

Kansas Learning First Alliance Brings Membership Together for a Day of Professional Learning



The Kansas Learning First Alliance (KLFA) held its first meeting of the academic year on August 27, 2020 virtually due to restrictions on gatherings in Topeka. Laurie Curtis, KLFA Chair, welcomed representatives of over 25 educational organizations in support of strong public education in our state.

Dr. Randy Watson, Kansas Commissioner of Education, provided an update on Kansas education initiatives. He began with the KS Board of Education Vision, “Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.” Currently the greatest challenge is some students have not been in a face-to-face classroom since March, which is especially challenging for some of our most at-risk students. Metrics used by the state to measure “success” of our education system include a five-year graduation rate, the five-year success average (determined as a high school graduate receiving a license or certificate to be used in the workplace or enrolling in a post-secondary institution program within five years of graduation), averaged to achieve the five-year effectiveness average. This data is then partnered with a predictability range that considers three factors shown to have the most impact on success rates: cumulative poverty, student mobility and chronic absenteeism. Current data show improvement is occurring, but Dr. Watson cautioned that the current pandemic will slow down the postsecondary progress. You may access Dr. Watson’s presentation here: [Dr. Watson's Presentation](#)

Dr. Watson also gave an update regarding COVID-19 and Kansas schools. Almost 1,000 educators, health care officials, physicians, school board members and KSDE staff volunteered their time to create a living document, [Navigating Change: Kansas' Guide to Learning and School Safety Operations](#). This document provides guidance to local school districts and communities and is updated regularly. There are goals for all stages to maintain a strong learning environment while keeping students and staff safe. Included are grade banded instructional competencies focusing on continuous learning with social-emotion learning embedded. These competencies are flexible and were created to support educators throughout the state with our new normal of various options of instruction. There are three learning models; on-site, hybrid and remote. Within *Navigating Change* there is gating criteria developed by KDHE, University of Kansas Medical Center – Wichita Pediatrics, Kansas Academy of Family Physicians and Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

A legislative update was provided by Mark Desetti, KNEA and Leah Fliter, KASB. They noted that there were multiple pro-public education Republicans that were defeated in the primary, but there are many other pro-public education candidates running in these areas. Due to these losses the 2021 legislative session will be challenging. Getting out the vote is extremely important for the November election.

Request an Advanced Ballot: NOW – October 27 (earlier the better) – www.ksvotes.org

Every Kansan can request an advanced ballot! You can track your ballot also.

Deadline to Register to Vote: October 13 – www.ksvotes.org

Advanced Voting Begins: October 14 – check locations with county elections office

Voting In-Person: November 3 – 7AM – 7PM

The **US Census** is in full swing and will continue until September 30. Kansas receives federal funding, including federal education funding, based on the census so it's extremely important to promote completing the 2020 Census. ALL people residing in Kansas should complete the census. Educator resources and posters can be found [here](#).

Jeanette Nobo, Assistant Director for Teacher Licensure and Accreditation, provided an update on the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) work. She noted that during this challenging time of COVID-19 there needs to be regular communication between district leadership teams building leadership teams, educators, staff, students, community and families on expectations. KSDE has extended the deadline to complete the 2019-2020 KESA visits and these visits can be either in-person, with social distancing, or virtual. Schools need to continue to examine data and explain what the data shows for the system. KSDE has also made numerous enhancements and updates to KESA. There has also been an appeal process developed and implemented. KSDE will continue to offer monthly KESA updates via zoom for the 2020-2021 school year. Her presentation can be found [here](#).

The Kansas Learning First Alliance is a coalition of over 35 educational organizations in Kansas representing school boards, administrators, teachers, teacher educator programs, parent organizations, the Kansas State Board of Education, and the Kansas State Department Education. The mission of KLFA is "to unite the education community to improve our outstanding public education system, pre-K through higher education, to empower each Kansan to succeed in the diverse, interdependent world of the 21st century". For more information about KLFA, visit the KLFA [Website](#) and/or look for "Kansas Learning First Alliance" on Facebook. Please contact Laurie Curtis, KLFA Chair, for more information on how you can be a part of KLFA. (ljcurtis@ksu.edu)

Future KLFA meetings scheduled for the 2020-2021 academic year are:

Thursday, October 15, 2020 9:30 am, held via Zoom

Tuesday, January 21, 2021 9:30 am

Thursday, April 8, 2021, 9:30 am