



ECKCE Focus

*A newsletter for the employees of the
East Central Kansas Cooperative in
Education, serving Eudora, Baldwin
City and Wellsville*

July/August 2020
"Back to School" Awareness
Month



Volume 5 Issue 1



Navigating Change in an Uncertain Educational World

With the Governor's announcement of an executive order to keep schools in Kansas from opening before Labor Day, and then the Kansas School Board's subsequent refusal to endorse it, a myriad of questions began flooding most of our minds. When will teachers report? How many students can we expect in September? Will we and our paraprofessionals still get paid?

There has never been an anticipated school year where more things were up in the air this late into July. And the simple answer to all of these questions is that we don't know yet. And the answers may be different depending upon which district you serve. The school Board's vote means that local control has been returned and each superintendent and their Boards will make the determination for their respective districts on what the first day of school is. But here is what you need to know.

School will begin, with options given to parents as to whether or not to send their students into school to receive face to face instruction, to have them go remotely through a more rigorous online option; some districts may offer a hybrid model that incorporates both. Masks will be required to be worn by all students and staff at all times, with few exceptions. Temperature checks



Inside

Frequently Recently Asked Questions

Questions fielded from you, by you,
for you, with answers that may benefit
you

2

Para Corner

Things our paras need to know

Inservice Information

4

Follow me to Page

3



Frequently (Recently) Asked Questions

Every month I will include questions that you have asked – others probably need the answers

Q: I heard that we have a new WEBS Principal but that she's more of an Assistant Director?

A: That is absolutely correct! Please welcome Lorelea Hubert to ECKCE! Lorelea most recently has been working as an Early Childhood Special Education teacher here in Kansas. For five years previous to that she was the Early Childhood Coordinator and Teacher at The American International School of Muscat in Muscat, Oman. While there, Lorelea was part of the administration team that created a school wide Standards Based Learning System and a Learner Profile that drove the growth and success of their school. Lorelea also established foundational documents for the Early Childhood program and created the Early Learning Outdoor Environment. She values the importance of the whole child and focusing on the success of each child. She also believes in strong, collaborative relationships with children, colleagues, parents, and the community to optimize children's growth. As Lorelea begins with us here at ECKCE, she is ready and excited to share her passion for working with children with special needs and supporting the growth mindset and success that is the driving force here with all of you. Outside of work when she is not teaching dance, Lorelea enjoys spending time with her husband, Jeremy, and two children, Jovea and Cooper. And yes, she will be more than just the WEBS administrator, but that will be among her duties. Feel free to reach out and welcome her at lhubert@eckce.com. Welcome Lorelea!

Q: What happens when we have parents choosing an option that the team feels is going to be wrong for their child? I know there will be some parents who choose to have their child go online who would struggle. Change the IEP anyway?

A: This will certainly be the biggest challenge with the options that parents will be given, but in order not to discriminate against kids with disabilities, all parents will have the same options. The best thing to do is to discuss the thinking behind the choice and offer to meet as a team, either virtually or in person, asap to determine what supports are necessary to allow the child the best opportunity to succeed in that option. Under normal circumstances, we would stand behind the original offering on the IEP and PWN the request and the district's refusal. These are not normal circumstances. We will be asking teams to act very thoughtfully regarding these requests and be certain that you have exhausted every option before either agreeing to the placement without a plan or telling the parents that they can't do something that by law they have a right to do. We are going to be giving guidance as to how to handle various scenarios and I will be sharing some of the KSDE guidance regarding these kinds of choices at the inservice on the 11th, but just know that your school psychologists will be instrumental in guiding you through the process to make certain that everyone's rights are protected and that the right thing, again, under adverse circumstances, can happen for the children we love and serve. If a particular situation arises that you feel requires more input, please don't hesitate to call me.



Continued from page 1



will be done by school staff on all students and staff daily, and hand washing and sanitizing will be an hourly activity. We know that we will more than likely experience interruptions to the face-to-face schedule depending upon the local health departments' assessments as to whether or not it is safe to continue. We know that the students will still be expected to complete 1016 hours of instruction regardless of the option chosen, and therefore that teachers and paraprofessionals alike will be needed to support the students in those environments, whether face-to-face or virtually. The school year will continue in one form or another until such time a vaccine is available and we can have more consistent expectations.

For students in special education, we know that remote learning options are not ideal and that the majority of those students on IEPs benefit much more from the direct instruction that our staff has provided in the past. However, there is no discrimination between students when the options are presented, and a good number of our students may choose to have an option that has a remote or online component. IEP teams will need to determine on a case by case basis whether this is an appropriate option for them, and the paperwork that is required will depend upon the outcome of that decision. In most cases, the IEP will stand as the FAPE offering, because that was already determined. Teams will have to decide, when parents choose to deviate from that, what accommodations or supports are necessary to help that student benefit from the chosen option. Those will be documented in a prior written notice, and more guidance will be given at our inservice in August on how to do that. In some cases, the IEP will need to be amended, however, when the team decides that the chosen option is a reasonable consideration for the student's academic success. There is no one size fits all in special education and we will have our opportunities to prove that as we move further into this experiment that will be the 20-21 school year.

