

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Minutes of the Third Meeting of the 2023 Interim

August 1, 2023

Call to Order and Roll Call

The third meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Education was held on August 1, 2023, at 11:00 AM in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Representative James Tipton, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Stephen West, Co-Chair; Representative James Tipton, Co-Chair; Senators Shelley Funke Frommeyer, Jimmy Higdon, Stephen Meredith, Reginald Thomas, Lindsey Tichenor, Gex Williams, Mike Wilson, and Max Wise, Representatives Shane Baker, Jared Bauman, Tina Bojanowski, George Brown Jr., Emily Callaway, Jennifer Decker, Kevin Jackson, Scott Lewis, Candy Massaroni, Felicia Rabourn, Steve Rawlings, Josie Raymond, Killian Timoney, Timmy Truett, Russell Webber, and Lisa Willner.

Guests: Kelly Stone DeLong, Executive Director, Kentucky Center for Mathematics; Dr. Jonathan Thomas, STEM Education Chair, UK; Dr. Kanita DuCloux, Department of Mathematics Chair, WKU; Dr. Diana McGill, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, NKU; Amanda Holbrook, Math Teacher, Letcher County Public Schools; Shelley Winterberg, Director of Programs and Partnerships, New Teacher Center; Angie Keene, Retired Teacher and Coaching Advocate; Tori Anders, Lead Coach and Literacy Specialist, Southeast South-Central Educational Cooperative (SESC); Melissa Conlin, Instructional Coach and Science Consultant, SESC Co-op; Lindsey Wilson, Lead Teacher and Writing Teacher, McKee Elementary; Dr. Marty Pollio, Superintendent, Jefferson County Public Schools; Dr. Terra Greenwell, Chief Academic Officer, Jefferson County Public Schools; Cassie Trueblood, Policy Advisor and Counsel, Office of Education Licensure and Effectiveness, Education Professional Standards Board.

LRC Staff: Jo Carole Ellis, Yvette Perry, Lauren Busch, Joshua Collins, and Maurya Allen.

Approval of Minutes - July 18, 2023

Senator West made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 18, 2023, meeting. The motion was seconded by Representative Timoney and passed by voice vote.

Chair Tipton presented a citation of appreciation to Jo Carole Ellis for her service to the LRC and the Education Committee, as she would soon be leaving LRC to assume the position of Executive Director of the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA).

Senator Thomas recognized the accomplishments of Fayette County Public Schools in light of the address given by the superintendent earlier in the day.

Kentucky Center for Mathematics - Collaborative Partner for Excellence in Mathematics

Ms. Kelly Stone Delong, Executive Director, Kentucky Center for Mathematics (KCM), discussed the center which was created by the legislature in 2006. The center is state funded to do professional development; become a clearinghouse for information; and provide reliable, research-based, math teaching methods. Over the past three years, more than 2,000 teachers have participated in professional learning sessions. Additionally, there is a website with resources available to teachers and parents as well as asynchronous professional development instruction for teachers.

Dr. Kanita DuCloux, Department of Mathematics Chair, WKU, discussed how WKU is a collaborative partner with KCM and provides mentoring opportunities to classroom teachers. Dr. Jonathan Thomas, STEM Education Chair, UK, spoke to how fragmented schools can be and that KCM serves as a networking and unifying resource for teachers. He spoke to the research that comes from the universities and how KCM helps disseminate that knowledge to teachers to make real impacts in the classroom.

Ms. DeLong said KCM works with KDE to innovate in the classroom and secure grant funding to evaluate alternatives to assessment and explore micro credentialing. Professional learning is made regionally available, as are materials for classrooms, through partnerships with the KEDC. Customized district support is created in collaboration with local superintendents and administrators with a focus on Kentucky Academic Standards. She spoke to the ways that KCM supported teachers through the pandemic, by creating over 200 digitally available math intervention and teaching resources.

