

KANSAS CHILDREN’S CABINET AND TRUST FUND BOARD
AUGUST MINUTES

The August 7, 2026 regular session of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund Board was held at 9:00 a.m. via virtual meeting with a quorum. Proper notice of the meeting was published in the *Kansas Register*.

Members Present:

Dr. LeEtta Felter, Chair, David Younger, Lori Blake, Tabatha Rosproy, Dr. Tara Wallace, Representative Suzanne Wikle, Senator Dinah Sykes, Representative Laura Williams, Senator Tory Marie Blew, Christi Smith (KOEK), Natalie McClane (KSDE), Matthew Billinger (KDOC/JJ), Jennifer Bretsnyder, (DCF), Justice Melissa Standridge (Supreme Court), and Amy Dean Campmire, (KDHE)

Staff Present:

Melissa Rooker, Craig Barnes, Christie Wyckoff, and Dyogga Adegbore

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Dr. LeEtta Felter, Chair, thanked everyone for joining the meeting. She remarked the experience and commitment everyone brings to the meeting makes the work better. She added that “although a lot is happening around us, in times of uncertainty our ability to remain steady and focused matters. Children flourish when adults that are entrusted with their future choose steadiness over noise, purpose over pressure, and partnership over politics.” Chair Felter looked forward to a purposeful, productive meeting.

APPROVAL OF JUNE 5, 2026 REGULAR SESSION AND RETREAT MINUTES

Chair Felter called for a motion to approve the June 5, 2026 regular session and retreat minutes.

Lori Blake requested a correction to the June regular session minutes regarding the composition of the Strategic Planning subcommittee, noting that Tory Blew is the fourth member instead of Renee Erickson.

MOTION:

Tory Blew moved to approve the June 5, 2026, regular session minutes as corrected and to approve the retreat minutes as written. Dinah Sykes seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously by a voice vote of the members.

EARLY CHILDHOOD BLOCK GRANT EVALUATION REPORT

Dr. Schrepferman, Senior Research Scientist, at Wichita State University presented the annual ECBG Evaluation Report. The current report reflects data collected through the Common Measures Initiative for the 2025–2026 program year.

The Common Measures Initiative was established in 2008 to support communities in addressing the needs of children and families. In 2011, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund (KCCTF) refined its approach to maximize return on investment by prioritizing services for those with the greatest need, funding evidence-based programs, and implementing rigorous evaluation practices.

The presentation covered data collected and analyzed by Dr. Schrepferman’s team. The report includes outcomes, screening tools, and reporting from early childhood programs across Kansas. The slide presentation is publicly available on the Children’s Cabinet website as part of the meeting materials.

Chair Felter thanked Dr. Schrepferman for her report.

COMMUNITY-BASED CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM

Craig Barnes, Assistant Deputy Director

Craig Barnes provided an overview of the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) program, a federally funded initiative that helps states develop, operate, enhance, and expand community programs focused on child abuse prevention and family support. He discussed both primary and secondary prevention strategies, noting that while CBCAP funding represents a small portion of the Children’s Cabinet portfolio, it plays a vital role within the Kansas child well-being ecosystem.

No action is required today since the board reviewed a slate of five organizations eligible for renewal grants at the April 2026 meeting. The awards total \$1,236,897.70. These allocations are contingent upon the official federal grant award notification, which is anticipated in late August or late September. The new grant period will run from October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2027.

Melissa Rooker noted that if the federal funding allocation arrives higher than projected, staff will present recommendations to the board via a special meeting to adjust the awards as needed.

BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Dr. LeEtta Felter, Board Chair

Chair Felter reported that the board subcommittee, consisting of Lori Blake, Tory Blew, Laura Williams, and herself, met in July to establish formal board governance norms. While the board operates at a high level and navigates its business successfully, the subcommittee

emphasizes the importance of putting these governance procedures in writing to prevent future operational challenges.

The subcommittee developed a foundational policies and procedures document, which has been sent to Melissa Rooker to share with the KOEC general counsel. The legal team will review the draft and insert all applicable state statutes.

A final draft of the governance document will be presented to the full board for formal adoption at the upcoming October meeting.

AGENCY UPDATES

Chair Felter asked that for the sake of time that any State agency reports longer than 3 minutes be put in writing and staff will send it to the board.

Christi Smith, Director, Kansas Office of Early Childhood (KOEC) reported:

- KOEC Workflow Review: One month after opening the KOEC, leadership is analyzing current workflows, processes, and policies to see how they interconnect. A report on how these functions will be streamlined will be provided at a future meeting.
- Head Start Regulations: Federal Head Start regulations are being streamlined to reduce reporting requirements and administrative burdens. The office is currently researching how these implementation changes will impact classrooms and the children they serve.
- Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Regulations: The office is tracking new and updated CCDF regulations for this federal funding. These changes are designed to reduce the administrative burden encountered by several states, making the administration and implementation of the Kansas FY27–FY29 state plan less burdensome. This change impacts Child Care Licensing, Home Visiting, and the Children’s Cabinet.
- Kansas Early Learning Advisory Council: Governor Laura Kelly signed Executive Order 26-05, establishing the Kansas Early Learning Advisory Council within the KOEC. This updates the structure of the previous ECAC so it is housed directly in the new office. Christi will coordinate with Chair Felter to create a position for a Children’s Cabinet board member on the Council. The Council will evaluate the full system rather than just the KEY Fund and CIF. Meeting details and dates will be shared with the board in late August or early September. Melissa added that this group supplants the Early Childhood Recommendations Panel, representing a new approach to the governance of programs overseen by the KOEC.

