



# MODEL LABORATORY SCHOOL

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## AT EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

### MODEL LABORATORY SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

#### MEETING MINUTES

December 3, 2019

Model Lab School Library

6:00 p.m.

**Members present:** Beth Campbell, Model Non-Faculty  
Mendi Goble, Community Member  
Robin Jones, Model Parent  
Gerald Tatum, Model Parent  
Heather Taylor, Model Teacher  
Lynn Taylor Tye, ECU Board of Regents  
Katelyn Upchurch, Model Student  
Alex White, Model Teacher  
John Williamson, Chair, Model Superintendent

**Members not present:** Rodney Davis, Community Member  
Tom Martin, ECU Administrator

**Also present:** Dr. Christopher Budano, Associate Dean K-12 Programs / Model  
Director of Teaching & Learning  
Erick Collings, Model Communications Coordinator  
Laura Dedic, Principal Model Middle & High/Director Upper School  
Dr. David McFaddin, ECU Senior Vice President, Operations &  
Strategic Initiatives  
Donna McGuire, Model Executive Assistant  
David Naylor, Principal Model Elementary/Director Lower School  
Kim Puckett, Director of Student Services

*Copies of the meeting agenda, PowerPoint slides, and Fast Facts documents are bound at the conclusion of these Minutes.*

#### I. **Call to Order**

Mr. John Williamson, ECU Dean of K-12 Programs and Superintendent of Model Laboratory School, opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance to the first meeting of the Model Laboratory School Advisory Committee.

## II. Superintendent's Review Items

Mr. Williamson introduced Dr. David McFaddin, ECU Senior Vice President, Operations & Strategic Initiatives. Dr. McFaddin thanked the members of the Advisory Committee for volunteering. He said he is a proud Model parent and spoke of the new vision for the school. He acknowledged that Model faces regulatory challenges with the Kentucky Board of Education and Kentucky Legislature.

Dr. McFaddin said there is exceptional teaching and learning taking place at Model, but the purpose in bringing people around the table is to be visionary in terms of restoring Model to a laboratory school format. He said there is an opportunity for Model to be a leader in K-12 education and to restore ECU's brand of educators preparing educators. The Advisory Committee will help identify opportunities, tackle challenges and provide relevant information to the Model and ECU leadership to prevent tunnel vision. He shared that the future of Model is important to the ECU Board of Regents as it helps to define ECU. He said there is a bridge that needs to be rebuilt.

Dr. McFaddin noted that the Advisory Committee is a different structure than the traditional K-12 SBDM Council which he believes will enable better facilitation and outcomes. The group will help set the vision that will be executed by the Superintendent, preceded by feedback from the Committee.

## III. Introductions

Mr. Williamson requested, since this was the Advisory Committee's first meeting, that each person present introduce themselves and share their role. He briefly reviewed the members, their roles and terms (terms are from 7/1 – 6/30), as follows:

- Beth Campbell, Model Non-Faculty, 2 years
- Rodney Davis, Community Member, 1 year
- Mendi Goble, Community Member, 2 years
- Robin Jones, Model Parent, 2 years
- Tom Martin, ECU Administrator, 1 year (Dean and Model graduate)
- Gerald Tatum, Model Parent, 1 year
- Heather Taylor, Model Teacher, 2 years (also a Model parent and former alumni)
- Lynn Taylor Tye, ECU Board of Regents, 2 years
- Katelyn Upchurch, Student, 1 year
- Alex White, Model Teacher, 1 year
- John Williamson, Chair (also an ECU graduate)

## IV. Committee's Purpose & Meeting Structure

Mr. Williamson explained that the Committee would review information and provide recommendations regarding strategic goals, parent and community engagement and

academic programs. He said meetings will last 90 minutes and be held once per quarter. The meetings will be structured to receive feedback, inform members regarding current issues, discuss and consider options for 2-3 topics, reach consensus on suggestion options, and consider topics for the next meeting. Between meetings information will be shared with members through the monthly newsletter and other appropriate sources.

