



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION Superintendents Advisory Council SUMMARY

MAY 5, 2026

ATTENDANCE: Amanda Abell, Wayne Ackerman, Carrie Ballinger, Larry Begley, Robin Cochran, Thom Cochran, Ralph Hamilton, Damian Johnson, Bob Lawson, Barry Lee, Matthew Madding, Chad Molley, Todd Neace, Brian Robinson, John Siler, Wayne Sizemore,

MEMBERS ABSENT: Matt Baker, Wes Bradley, Sheri Satterly, Mike Rowe, Leonard Whalen, Sarah Wasson, Brian Yearwood

Agenda Item: Kentucky Department of Education Strategic Dashboard

Presenter: Susan Strange, Strategic Plan Program Manager, Division of Strategic Planning and Research, Office of the Commissioner

Summary of Discussion: Susan Strange provided an overview of the 2024–2029 Strategic Dashboard available on the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) website, highlighting how it outlines KDE’s goals through three guiding ideas—Vibrant Learning Experiences, Encouraging Innovation and a Bold New Future. She invited superintendents to consider how they might use the dashboard in their own work and what additional features would make it even more valuable. Chairperson Carrie Ballinger noted that districts already use much of the same data and could benefit from the dashboard as a comparison tool. Superintendents agreed that adding a district spotlight section could increase engagement and draw more visitors to the dashboard.

Agenda Item: Analysis of Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) in Kentucky

Presenter: Terry Scott, Executive Director, Kentucky Reading Research Center

Summary of Discussion: KDE selected the University of Louisville’s College of Education and Human Development to establish the Kentucky Reading Research Center, which will support educators in using reliable, research-based reading practices. Their goals are to make information about the science of reading available to everyone in Kentucky including teachers, administrators, parents and policymakers, to conduct research on literacy and to continue to grow the [research clearinghouse](#) with evidence-based insights on literacy education.

The Kentucky Reading Research Center [recently completed an analysis of the Kentucky Reading Academies](#), which shows how the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training is making a difference for student literacy success. The Kentucky Reading Academies aim to transform literacy instruction across the state by offering an opt-in, no-cost

professional learning opportunity to both K-5 educators and administrators. “The most significant finding that came out of that analysis was that the more schools have teachers that are trained in LETRS, the more growth we see into the proficient level with students in literacy,” Scott said. Registration is currently open for [Cohort 5 of LETRS](#).

Agenda Item: Assessment and Accountability Update

Presenter: Jennifer Stafford, Associate Commissioner; Shara Savage, Division Director, Division of Assessment and Accountability Support, Office of Assessment and Accountability

Summary of Discussion: The Kentucky General Assembly passed Senate Bill 197, requiring KDE to launch a new procurement for the state-provided college entrance exam to be implemented in the 2026–2027 school year. Jennifer Stafford, associate commissioner in KDE’s Office of Assessment and Accountability, said the Finance and Administration Cabinet has expressed a commitment to helping KDE complete the bid process sooner than it’s normally done. Stafford said KDE is hoping to have a decision on the college entrance exam by October. Division Director Shara Savage provided an overview of House Bill (HB) 257, which redesigns Kentucky’s assessment and accountability systems by adding locally developed indicators of quality, reducing state testing time, using individual student growth rather than cohort comparisons, and elevating student attendance in the accountability model.

Agenda Item: Legislative Update

Presenter: Brian Perry, Director of Government Relations, Government Relations, Office of the Commissioner

Summary of Discussion: Brian Perry gave a brief overview of key legislation from the 2026 General Assembly. HB 257 adds targeted quality measures to the Kentucky School Report Card, and HB 727 replaces KEPS with a statewide job portal funded through certification fees. He noted that HB 500 increases SEEK funding for FY27–FY28, though transportation remains funded at only 81%. Academic Academies students will no longer count toward districts’ average daily attendance for SEEK, and ATCs are now included in supplemental funding. Perry also reported reduced in state and out-of-state travel in the fourth quarter.

Next Meeting:

Aug. 26, 2026