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To: Special Committee on Education

From: Brad Neuenswander, Deputy Commissioner
KSDE Division of Learning Services

Re: Measures to Monitor Student Success

Chair Williams and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas State Board of Education (KSBE) looks at several different measures to monitor student success as derived from a state-wide listening tour in 2016, followed by recent 50-city tour in 2021. In addition, the KSBE Kansans Can Vision, informed by the community tours, aligns with Kansas legislation K.S.A. 72-3218 that requires goals established by the legislature to provide each child with the following capacities.

1. Sufficient oral and written communication skills to enable students to function in a complex and rapidly changing civilization;
2. Sufficient knowledge of economic, social, and political systems to enable the student to make informed choices;
3. Sufficient understanding of governmental processes to enable the student to understand the issues that affect his or her community, state, and nation;
4. Sufficient self-knowledge and knowledge of his or her mental and physical wellness;
5. Sufficient grounding in the arts to enable each student to appreciate his or her cultural and historical heritage;
6. Sufficient training or preparation for advanced training in either academic or vocational fields so as to enable each child to choose and pursue life work intelligently; and
7. Sufficient levels of academic or vocational skills to enable public school students to compete favorably with their counterparts in surrounding states, in academics or in the job market.

Academic Performance:

Using the Kansas Assessment Program (KAP) in English Language Arts (ELA), Math and Science, performance was on a decline from 2015 to 2018 and began to level off in 2019. It was our hopes to see improvement going into 2020, but assessments were not given due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Performance in 2021 saw a decline, much more than any other year prior, which is trending nationally due to the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had on schools, communities and students.

In addition to KAP performance, student performance on ACT saw an overall state decline, predominately due to the state funding for all students to take the ACT. In the first year of the state paying for each student to have free access to the exam, state-wide participation increased from 72% - 82%. This was the ultimate goal of the legislation and a new baseline in ACT performance will need to be set once Kansas maintains a consistent level of students taking the exam.

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

Graduation:

Kansas has seen a steady increase in overall graduation rates from 2015 – 2020, increasing from 85.7 to 88.3 percent. The largest percentage of gains was within our ethnic and poverty subgroups. 2021 graduates decreased slightly from the prior year by .2% at 88.1%. We don't know yet what effect the pandemic may have had on graduation rates, but all indication is that the pandemic had a negative effect on most measures for student success.

Postsecondary Success:

A continued focus for the KSBE is to follow students onto postsecondary institutions in order to meet the needs for Kansas workforce and economy. This measure looks at students two years out of high school to see if they are either still enrolled in a postsecondary institution, or have already completed a certificate, associates or 4-year degree. Overall increase for all-students is up from 2015-2019 by 1.2%, but the greatest gains are with students in poverty, increasing by 2.6%. State wide, 1 in 2 high school freshmen graduate high school and two years later are still seeking a postsecondary degree or certification. While this is improvement, the Kansas economy needs this to be 70 – 75%.

Use of federal ESSER funds:

To address declines in student performance and challenges facing communities, students and educators during the pandemic, the KSBE has moved several initiatives forward with the use of federal ESSER funds.

- LETRS (early literacy training) for teachers grades PreK-3 for our school districts most effected with Remote/Hybrid learning.
- Math literacy trainings being developed for Kansas Educators.
- Assessment literacy training being provided to measure learning loss and the selection of evidence based best practices for use.
- Before-school, after-school and summer school opportunities through YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs and 4-H.
- Kansans Can Competency framework to provide additional support for teachers and students with interpersonal, intrapersonal and cognitive skill development.
- Kansas Teaching and Leading Project website development for online professional learning modules for educators to address immediate and future educational and instructional needs.

Use of state at-risk funds:

The KSDE provides guidance on the use of state at-risk funds to support students with evidence based best practices. Schools and districts must spend their state at-risk funds on programs and initiatives that are listed on the [KSDE website](#). Schools and districts may not spend state at-risk funds on programs and initiatives that are not on the list pursuant to HB 2134, unless such program is a provisional at-risk educational program.

Annually each school district submits a local consolidated plan to KSDE that includes;

- Number of students meeting at-risk criteria;
- Number of those students served with state at-risk funds;
- Types of services provided to at-risk students;
- How the students were identified;
- What research did the district rely on for selecting programs and services;
- What were the results/effects of providing these services;
- List the evidence based best practices that were used; and
- Comments provided back to the district from KSDE consultants.

For more information, contact:

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