Senator Blew asked if the executive order will remain in place once the new governor comes to office in January. Melissa responded that executive orders will remain in place until a follow-up order is issued to rescind and replace them.

Craig Barnes, Assistant Deputy Director, Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund /Kansas Office of Early Childhood reported:

- FY2026 Closeout: Children's Cabinet staff successfully closed out state fiscal year 2026 grants and activities. Despite the challenges of closing one fiscal year while launching a new one during the transition to the KOEC, the staff rose to the occasion. The Children's Cabinet team is commended for their excellent work and for maintaining continuity for grantees with minimal to no service disruptions.
- FY2027 Launch: Staff kicked off FY2027 last week with a webinar for the Early Childhood Block Grants (ECBGs). The Cabinet team is currently working through the reporting process with grantees, and site visits are scheduled for early September.
- Federal Grants Update: The agency is entering the final quarter of the federal fiscal year for several grants, including CBCAP, Kan Link, PDG, the Capital Funds Project (CPF), and the Child Care Accelerator. As these federal grants close out, the Cabinet is offering peer mentorship opportunities to provide technical assistance and peer learning for the grantees.

Matthew Billinger, Kansas Department of Corrections, Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee Coordinator reported:

- Build a Bike Program Relaunch: The Norton Correctional Facility successfully relaunched the Build a Bike Program, an initiative where incarcerated residents repair and rebuild old bicycles to donate to children in the community.
- CDL Institute Graduation: The department held its first Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Institute graduation. In partnership with the Kansas Department of Corrections, this training initiative allows individuals participating in the Topeka and Lansing Correctional Facilities to learn to drive and earn a standard commercial driver's license.
- Data Collection Milestones: Significant strides are being made in data collection through collaboration with the Office of Judicial Administration and the Kansas Department for Children and Families. This effort involves using unique identifiers to track youth in various programs, including those under the juvenile justice authority. This process will help track statewide recidivism and mark a major step toward establishing a centralized data center for shared program use, aligning directly with the goals of this board.
- Evidence-Based Practice Account Grants: The Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee and the Kansas Department of Corrections completed their grant review process, awarding approximately \$12 million through the Evidence-Based Practice Account.

Matthew reported these funds support justice-involved youth through services such as behavioral health care, substance abuse treatment, cognitive therapy, mentoring, and goal setting. Additionally, funding covers a new program designed to track school credits for youth who transfer between school districts.

Natalie McClane, Preschool Programs Coordinator, Kansas State Department of Education reported:

- Great Ideas in Education Conference: The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) hosted its annual Great Ideas in Education Conference which was held July 27–29 in Wichita, bringing together district and leadership teams. The event focused on core school improvement fundamentals, including structured literacy, standards alignment, balanced assessment, and high-quality instruction. Keynote speaker Mitch Holthus, the "Voice of the Chiefs," shared that the winning organizational formula centers on confident humility, vertical respect, and horizontal accountability.
<https://www.ksde.gov/news-center/news-releases/2026/07/30/great-ideas-in-education-conference-highlights-priorities-for-kansas-students>
- Kansas State Interagency Coordinating Council Planning Retreat: The council held its strategic planning retreat in July. As a federally mandated entity, the council is established to advise and assist in maintaining a coordinated service delivery system for children from birth to five years old with developmental delays. During the retreat, the council collaborated with the National Technical Assistance Center to design a strategic plan for recruiting and retaining early intervention and early childhood special education teachers and service providers.
- Back-to-School Readiness: The department is actively communicating with and supporting local school districts across the state to prepare for the launch of the upcoming school year.

Jennifer Bretsnyder, Director of Prevention Services, Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) reported:

- Family Resource Center Grants: DCF announced a \$1.1 million investment to fund agencies supporting 10 Family Resource Centers across the state for FY2028.
- Working on Family First RFP. Anticipating announcing those grantees in the next month.

Justice Melissa Standridge, Supreme Court and Office Judicial Administration had no updates.

Amy Dean Campmire, Bureau Director for Family Health, KDHE experienced technical difficulty and will be submitting a written report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Melissa Rooker, Deputy Director - Kansas Children's Cabinet/Kansas Office of Early Childhood

- Melissa thanked the Children's Cabinet team and the team we have joined at the KOEC for the good work they are doing.
- Communicating with our federal officers to ensure the changes that must be made to shift federal grants from former fiscal agency, KSDE over to the new KOEC

are handled.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled *October 2, 2026, as a virtual meeting*.

All meetings are held on the first Friday of every other month as virtual meetings unless otherwise indicated. The final meeting of the year is December 4.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to address, Chair Felter adjourned the meeting at 10:27 a.m.