

Hello again and greetings from USD 467!

First this week some congratulations. The Indian basketball teams played last week in the Sagebrush Shootout at Brewster. Saturday the Lady Indians came away with a big win, the Men's team weren't as fortunate but still came home as the Runners-up of the tournament. Also on Saturday were the finals of the Ulysses Wrestling tournament. Several of the Indian grapplers placed in the top four: in Fourth place was Aron Castillo; in Second place were Juakin Castillo and Chandler Seaton; and in First place were Jesse Gardner and Tristen Porter! And the Indians finished third as a team! Due to poor weather conditions the weekend before, this was the first competition for the wrestlers. Congratulations to all the wrestlers and basketball players!

As a reminder, USD 467 will begin our Winter Break next week Thursday and lasting through January 3<sup>rd</sup>. The students at WCJSHS will have semester tests Tuesday and Wednesday; junior high students will be in class all day on Tuesday and not be in session on Wednesday, while the high school students will finish on Wednesday at noon. WCES students will have class all day both Tuesday and Wednesday. Happy Holidays!

This week I begin with the Academic part of Kansans Can. The Kansas State Board of Education has determined necessary Outcomes for Measuring Progress: Kindergarten readiness; Individual Plan of Study focused on career interest; High school graduation rates; Postsecondary completion/attendance; and, Social/emotional growth measured locally (which I have discussed earlier).

Why Kindergarten Readiness?

Early childhood experiences, birth to kindergarten entry, that ensure health and physical well-being and the development of cognitive, communication and social-emotional skills necessary for school success and have a direct influence on future success. School readiness occurs within a broad context that includes the four components of community, educational environment, family the individual child. These four components function as interdependent systems of supports that have multi-directional influences.

An effective foundation for school readiness involves policy, funding and systems for children that support their ability to thrive and their success in learning environments through their lifespan. Readiness is assessed after entry to Kindergarten.

What is a Developmental Screening Tool? A developmental screening tool reviews developmental areas of language and literacy, cognitive and problem solving, physical well-being and motor development, and social-emotional development. It is based upon families'/teachers' observations of children's skills and abilities and aligns with Kansas standards and tools already used in Kindergarten settings.

A Kindergarten Readiness Screener is like a hinge: Swings back to highlight a child's prior experiences and interventions; Swings forward to inform most effective practice for a child in elementary years.

How Can Kindergarten Readiness data be useful?

Policymakers will consider targeted ways to increase Kindergarten readiness.

Families, teachers, administrators and leaders can use data-based decision making to plan strategically in the home, classroom, district and community.

Why are Individual Plans of Study important?

With a workforce increasingly requiring higher educational levels for jobs coupled with a relatively low percentage of students completing a postsecondary credential (certificate through advanced degree), the learning and labor landscape has come to a crossroads. To assist more students to complete a postsecondary credential and be competitive in the labor market, it's crucial to begin career exploration and planning earlier in students' educational experience. The Kansas State Board of Education has set an Individual Plan of Study (IPS) for every student beginning in the middle grades as one of their State Student Success Outcomes to help students plan for success after high school.

What is an Individual Plan of Study?

An IPS is both the actual product a student develops and a process the school implements to guide students in developing their unique IPS. Through multiple discussions with school counselors and administrators, KSDE has set the following as minimum components of a student's Individual Plan of Study: A graduated series of strength finders and career interest inventories to help students identify preference toward career clusters; Eighth- through 12th-grade course builder function with course selections based on career interests; A general postsecondary plan (workforce, military, certification program, two-year college, four-year college); and, Portable electronic portfolio.

A Successful High School Graduate

As defined by the Kansas State Board of Education, a successful high school graduate has the Academic preparation, Cognitive preparation, Technical skills, Employability skills and, Civic engagement to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

Next week I will continue with the factors for improving the graduation rate for our high school students.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. If you have specific questions or want more information about what's happening in the buildings or district, don't hesitate to contact Lori Maxwell, WCES Principal, at 375-2314, Delbert Schmidt, WCJSHS Principal, at 375-2213, or me at 375-4677. Thanks!

Keith Higgins