The KCM works with parents to help them become better math teachers at home through Family Math Night programs and partnering with KET to bring math instruction into homes across the commonwealth. Ms. Amanda Holbrook, 2nd grade teacher, spoke to the Eastern Kentucky flooding events of 2022. Following the destruction of their school, she reached out to the KCM and was provided entire classrooms of teaching materials and tools in order for school to resume.

Ms. DeLong said that the math scores on the Kentucky summative assessments were not where they should be based on many factors, including the limited effectiveness of virtual instruction during the pandemic and a change in Kentucky Academic Standards. KCM is implementing a variety of strategies to address this situation.

The KCM has an open-source Kentucky Numeracy Project available to teachers, and a continued focus on early numeracy will make a huge impact. KCM has national experts in mathematics education, and Ms. DeLong asked the members to think about the ways they might utilize the center going forward.

In response to a question from Chair Tipton, Ms. DeLong said that she can only hypothesize that as students advance through school, they do not have the math facts and fluency engrained enough to deal with the more complicated mathematics courses in middle and high school.

In response to a question from Representative Bojanowski, Ms. DeLong said there needs to be a strong emphasis on early numeracy as well as early focus on math facts, especially fractions. Dr. Thomas said addressing math identities is important, and intervention structures need to be careful to address that. Teacher pipelines need to be addressed.

Responding to a question from Representative Raymond, Ms. DeLong said there is a preschool curriculum, grounded in research, that the KCM would love to expand to more early childhood locations. Additionally, KCM is working with KET to develop programming and distributing ready-to-use resources directly into homes for parents of very young children. The roadblock right now is how to scale these resources so that more schools and early learning centers know about the information available to them from KCM.

In response to a question from Representative Truett, Ms. DeLong spoke to the value of grow-your-own programs and the impact of mentoring to bring in more teachers and support new teachers.

Representative Massaroni thanked KCM for their efforts to help low-performing schools in Nelson County. Ms. DeLong expressed her thanks to local administrators, especially the Nelson County superintendent, for their support. The interventions there have been customized to be truly meaningful and impactful.

Responding to a question from Senator Meredith, Ms. DeLong said the KCM believes in interventions, especially those that have been distributed to 93 schools throughout the commonwealth. The factors that led to a potential breakdown in the intervention system were many, and she will look into them to report back to the committee. Dr. Thomas said the 2015 inflection point may reflect the beginning of the teacher shortage crisis, but further information needs to be gathered.

In response to a question from Senator West, Ms. DeLong said that education is a difficult profession and new teachers are expected to be able to hit the ground running, which is very hard to do with mathematics. Mathematics is a difficult subject, and teachers are underprepared to go into the classroom in the first few years. There should be an expectation that teachers just coming out of teacher preparation programs can teach at the proper level, plus there are many other skills that may need to be addressed. This is one of the reasons a teacher mentoring program is so valuable.

Responding to a question from Senator Thomas, Ms. DeLong said that the Alabama Literacy Act is a seminal piece of legislation that focuses on teacher mentors, emphasizes academic standards, and places a foundation of numeracy in the forefront. She would encourage the members to do the same with any potentially similar legislation in Kentucky.

The Impact of Instructional Coaching on Teacher Effectiveness, Recruitment, and Retention

Ms. Shelley Winterberg, Director of Programs and Partnerships, New Teacher Center, said the New Teacher Center is active in 22 states, representing over 400 school districts, and supports over 25,000 teachers. In 2019, the Southeast South-Central Educational Cooperative (SESC) created a partnership with New Teacher Center to implement and study the effectiveness of a mentorship model. The work has proven the instructional effectiveness of the mentorship model and is expanding to include even more schools going forward. Sustainability and cost effectiveness is a key element of the strategic practices for training and support.

