

To: Board of Education

From: Kevin Harrell, executive director, student support/special education
Laura Basham, assistant director, special education/early childhood

RE: Potential Lead Agency change for Tiny k Early Intervention Services

Date: January 4, 2018

Background:

The Board of Directors of Tiny- k Early Intervention Services of Douglas County approached USD 497 last year with a request for USD 497 to become the lead/fiscal agency, and ultimately, responsible for Tiny- k Early Intervention Services in Douglas County beginning August of 2018. USD 497 staff is exploring this option including the positive and negative impacts a change in lead agency for Tiny k may have on students, families, and district resources.

Report:

Tiny k, also known as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Part C program serves qualifying infants and toddlers age 0-3 years old through out Douglas County. Staff will share information regarding Tiny k Early Interventions Services as well as the “why” of this possible transition. Both challenges and strengths of changing lead agencies will be discussed as well as the supports available by KSDE and KDHE to assist in a smooth transition if the District moves forward and commits to bring Tiny k services into Lawrence Public Schools.

The Kansas Education System Accreditation (KESA) process and the Kansas Kindergarten Readiness initiative do support systems thinking and bringing parts together to create a larger system with shared positive impacts. As Tiny K does provide services and supports to future Lawrence Public School students, this merger does fit with strengthening the 5R's (Results, Relationships, Relevance, Responsive Culture, Rigor) of the KESA process. KSDE supports this change. (See attached.)

Additionally, supporting our district mission: “Lawrence USD 497 is a learning community committed to ensuring educational equity and excellence so that students of all races and backgrounds achieve at high levels and graduate prepared for success in college, careers and life in a diverse and rapidly changing world” along with Board goals focused on areas of equity, excellence, and engagement, this merger will grow our district’s reach to qualifying students in need at an earlier age and create a continuous support system for individuals as developmental needs change throughout a child’s experience in LPS.

Working collaboratively with regional supports from Kansas Inservice Training System (KITS) and Tiny k, LPS staff is in the process of working through short-term and long-term steps that will ensure a smooth transition should the lead agency change to LPS. Tiny K is funded through a state non-competitive grant process (similar to Parents as Teachers and 4 year old at risk preschool program) and historically is a self-sustaining program. With Tiny k becoming part of Lawrence Public Schools, it brings the opportunity to blend funding streams and program resources to effectively support all early learning programs offered by LPS. Opportunities to restructure our current Early Childhood Department will also be a benefit to effectively support all early learning programs and ultimately strengthen early learning services in our community.

On January 22, 2018, administrative staff will present to the board for approval, the request to change the Local Lead Agency for Tiny k Early Intervention Services to USD 497, beginning with the start of the 2018-2019 school year.