**V. Change in Meeting Time**

The Committee discussed whether a different time would be preferred for future meetings. By consensus, the meeting time for future meetings was changed to 4:30 p.m.

**VI. Discussion Topics & Suggestion Options**

Mr. Williamson shared the two key topics for discussion at the meeting as follows:

- How can community stakeholders support Model’s long-term sustainability plan?
- How can we address enrollment changes at Model?

**A. How can community stakeholders support Model’s long-term sustainability plan?**

**1. Commissioner’s Ruling**

Mr. Williamson explained a new ruling by the Commissioner of Education in the fall which requires that Model either accept state funding and eliminate tuition or charge tuition and forfeit state education funding. Model is to inform the Commissioner of its plan by March 1, 2020.

**2. Funding Sources and Per Pupil Expenses**

Mr. Williamson reviewed the current funding structure for Model which is roughly 1/3 state funding via Madison County, 1/3 ECU mandated program funds, and 1/3 tuition and fees. About 1% in federal funding is received through the special education program for a total of \$7.3 million. He stated that it is not a “fluffy” budget and the school cannot operate on 1/3 less money.

Committee members asked how that related to Madison County. Mr. Williamson explained that Madison County counts Model students in funding and testing. If Model did not receive state or federal funding (becoming a private school) Madison County would lose approximately \$1,000,000 in funds.

Model’s per pupil expenses for 2019-20 are \$11,263, which is lower than the 2017-18 amounts for Madison County, the state average, Fort Thomas Highlands (where Mr. Williamson previously served as Superintendent) and Anchorage, which boasted the highest per pupil expenses at \$21,686. Mr. Williamson noted it is also well below private school costs. He did note that school district per pupil

expenses include capital projects so they are higher and the Madison County per pupil expenses are lower because Model students are included in the count.

### 3. Proposed Plan

Mr. Williamson said State Representative Deanna Frazier will file a bill requesting that Model be separated from Madison County Schools, with funding routed through the University. The proposal would:

- Establish Model as the State's educational lab, governed by EKV; and
- Establish the Center for Innovation in Educator Preparation and Excellence.

The Center would address the teacher shortage crisis by providing a more rapid preparation to teach, but with actual classroom experience, which does not currently exist in the non-traditional teaching preparation programs.

State funding in the proposed plan would be equivalent, based on average daily attendance (ADA), to the State's per pupil base, average of per pupil spending and allocation for capital outlay. Need-based scholarships would be awarded to achieve demographic representativeness. The total proposed budget would yield \$10.2 million, allowing for facilities maintenance and planning and lower tuition rates.

#### Discussion

Mr. Williamson noted that there are many requests before the Legislature and what is being proposed has not been asked for by legislators. He said the strategy options for Model include:

- Get proposed legislation passed.
- Double tuition.
- Appeal to a new commissioner regarding the ruling. The special education complaint which prompted the ruling was not related to tuition and funding.
- Pursue a resolution through the court system. He added that a suit has been filed as the window for filing was closing.

Ms. Tye and Mr. Tatum asked if the change in Governors would impact the issue. The consensus was that it should not. Mr. Williamson shared that the Governor-Elect had announced plans to appoint new Kentucky Board of Education members and that Commissioner Lewis had stated that he does not plan to resign. It was noted that with a platform of education it would be odd for the Governor to close a 5-star school.

Ms. Tye asked if Model could hold steady for a year until the new Governor is grounded. Mr. Williamson said Model must reply to the Commissioner by March 1, 2020.

Ms. Tye asked what Madison County Schools' view is. Mr. Williamson said Superintendent Gilliam will support a plan that holds harmless Madison County and maintains the present funding. However, Gilliam also said if necessary Madison County could absorb Model students within 5 days. Ms. Puckett noted that the previous Madison County Schools' administration had indicated it *would* be a problem to absorb Model's students. Ms. Goble asked how many students are at Model. Presently there are 707.