Ms. Melissa Conlin, Instructional Coach and Science Consultant, SESC, said students need effective teachers, and 90 percent of open teaching positions are created by teachers leaving the profession. As much as one-third is due to retirement, but there are a significant number of teachers who leave within the first three years due to lack of support, lack of decision making, lack of belonging, and an unwelcoming work environment. National data from New Teacher Center shows that teacher retention rates rose from 72 percent before NTC to 94 percent following their intervention. Students also achieve more learning in mathematics and ELA in classrooms where the teacher benefitted from New Teacher Center mentorship, as evidenced by test score data.

Ms. Tori Anders, Lead Coach and Literacy Specialist, spoke about the Option 9 pathway to alternative certification that, as defined in statute, highlights the value of teacher coaching and mentorship. This is critical for continued success in teacher training and retention. Ms. Lindsey Wilson, Lead Teacher and Writing Teacher, loves her job. She was mentored under the KTIP program, and now works as a mentor in the NTC program. The NTC mentorship program prepared her to be an effective mentor and is far more extensive than the KTIP program which provided little training for mentors. In the NTC program, the burden of work is not on the new

teacher, but rather on the mentor. It is more like weekly check-in and conversation between the mentor and new teacher. The new teacher gets to ask for support in areas of interest, and they are in the same building, so there is collaboration and a foundation of trust. Mentorship is valuable for experienced teachers as well, because it recognizes the work and experience of veteran teachers and improves morale within the school. Over time, new teachers who have been through the program grow into mentors themselves and creates a network of support in school buildings.

Instructional coaching costs include professional development for coaches and school leaders, time invested to practice and collaborate with peers, and stipends for coaches who give up planning periods and other time outside of the classroom to be there for their mentees. Individualized, job-embedded coaching is very effective in transforming not only the individual teacher, but the culture of the school and district.

In response to questions from Senator Funke Frommeyer, Ms. Wilson said the belief in the work is what keeps her going, but the stipend would be very attractive to any teacher doing this work. Ms. Keene said part of the grant funding for the pilot was put toward stipends for those teachers who are going above and beyond to become good mentors. It will be critically important to get funding for stipends, because while many mentors are participating because they believe in the cause, that is not sustainable. Ms. Winterberg clarified the number of teachers and mentors who are part of New Teacher Center nationally.

Representative Timoney said there is real value in coaching and mentorship, especially in the area of classroom management. There are skills necessary to be in a classroom that cannot be learned before doing, and mentorship should be part of any legislation to assist with teacher retention going forward.

Representative Decker made a comment regarding the mission and vision statement of the University of Kentucky Department of Curriculum and Instruction and her concerns that it does not specify that teachers need classroom management skills and focuses instead on being globally minded and building inclusive classrooms.

Representative Truett encouraged school administrators throughout Kentucky to consider a program like this in their schools to help address the critical teacher shortages by bolstering teacher retention. He hopes the General Assembly can work to bring a mentorship program to all schools in Kentucky.

New Jefferson County Public Schools Policies for Student Achievement

Dr. Marty Pollio, Superintendent, Jefferson County Public Schools, said he truly enjoys talking to the legislature and sharing the changes made to JCPS in the last three years. There had been little real, lasting change to the district for decades and in collaboration with teachers and staff, they began making plans to improve student attendance, experience, and outcomes. The future state plan was outlined in February 2020, but unfortunately the coronavirus pandemic hit in the weeks immediately following. The changes could not wait, however, and while change is hard, there is a lot going into effect this summer.

First, there is a new student assignment plan, to address many of the inequitable school choice bussing plans that were used to implement desegregation. Students in west Louisville were forced to leave their communities for the sake of diversity, which had a negative impact on student attendance and sense of belonging. There are now school choice zones so that parents can have a wide variety of choices. Additionally, there is financial and other support to assist the schools in high poverty districts with improved feeder patterns.

