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GOVERNOR LAURA KELLY

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 26-05

Establishing the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council

WHEREAS, Kansas recognizes the value of high-quality early childhood care and education in preparing young children for healthy development and lifelong success;

WHEREAS, investments in comprehensive, high-quality early childhood programs strengthen families, support workforce participation, promote long-term educational and economic outcomes, and yield significant benefits for future generations and local communities;

WHEREAS, Kansas' Governor and Legislature have worked across party lines to develop policies that support children, families, early childhood providers, communities and businesses through legislation and cost-cutting measures that make it easier for our state's system to operate;

WHEREAS, this bipartisan collaboration culminated in the enactment of 2025 House Bill 2045 which streamlined early childhood licensing requirements, eliminated bureaucratic red tape, cut costs for providers, expanded access to services, and established the Kansas Office of Early Childhood ("the Office");

WHEREAS, the Kansas Office of Early Childhood was established with the purpose of creating greater transparency, safety and efficiency to Kansans with the oversight of all funds, programs and policies related to early childhood care services provided in Kansas;

WHEREAS, to effectuate this mission, the Kansas Office of Early Childhood requires significant support from external stakeholders, local community partners, and early childhood advocates to provide advice and make recommendations to the state's Director of Early Childhood;

WHEREAS, the federal Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, 42 U.S.C. § 9837b(b)(l)(A), requires the governor of each state to designate or establish a State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care ("Advisory Council") as part of a parallel federal effort to ensure coordination and collaboration within the states;

WHEREAS, Executive Order 20-02 updated the responsibilities of the Early Childhood Advisory Council and assigned them to the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund Board ("the Cabinet Board"), which is established by K.S.A. 38-1901.

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Kansas, I hereby rescind Executive Order 20-02 and establish the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council ("Council") and designate it as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 9837b(b)(l)(A). The Council will have the following duties and responsibilities:

1. The Council will meet the criteria and carry out the duties and functions prescribed by relevant federal law, to include the following:

    a. conduct a periodic statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry, including an assessment of the availability of high-quality pre-kindergarten services for low-income children in the State;

    b. identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among federally funded and State-funded child development, childcare, and early childhood education programs and services, including collaboration and coordination among State agencies responsible for administering such programs;

    c. develop recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing federal, State, and local childcare and early childhood education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations;

    d. develop recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood education and development programs and services throughout the State;

    e. develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators in the State;

    f. assess the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year public and private institutions of higher education in the State toward supporting the development of early childhood educators, including the extent to which such institutions have in place articulation agreements, professional development and career advancement plans, and practice or internships for students to spend time in a Head Start or prekindergarten program; and

    g. make recommendations for improvements in State early learning standards and undertake efforts to develop high-quality comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate.

2. The Council will hold public meetings and provide an opportunity for public comment on the activities described in paragraph 1 and will submit a statewide strategic plan addressing the activities described in paragraph 1 to the State Director of Head Start Collaboration and the Governor. This report may be integrated into the Annual Report submitted by KOEC.

3. When the Council considers formal recommendations to the Governor or state agencies it will seek to engage those agencies in the process of developing those recommendations. Where applicable it will do so by ensuring the engagement of the Council representative from that agency. If the Council develops formal recommendations to the Governor or any state executive branch agency it will ensure that those recommendations are formally transmitted to the Governor or the head of the relevant agency.

4. The Director will be responsible for ensuring that all existing committees, councils, work groups, and similar bodies under the authority of the Office are streamlined and consolidated. The Director will have authority to re-establish any existing body not created by statute into a committee of the Council, including the authority to combine bodies where appropriate.

5. The Director of the Office will serve as the Chair of the Council. The Governor may choose to appoint a co-chair from outside of state government.

    a. The Governor's appointed co-chair will serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

    b. The co-chairs who are tasked with calling and leading meetings of the Council, establishing rules for the Council's meetings and conduct of business, and working with agency staff to comply with this order.

6. The Office and its staff will provide ongoing support to the Council, identifying areas in which it would benefit from the Council's expertise and establishing responsibilities, governance, and reporting structures as it finds beneficial.

7. Collectively the Council members should represent the breadth of the Kansas early childhood community, including state agencies, community partners, providers, families, Tribal representatives, youth development, philanthropy, business leaders, and local implementation partners. Members should be selected for their perspective and expertise on the Kansas early childhood system, not solely as representatives of a single agency or program. The Council's membership will include, to the maximum extent possible, the following members appointed by the Director, subject to the approval of the Governor:

    a. A representative of the Kansas Department for Children and Families;

    b. A representative of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment;

    c. Representatives of the Kansas State Department of Education representing early childhood education and/or early childhood special education;

    d. A representative of the Kansas Department of Commerce;

    e. A member of the Cabinet Board;

f. the State Director of Head Start Collaboration;

g. One or more representatives of local school districts;

h. One or more representatives of institutions of higher education in the State;

i. One or more representatives of center-based local providers of early childhood education and development services;

j. One or more representatives of home-based local providers of early childhood education and development services;

k. One or more representatives of community-based early childhood collaborations;

l. A representative from a Head Start agency located in the State;

m. A representative of Child Care Resource and Referral agencies;

n. A representative of the Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics;

o. An individual representing chambers of commerce and/or with expertise in business or economic development;

p. A parent of a young child currently receiving early childhood services from the state of Kansas;

q. A parent of a young child not currently receiving early childhood services from the state of Kansas; and

k. Other representatives as determined by the Director, with the membership of the Council not to exceed 30 total members.

8. Members are appointed by the Director and serve for two-year terms.

a. Members whose term has concluded may continue on the Council after their term until a new member is appointed in their place.

b. Members may be appointed to additional terms at the discretion of the Director, with approval of the Governor.

c. If a member resigns from the Council, the Director may appoint a new member to complete their term. Resignations must be submitted in writing to the Governor's Office and the Director.

d. Council members may be removed from the Council if they no longer fulfill the role for which they were appointed.

9. The role of the Council is purely advisory and it will not exercise any administrative authority over public funding for early childhood services. The Council will work collaboratively with the full range of executive branch agencies and boards to fulfill its mission.

10. Members of the Council will receive no compensation or reimbursements for expenses and will serve voluntarily. Officers or employees of state agencies who are appointed to the Council as part of their duties will be authorized to participate on the Council and may claim subsistence, allowance, mileage, or associated expenses from their respective agency budgets as permitted by law.

11. The Council will be subject to the Kansas Open Records Act and the Kansas Open Meetings Act.

This document will be filed with the Secretary of State as Executive Order No. 26-05. It will become effective immediately and remain in force until rescinded.

THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE BY THE GOVERNOR _____

DATED 7.1.26

RECEIVED
JUL 01 2026
SCOTT SCHWAB
SECRETARY OF STATE

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Secretary of State

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Assistant Secretary of State

FILED
JUL 01 2026
SCOTT SCHWAB
SECRETARY OF STATE