Ms. Tye said it will be important for stakeholders to be well educated about the issue when lobbying legislators. Mr. Tatum said all of Model and ECU need to be on the same page. Mr. Williamson said realistically ECU faculty might not support having their programs closed, but \$2.2 million provided for K-12 education. Ms. Dedic said the original mission of the university was to be a teacher college. Ms. Tye said a lab school would support higher education. Mr. Naylor noted that the \$2.2 would be earmarked funds that likely wouldn't address faculty concerns, even if it didn't go to Model. Ms. Taylor said she has had psychology, nursing, education and occupational therapy students in her classroom, so Model does support programs throughout the University.

Ms. Goble said she had recently attended her first Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB) meeting and understands that there is a huge teacher shortage. Her daughter is a teacher and she has advised her not to depend on teacher retirement. The overall education program has been damaged by state events. Additionally, she said the drug issue is significantly impacting education. Companies cannot find enough workers due to drug issues. She said ECU's teacher education program is not as strong as it once was. Ms. Tye said changes are coming that will improve the education program.

Mr. White said he has been told by ECU faculty that the funding provided to Model represents an inequality with other departments. Mr. Williamson added that Model is not a part of the College of Education and that if the Legislature directs EPSB to work with Model to establish a rapid educator preparation program, it might not be fully supported by the Kentucky Department of Education or ECU's College of Education. He said it would take time to build a reputation, but a value proposition is needed because legislators would not be interested in simply supporting a 700-student school. Ms. Goble agreed, saying it would appear the same as other small schools across the state and create a perception

of privilege. Ms. Jones said new people in the community are pleased to have Model as a choice.

Mr. Williamson said merely engaging the Model community would likely not be enough impact overall. He asked how we engage the community. Ms. Goble said a campaign representing a concerted effort with legislators through email and phone calls is needed. Ms. Tye said data is needed and the effort needs to address solutions for the educator shortage. Ms. Dedic asked why the rest of the state would care and want Model as a Commonwealth Lab School. The consensus was that addressing the teacher shortage would be of value to all schools.

Mr. Williamson said it is important for innovation and excellence to be in place every day at Model and there is still work to do to make that happen. Ms. Tye asked if there is criteria for KDE “experts” who work in schools. Mr. Williamson said KDE representatives have stated that they would work with Model, but not using Model teachers, as they weren’t deemed suitable for the work. He said there was a time when Model was highly respected and that needs to be restored. He said the climate is not great at the school. Ms. Taylor said it was likely due to much change taking place in a short time.

Ms. Tye asked if Model will be prepared to be innovative if funding is provided. Mr. White said some teachers will not change. Ms. Goble asked if the school would replace those people. Mr. Williamson said 25 people had left in 1½ years. Ms. Jones said Model is under a microscope in the community. Mr. Williamson said he understood that the level of commitment that is expected is not for everyone and he has been clear with students and adults about what is expected to achieve a world-class education at Model. He said students are learning and performing but to be a leader and educator of educators, a higher level must be attained. Ms. Tye said Model parents are interested in education. They pay tuition and expect more.

Mr. Williamson stated that Model was sometimes viewed as “privileged” students, but demographics show that it is comparable to other schools: 9% are eligible for free/reduced lunch; 13% are minority; 13% receive special education services.

Mr. Williamson said many teachers currently certified through the MAT program never go into a classroom under the mentorship of a certified teacher before they actually teach and the program is not expedited. As a result, the students are not as successful as they could be and feel overwhelmed. The proposed plan

could provide 12 weeks of support and practice in the classroom for two hours each day.

**B. How can we address enrollment challenges for next year?**

- **Mitigate potential decreases in enrollment and admission applications**
- **Achieve representativeness, improve efficiencies, expand program offerings through increased enrollment**

**1. Enrollment Data**

Mr. Williamson reviewed tuition and fees and questioned what a good value for stakeholders would be. Enrollment is up 10 students for the current school year. The upcoming school year is unknown, but there have been many new applications submitted. He said three class sections are needed per grade for Model to be most efficient so some additional increase in enrollment is needed. He reviewed enrollment trends, withdrawal information and enrollment targets. He concluded his comments by asking how we sell Model.