Secondly, there will no longer be only two start times with over 700 bus routes. This year there will be 10 different start times. This change was necessary in order to ensure there would be adequate numbers of bus drivers, which last year resulted in loss of instructional time as students would miss school because of lack of transportation. The change will be hard on families, but it is critically important. Also, research shows that early starts for adolescent students is unhealthy and later start times will have a positive impact on attendance and outcomes.

For the first time in 20 years, there will be new schools built in the district with over 20 new schools, especially at the elementary level. The district needed to invest in facilities including playgrounds and athletic facilities. These are symbolic of the investment that the community is making in their children. Additionally, school safety is a huge concern and presents huge challenges. The board has made the decision to use an AI system to detect weapons and move students through as quickly and efficiently as possible. In five years, these changes will be difference makers in the district.

Dr. Terra Greenwell, Chief Academic Officer, JCPS, spoke to the changes JCPS is making to curriculum to improve outcomes in literacy and numeracy. In keeping with legislative directives, the district is working to create a comprehensive K-12 literacy plan, with a core ELA curriculum, for the district. There was a focus during development on high quality, research-based, methods. The curriculum includes numeracy support and supports for multilingual learners. Professional development for teachers has been utilized over the summer to create literacy support teams in collaboration with school administrators to make sure that teachers are prepared to implement the new curriculum this fall.

Representative Bojanowski complimented Dr. Greenwell and the district for the selection of MAP fluency as a diagnostic tool to better distinguish students who can read but may not be comprehending what they read. Teachers on the ground are grateful for the work and looking forward to hitting the ground running this fall.

In response to question from Representative Willner, Dr. Pollio said there are nearly 17,000 English language learners in the district. Historically, this has been seen as a detriment to the district, and they are trying to change that perspective. Part of the difficulty comes from the weight placed on the scores of English language learners in the accountability system. Dr. Greenwell said that the curriculum shift has been in allowing students to build expertise and confidence before being assessed and addressing their multilingual abilities as a strength and asset to the district.

Responding to a question from Representative Bauman, Dr. Pollio said there have been many salary increases in recent years to address inflation and there is an intention for the district to get to a minimum of \$55,000 for starting salary as has been done in Fayette County. The ceiling of teacher pay also needs to be addressed, as does the culture of respect toward the teaching profession. Both of these will go toward addressing the teacher shortages and improving retention.

In response to a question from Senator Meredith, Dr. Pollio said the measures that will indicate success will be test scores in literacy and numeracy. Baseline is to have students leaving each level of schooling fully prepared to enter the next level of schooling. There will also be measures of other career readiness skills, but there is no clear understanding of how to assess those at this time. There will be interim goals set and further reports made to show progress toward those interim checkpoints.

Responding to a question from Representative Jackson, Dr. Pollio said he is strongly opposed to dividing the district. There has been a lot of investment in allowing students to choose their school and take pride in their school facilities. There would also be a severe inequity if the district was divided, as it would quickly result in a very wealthy district and one facing severe poverty. He asked the legislature to give the district time to implement the changes and see the positive outcomes that are sure to come.

In response to a question from Representative Baker, Dr. Pollio said the policy is for no student to ever bring a weapon to school. The district has a police force that is brought in for every incident. With limited exceptions for special education students, violations result in the student being placed in an alternative education facility for a year.

Consideration of Administrative Regulations

Cassie Trueblood, Policy Advisor and Counsel, Office of Education Licensure and Effectiveness, Education Professional Standards Board, was present to answer any questions regarding proposed amendments to administrative regulation 16 KAR 2:240 – Interim Certificate *Emergency*.

Representative Massaroni made a motion to approve the agency amendment, seconded by Representative Timoney. The motion passed by voice vote.

Adjournment

Senator Wise announced that next month, on the same day as the Interim Joint Committee on Education meeting, students will be visiting the Capitol Annex to share information with legislators about coding and K-12 computer science. He invited all members to attend the roundtable presentation.

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 1:23 p.m. The next meeting of the committee will be September 19, 2023, at 11:00 a.m.