



Commissioner's Report
Commissioner of Education Jason E. Glass, Ed.D.

Dear Kentucky Board of Education Members:

Spring is a time for renewal and refresh. On the heels of a challenging legislative session, there is no better time for us to focus on the future of education in Kentucky.

Yesterday, was the first “stop” on our virtual listening tour. I am excited to hear directly from education stakeholders across the Commonwealth as they share their personal stories about their own educational experiences. The feedback received during the tour will help to inform the department’s strategic plan and priorities.

We continue our work with the Center for Innovation in Education to explore new approaches to education and assessment that engage students in deeper thinking and deeper learning. We are currently recruiting a representative sample of districts across the state who will assist us in the design and pilot of the next generation of student assessments. Throughout this process, the board’s commitment to equity remains our guidepost as we strive to ensure all students in Kentucky have an equal opportunity to learn, to thrive and to be successful.

One of my goals as Commissioner is to provide transparent reporting of indicators and long-range goals benchmarked against other states. We shared in February our plan to develop a strategic dashboard for this purpose. Proposed metrics for this dashboard includes both academic and non-academic indicators as well as aspirational metrics such as student engagement and the attainment of universal skills that we plan to include in future iterations.

Finally, I want to reiterate our communication plan for all KBE correspondence. As outlined in the KBE Policy Manual, to facilitate accurate and consistent responses, please forward any emails you receive to Meredith so she can coordinate a response. Board members may wish to respond to the sender, acknowledging receipt of the correspondence and explaining that KDE staff will follow up on the issues raised. Meredith will ensure the staff response is disseminated to all board members when it is sent to the correspondent.

Thank you for your dedication to Kentucky’s public schools. The future is bright.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jason E. Glass". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Jason E. Glass, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education



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KDE Welcomes New Staff

New staff who joined KDE since the board's February regular meeting are listed below by office:

Office of Legal Services:

3/16/2021: Kasey Chaflin

Office of Finance and Operations:

3/16/2021: Cecilia Van Dyke

Office of Continuous Improvement and Support:

3/1/2021: Jaime Nebbitt

Office of Special Education and Early Learning:

3/16/2021: Brittany Sams

KSB/KSD Update

Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) and Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) reopened for in-person instruction on March 1, 2021. Families were provided the option of students continuing virtual instruction or returning to the school for in-person instruction. Seventy-one percent of students enrolled at KSB returned to the campus for in-person instruction, while 29 percent of students continued with virtual instruction. Seventy two percent of KSD students returned to the campus, while other students chose to continue with virtual instruction. Both KSB and KSD are utilizing a synchronous approach to teach all students, both in-person and virtual modes. The KDE hired a Digital Learning Coach (DLC) utilizing ESSER funds provided to KSB and KSD to provide support to both schools.

Kentucky School for the Blind

On February 25, 2021, the Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) outreach consultants, in partnership with the KSB Charitable Foundation, hosted a virtual Dr. Seuss night for families throughout the Commonwealth. Activities included story reading, games, crafts and snack making. Each student that registered for the event was provided a book in print and braille as well as a \$25 gift card provided by a grant from the Charitable Foundation.

Spectrum News interviewed Becky Spies, high school English teacher; Gracie Smith, sophomore student; and Peggy Sinclair-Morris, principal, on March 8, 2021 regarding the return to in-person instruction [Kentucky School for the Blind Students are Happy to be Back on Campus](#).

KSB staff welcomed Dr. Glass when he visited campus on March 4, 2021. He spoke with teachers and staff regarding teaching in both the in-person and virtual modes.



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The KSB will honor seven graduating seniors this year. The graduation ceremony is scheduled for May 26, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. If weather permits, the ceremony will be held outdoors on the KSB campus. Students may invite up to four family members to attend the ceremony. If weather does not permit an outdoor ceremony, it will be moved into the auditorium. Everyone who attends must follow the COVID-19 mitigation strategies included in the [KSB Reopening Plan](#).



A young boy is using his white cane while walking in the hall with his teacher.



A high school boy is giving a thumbs up and smiling while sitting at a table in the cafeteria.



An elementary student is getting out of her car, wearing a mask, and having her temperature checked while her mom watches, on the first day back to in-person instruction.



Three high school students sit at tables working on laptops and a Perkins Braille Writer. The teacher is leading a discussion.