Discussion

Ms. Goble said the first step would be to ensure that faculty members are prepared and committed to the cause. Ms. Campbell said improving internal communications to allow student teachers to be placed at Model over other schools would help. Mr. Williamson said our faculty should be helping to teach teacher preparation classes for the College of Education. Mr. White said he had requested a Model placement for his student teaching and been sent to a school in Fayette County.

Mr. White asked if education students would pay for the program if the proposal was approved. Mr. Williamson said there would be a fee.

Ms. Goble said she had heard there was a bullying problem at Model. Mr. Williamson said many of the issues were related to people transitioning to new grades and interests and changing friend groups, which is more challenging in a small population group. Ms. Tye said innovation in transitioning to middle school would provide safety and academic security for students and parents.

Mr. Williamson said he does see more differentiating at Model than in other schools. He shared that the most recent plan is to establish the facilities so that grades are split into K-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12, essentially keeping 6<sup>th</sup> grade as part of the elementary, though the curriculum would progress at the middle school level. Ms. Tye supported the plan.

## 2. Tuition

Mr. Williamson asked the group their opinion of tuition rates. In the past different grade levels paid varying amounts, with a difference of as little as \$22. Tuition rates and fees are set and approved by the ECU Board of Regents in consideration of his recommendation. He said his goal was to keep the amounts under \$4,000 and to set rates to remain in effect for a two-year period.

### Discussion

Mr. Tatum asked why kindergarten rates were higher than other grades. Mr. Williamson explained that the state only funds half-day kindergarten so it is more expensive to operate. The consensus was that all of the rates, with the exception of kindergarten should be set the same. Mr. Tatum noted that the increase was about \$100, which is acceptable. He said doubling the fees would not be an option for Model parents.

In terms of selling Model and increasing enrollment, Mr. Tatum and Ms. Jones said it is perfect for families who prefer a smaller learning environment. The students are a tight-knit group. Mr. Williamson said priorities differ, for example, there is no football program. However, he said Model has to be bigger than just educating our students to be viable as a leader in the state. It has to be a true lab school with experimentation and innovation that can be replicated throughout the state. ECU students need to be involved in the program and Model teachers have to be viewed at a higher level.

The Committee recommended by consensus that the modest rate increases discussed were acceptable and that having the same rate for grades 1-12 made sense.

## VII. Review/Follow-Up

Mr. Tatum asked if Model/ECU would request a reinterpretation of the existing funding structure if a new Commissioner is put in place. Mr. Williamson said, yes, but that would not resolve the issue. He views the current situation as an opportunity to permanently change and establish Model's future status.

## VIII. Closing Comments/Feedback

### A. Actions

Mr. Williamson shared ways Advisory Committee members could remain involved and support Model prior to the next scheduled meeting, including:

- Encourage Hall of Fame Nominations
- Encourage student applications for 2020-21
- Attend Homecoming -



- Share Model Facts (Dispel Myths)
- Participate in Legislative Call to Action

#### **B. Potential Questions for Next Meeting**

Mr. Williamson shared options for discussion questions for the next meeting as listed, but also encouraged the members to submit other ideas.

- How can we attract and retain high quality faculty in a time of teacher shortage?
- How can Model be a statewide “Model” for teacher certification, pedagogical approaches, and effective programs?

#### **C. Legislative Focus**

Ms. Goble suggested that once a bill is filed and more information is known about the legislative process, a night be scheduled to inform people and share talking points.

#### **IX. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Model Laboratory School Advisory Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. in the Model Library.

#### **X. Adjourn**

The meeting concluded at 7:35 p.m.

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John Williamson  
Dean of K-12 Programs/ Model Laboratory School Superintendent