promising Practices Network on Children, Families and Communities: The PPN website is a unique resource that offers credible, research-based information on what works to improve the lives of children and families. www.promisingpractices.net

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

Gayle

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Editor of the APPLE