Kentucky School for the Deaf

Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) staff worked diligently to prepare for the reopening of in-person instruction. Staff utilized the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) [K-12 Schools COVID-19 Mitigation Toolkit](#) to ensure the KSD campus was ready for reopening. All departments are completing plus/deltas daily and collaborating with the principal to continuously refine the implementation of safety processes as outlined in the [KSD Reopening Plan](#) and aligned with the Kentucky Department of Education’s (KDE) [Guidance on Safety Expectations and Best Practices for Kentucky Schools \(K-12\)](#).

Principal Robey recently completed a two-year mentoring program through the [Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf \(CEASD\)](#). Robey attended a week-long leadership retreat in Connecticut during the fall of 2019. The retreat was hosted by the American School for the Deaf. Mentors and mentees, across the nation attended the event. Each mentee was matched with a mentor and expected to develop a plan of action and implement prioritized projects specific to the needs of their school. Robey was matched with the superintendent of the Texas School for the Deaf. Recently, all mentors and mentees gathered virtually to present projects as a part of the graduating process.

KSD will honor graduating seniors through an outdoor ceremony on May 26, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. Everyone who attends must follow the mitigation strategies included in the [KSD Reopening Plan](#). KSD will have the same limit as last year, keeping it to two cars per student at graduation.

On March 6, 2021, National Deaf Youth Day, the [Kentucky Department of Education](#) and [Kentucky School for the Deaf](#) recognized all the Deaf youth in the Commonwealth.



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[National Deaf Youth Day video from KSD!](#) (Facebook)

Updates on Kentucky Tech District of Area Technology Centers (ATCs)

The 51 Area Technology Centers (ATCs) have completed staff vaccinations. As of March 29, 2021, only two ATCs were located in a home county classified as RED, according to the Department for Public Health's metrics. Twenty-three schools were located in orange counties, twenty-five in yellow and one in green. At this point, 37 ATCs are still operating on a hybrid schedule, with 14 operating solely face-to-face. ATCs continue working on remediation plans for students, which provide targeted interventions, including one-on-one skill remediation. Presently, ATC students are completing industry certifications and end-of-program assessments to better prepare them for postsecondary education and career opportunities.

ATC and locally-operated CTE leadership training opportunities are underway. Currently, seven one-hour leadership sessions are being offered by Baruti Kafele, Mark Perna, and Todd Whitaker. These sessions focus on leadership efficacy, including leadership during changing instructional dynamics. Also, Dr. Roger Cleveland is providing training for diversity, equity, and inclusion, including topics on implicit bias and racial micro-aggressions; culturally responsive teaching; and cultural humility and cultural competence.

As a reminder, February was national Career and Technical Education (CTE) month, designed to highlight CTE achievements across the country. Throughout the month, the KDE Office of Career and Technical Education shared student accomplishments to celebrate Kentucky CTE students. Many ATCs took the opportunity to share staff, program, and student information by marketing CTE to the community and stakeholders. As an example, the following newsletter was sent to Greenup Co. ATC stakeholders, which highlights the benefits of a career and technical education.

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FEBRUARY IS
CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH

Check out the exciting things happening at the Greenup County Area Technology Center!

Consider joining:

- SkillsUSA (Electricity/Welding/Automotive)
- Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA)
- Future Farmers of America (FFA)

Did you know?

- 53 percent of all jobs in the U.S. today are "middle-skill" jobs that require more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree, but only 43 percent of workers are trained to the middle-skill level. – National Skills Coalition
- 46 percent of employers cite difficulty finding skilled talent, and positions in the skilled trades are the hardest to fill. – 2018 Talent Shortage Survey, Manpower Group
- More than 80 percent of manufacturers report that talent shortages impact their ability to meet customer demand. – "The Skills Gap in US Manufacturing," Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institute

Anthony Thompson
 Principal, GCATC
 @ATCGreenup

Additionally, the Kentucky Tech system celebrates the Webster County ATC, which recently purchased new and advanced CTE equipment through a \$250,000 grant from the Delta Regional Authority (DRA).

Thanks to a grant received through the DRA, the ATC has been able to purchase some new equipment for our CAD, Machine Tool, and AIT/Welding programs.

Medicaid Nurse Aide (MNA) students at Webster County ATC are also seen below demonstrating virtual MNA clinicals. The program requires students to complete 16 clinical hours in a nursing facility. Due to continued safety concerns presented by the pandemic, the



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instructor and students were able to effectively complete the required hours in the classroom setting, while adhering to COVID-19 guidelines.



MNA Students

Students were able to put their skills to the test during an in-class Nursing Home Simulation