

LOTTERY TRUST FUND TASK FORCE

Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the 2023 Interim

August 3, 2023

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 3rd meeting of the Lottery Trust Fund Task Force was held on Thursday, August 3, 2023, at 3:00 PM, in Room 171 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Matthew Deneen, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Matthew Deneen, Co-Chair; Representative Bobby McCool, Co-Chair; Senators Lindsey Tichenor and Mike Wilson; Representatives Daniel Grossberg, Steve Rawlings, and Killian Timoney.

Guests: Jennifer Cobb, Counselor, Hardin County Schools; Dan Robbins, Principal, Hardin County Schools Early College and Career Center; Amanda Murphy, Senior Guidance Counselor, Johnson Central High School; Amiee Cantrell-Webb, Curriculum Director, Johnson County High School; Dr. Larry Ferguson, Acting President, Kentucky Community and Technical College System; Dr. John Gregory, Executive Director, Kentucky Adult Education; Mark Messingschlager, Director of Financial Aid, Thomas More University, Kentucky Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators; and Mason Dyer, President, Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities.

LRC Staff: Joshua Collins, Cynthia Brown, Katy Jenkins, Haley Webb, Justin Smith, and Mariah Derringer-Lackey.

Recognition of Special Guests

Representative McCool gave special recognition to Aimee Cantrell-Webb.

Approval of the Minutes

On a motion from Senator Tichenor, second from Representative Timoney, the minutes from the July 20, 2023, meeting were approved.

School Administrators perspective on financial aid

School administrators were involved in a question-and-answer discussion about their participation in helping students with financial aid. The panel included Jennifer Cobb, Counselor, Hardin County Schools; Dan Robbins, Principal, Hardin County Schools Early College and Career Center; Amanda Murphy, Senior Guidance Counselor, Johnson Central

High School; and Amiee Cantrell-Webb, Curriculum Director, Johnson Central High School.

In response to Senator Deneen, Mr. Robbins discussed how much time he spends daily with students at the Early College and Career Center, advising them on post-secondary plans. With their Academy program, students can earn an Associate's degree before graduating high school. Ms. Cobb explained how she spends approximately an hour a day providing one on one counseling with students. Options discussed with students include going straight into a career, going to community college or four-year academic program, or going to the military.

In response to Senator Deneen, Ms. Murphy communicated she discussed all of Kentucky's scholarship programs with her students. Ms. Cantrell-Webb clarified that she mostly discusses the dual credit scholarship.

In response to Senator Deneen, Ms. Cantrell-Webb explained issues she has observed with the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) program. As an example, if a student is not considered low income and takes an Advanced Placement (AP) test, the student will not receive money for taking the test.

In response to Representative McCool, Ms. Murphy discussed how she helps her students learn about and fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). She gave examples of FAFSA workshops which can occur during the day or in the evening, usually with a Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) representative. Ms. Murphy also provided insight on why students do not complete the FAFSA.

In response to Representative Timoney, Ms. Murphy discussed possible reasons for low FAFSA completion rate in the 606 area. Some programs do not qualify for scholarships. For example, if a student wanted to attend lineman school, filling out the FAFSA will not help them because scholarships are not applicable for lineman school. Ms. Cantrell-Webb mentioned that the FAFSA requires family knowledge and a large population of students do not live with family. She described a real-life example of the problems one student is having because she is an independent minor. Ms. Cobb also commented that the FAFSA is easy to complete, if the student lives in a two-parent household in which the parents complete and pay their taxes. The FAFSA is difficult to fill out if the student does not fit in traditional boxes.

In response to Senator Deneen, Ms. Cobb explained how foster care students have the same issues with filling out the FAFSA.

Mr. Robbins gave his personal experience with the FAFSA. While not eligible for aid from the FAFSA, he filled it out because he is an educator who encourages all his

students to complete it. Mr. Robbins proposed the idea to tie students' KEES money to the completion of the FAFSA to increase the completion rate.

In response to Representative McCool, Mr. Robbins provided his thoughts on the dual credit and work ready scholarships and how it helps high school students. He discussed improving the access system for high school counselors or transition coaches. Ms. Cantrell-Webb discussed how she educates the students and the parents on the dual credit scholarship.

In response to Senator Deneen's request for final thoughts, Mr. Robbins discussed giving students and families more control over the students' KEES monies. He provided a scenario of a student who takes dual credit courses and graduates from college in three years. The student has not used all the KEES money they have earned. Ms. Cantrell-Webb discussed restrictions on scholarships and how that affects middle-income students.

Colleges and Universities Perspective on Financial Aid

Representatives from various college and university organizations were part of a question-and-answer discussion on financial aid. The panel consisted of Dr. Larry Ferguson, Acting President, Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS); Dr. John Gregory, Executive Director, Kentucky Adult Education; Mark Messingschlager, Director of Financial Aid, Thomas More University; Kentucky Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators; and Mason Dyer, President, Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities.

In response to Senator Deneen, Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Gregory discussed the missions of their respective programs.

In response to Senator Deneen, Mr. Ferguson discussed how KCTCS students utilize the work ready and dual credit scholarships. Mr. Gregory explained how adult education uses the work ready scholarship. He also explained the problematic components of KEES with working age Kentuckians.

In response to Representative McCool, Mr. Ferguson discussed ways to improve the work ready scholarship outside of more funding.

In response to Senator Deneen, Mr. Ferguson discussed different types of partnerships KCTCS needs to focus on within the changing workforce sectors. A suggestion was proposed to expand the work ready scholarship beyond the five main work force sectors. He mentioned codifying into statute that KCTCS students only pay 50 percent of tuition for dual credit courses.

In response to Senator Deneen, Mr. Ferguson discussed how learning and teaching changed during COVID-19, but workplace training still requires in person learning. Mr.

Gregory explained the idea of backward planning, and synchronizing what happens in the classroom with training. Mr. Gregory wants to see some consideration for additional subpopulations.

Mr. Ferguson clarified that Kentucky does not receive 54 million dollars a year due to low FAFSA completion. Research shows 90 percent of students who complete a FAFSA, immediately enter post-secondary education.

In response to Senator Deneen, Mr. Messingschlager discussed several things that keep students from using financial aid. Several reasons included concerns over the FAFSA simplification act recently passed, not knowing where to find answers, and the base KEES amount not being raised since the program began. Mr. Dyer also discussed his concerns about changes to FAFSA and the implementation. He commented one barrier may be students don't know what financial aid available for them.

In response to Senator Deneen, Mr. Messingschlager discussed two issues beyond the FAFSA: overall cost and the enrollment cliff.

In response to Senator Deneen, Mr. Messingschlager explained there are 2,000 students at Thomas More, and 500 are high school students using the dual credit and work ready scholarships.

Mr. Dyer provided his final thoughts on financial aid, including different programs private institutions are offering to help students.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 21, at 3:00 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 4:02 p.m.