To this end, we will be following the 5C process for Hybrid learning which I will be sending out early next week. This process provides a framework within which teams can develop an instructional plan for students with moderate to severe cognitive disabilities in multiple learning environments, i.e. home and school and a combination of the two. Again, we will be going over these at our inservice in August, but I will send some information out next week.

Speaking of our inservice, we recently settled on holding just a half-day inservice to begin the year, but there may be additional training built-in to respond to the individual districts' plans sometime later in the month, depending on their chosen start dates. Our 20-21 school year kick-off will still be on August 11, but it will be at the Performing Arts Center at Baldwin High School and it will be in the afternoon only, from 12-4 to accommodate some district trainings. By that time things will have changed some, as things tend to do in this not-so-brave new world, so stay tuned for changes in your email. Until that day, stay healthy and try not to stress too much about what things will look like. We'll all get through this. Together.

DOs & DON'Ts

Here are things to consider on how to approach the start of the 20-21 school year given the current pandemic

DO always be on the lookout for new ways of presenting information to kids in multiple environments. Review the materials we will provide you with and think about how they apply to each of your students.

DO plan on holding all IEP meetings as scheduled, as the IDEA regulations are not going to be relaxed. Regardless of when your district sets as their first day, if you have IEPs that are due prior to it, plan on holding them virtually.

DON'T live in fear. Yes, a virus is something that we cannot control and the precautions that we will be taking as we teach this fall will be a pain in the face mask. But if you set the example for your students with a can-do attitude, the results can be amazing.

DON'T despair that this is our "new normal". We have an educational system that works for our kids and we will return to it as soon as we can. This version of it will show what our students, and teachers, are truly made of.

ECKCE Certified Start of the Year Kick-off Scheduled for August 11 from 12-4

We are scheduled to meet for our annual kick-off at the Baldwin Performing Arts Center so that we can appropriately social distance more comfortably. This year's inservice will be from noon to 4 and we'll have a lot to cover. As a result of having less time, we will be sending out some of the required trainings for you to complete on your own; those will follow in a separate email. So have a fun, relaxing summer and we will see you August 11!

SEAC to Resume in September

Our Special Education Advisory Council, or parent advocacy group is on hiatus due to the shutdown, but will resume in the fall, possibly virtually. For more information please visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/WEB-of-Compassion-711766132538996/> Hope to see many of you next year!

ESY Services Delivered Smoothly Despite Obstacles

Overcoming the trepidation of a resurgence in the Covid-19, we held ESY services in multiple locations throughout the interlocal in June and July with great success. We had tremendous attendance, great staff working with our students and no hiccups with no cases confirmed at any of our locations. Temperature checks and increased sanitizing were the norm, and the ESY experience proved to be a great trial balloon for what things might look like in the fall. Thanks to all of the dedicated staff who volunteered for the responsibility of getting our kids reconnected to the environment they were taken out of in the Spring and thanks for showing us how this can be done effectively as we embark on this next school year's journey!

Para Corner

Please share this newsletter with your paras, just in case they did not receive it via email. If you have questions about paras as a group, don't hesitate to now contact Shelly McCart @ smccart@eckce.com.

Para InService August 12

I'm sure that most of you have a lot of fears about having jobs in the fall, and I want to assure you that you all do. While we are still scrambling to fill the last few vacancies that we do have, most teams are set and ready to start. The biggest question revolves around getting paid if schools are closed at some point in the year. While it may not look like it did in the Spring, because responsibilities during shutdowns will be much more clearly defined, the students are under the same requirements for the same amount of hours, and those hours are what comprise your work agreements. So will you have the opportunity to fulfill the hours within those agreements? The answer is yes. There may be additional steps to take if you are demonstrating symptoms or have been exposed to someone who has, but you will receive training on that at our inservice on August 12. We will be meeting from 8-3 at the performing Arts Center in Baldwin. Because of the restrictions that are in place for food distribution, we will have minimal, but some snacking options and bottled water, but there is no food allowed in the PAC, so keep that in mind. Lunch will be on your own, so we will allow plenty of time.

It is extremely important that each of you let us know if you are not planning on returning. We are counting on you unless you have previously told us that you wouldn't be coming back, so if you have been waiting to see if we would start, the time is now to let us know your intentions.

Your roles and responsibilities this year may be redefined as we enter this time of supporting students in multiple environments with no real template of how to do this. Rest assured, you will be given the tools that you need to be able to meet these new challenges as they arise. We love our paraprofessional team and hope that you have all had a relaxing summer and are ready to be back with the kids you obviously love!