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Superintendents Webcast

November 18, 2025



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Agenda

Welcome and Updates

Dr. Robbie Fletcher, Commissioner of Education

Kentucky Department of Education Update

Jennifer Ginn, KDE Director of Communications

Kentucky's Model Framework

Dr. Robbie Fletcher, Commissioner of Education

Associate Commissioner Jennifer Stafford, Office of Assessment and Accountability

Kentucky Board of Education and Education Professional Standards Board 2026 Legislative Priorities

Brian Perry, Ph.D., KDE's Director of Government Relations

Counselor and School-Based Mental Health Providers' Use of Time Superintendent's Report

Deputy Commissioner Thomas Tucker, Ph.D., KDE's Office of Teaching and Learning

Michelle Sircy, Ed.D., Program Coordinator for Comprehensive School Counseling, KDE's Office of Teaching and Learning

Questions and Answers

Important Dates

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Welcome and Updates

Dr. Robbie Fletcher
Commissioner of Education



Kentucky Reading Academies Shows Early Progress Toward Improving Early Literacy

- According to a new report from a third-party evaluator, the Kentucky Reading Academies have rapidly advanced literacy outcomes since the program's inception 3 years ago, with increases in educators' evidence-based literacy knowledge, beliefs and instructional practices, and in their students' reading scores.
- Implemented in 2022 after the Kentucky General Assembly's passage of Senate Bill 9, also known as the Read to Succeed Act, 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.
- Since fall 2022, more than 6,000 Kentucky educators participated in LETRS Professional Learning.



KDE Launches Second Year of Kaleidoscope Community of Practice for Special Education Teachers

- KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning kicked off the second year of the Kaleidoscope Community of Practice, a professional learning initiative designed to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Approximately 50 special education teachers representing 21 school districts gathered for the kickoff session of the yearlong series.
- The Kaleidoscope Community of Practice is designed to enrich specially designed instruction in mathematics, literacy and behavior. The initiative emphasizes teacher learning and ongoing reflection as key drivers of instructional improvement.
- To learn more information, email [Rebecca Turner](#) or visit KDE's [Kaleidoscope Community of Practice webpage](#).



Barren County Teacher Created Prosthetic Hand for Student Using School's 3D Printing Lab

- Red Cross Elementary School (Barren County) Teacher Scott Johnson noticed one of his kindergarten students was wearing a rubber hand. His student, Jackson Farmer, was born without a right hand and would sometimes wear the rubber hand to give the appearance of having a hand.
- Johnson is a STEAM teacher at Red Cross. He teaches the STEAM lab class to every student in the school, which includes learning how to 3D print.
- Last year, Johnson started wondering and researching whether he could create a working prosthetic hand out of 3D-printed materials for Jackson.
- He started communicating with other professionals through the E-Nable community, an online global community of volunteers who are using 3D printers to make free and low-cost prosthetic limb devices for children and adults in need.
- When Johnson felt confident enough, he printed a 3D prototype, then showed Jackson and his mom. They gave permission for him to create a full hand.
- It took 25 hours to print the finalized parts of the hand in Red Cross Elementary's STEAM lab and about four hours to put it together. The prosthetic doesn't require batteries or power; rather, it's a simple machine powered through the bending of Jackson's wrist.



Kentucky Schools Recognized Among America's Healthiest



Garrett Tyson, a physical education teacher at Deep Springs Elementary (Fayette County), high fives a student during a class activity.

- Thirty-one Kentucky school districts have earned recognition on the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's list of America's Healthiest Schools.
- The award evaluates schools across nine key areas: school health services, wellness policy implementation, nutrition and food access, physical activity, health education, social-emotional learning, tobacco-free environments, staff well-being, and family and community engagement. Schools that meet all nine areas receive the All-Star distinction.
- To qualify, schools must submit evidence of wellness activities enforced throughout the school year.
- The full list of schools and districts can be found on the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation's America's Healthiest Schools website](#).

Education Professional Standards Board Welcomes Two New Members

- Gov. Andy Beshear has appointed two new members to the Education Professional Standards Board: Nicholas Pace of Lexington and Elizabeth Dinkins of Louisville.
- Pace is dean of the University of Kentucky's College of Education and will represent postsecondary institutions on the board, with a term expiring June 30, 2026.
- Dinkins is dean of Bellarmine University's School of Education and will represent independent colleges and universities, with a term expiring Sept. 10, 2028.

Announcing New EPSB Members



Elizabeth Dinkins



Nicholas Pace



Three Kentucky School Districts Receive Awards for Purchasing Kentucky Food Products

- During National Farm to School Month in October, three Kentucky school districts were awarded for their dedication to purchasing and using locally grown produce and proteins.
- The awards came through the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's new Kentucky Farm to School Stars Recognition Program, which was created to recognize school districts that demonstrate a commitment to increase purchases directly from Kentucky farmers.
- The school districts recognized in the program's first year and the amount awarded are:
 - Jackson Independent Schools in Breathitt County – \$10,000
 - Mercer County Public Schools – \$8,000
 - Barren County Public Schools – \$6,000
- Winning districts had the highest percentage of locally produced proteins and produce for an entire school year in their meals. Eligible districts also had to participate in the National School Lunch Program.
- The monetary awards each district received must be spent on local food purchases for the 2025-2026 school year.

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KDE Updates

Jennifer Ginn

KDE Director of Communications



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Competitive Grants from KDE

FY26 CTE Innovation and Support Grant (CTEI)

- **Grant applications due:** Nov. 20 at 4 p.m. ET
- **Award Amount:** \$100,000
- **Matching Funds Requirement:** No

The purpose of the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Innovation and Support grant is to support innovation in new or emerging career fields. The school district must submit a separate application for each CTE school or CTE program in a comprehensive high school. Area technology centers can submit an independent application.

FY26 Supporting Postsecondary Achievement and Resources for Kentucky Students with Disabilities (SPARK) Grant

- **Grant applications due:** Nov. 25 at 4 p.m. ET
- **Award Amount:** \$75,000 per awarded district
- **Matching Funds Requirement:** No

KDE is issuing a request for application for the KY Transition 360 SPARK: Supporting Postsecondary Achievement and Resources for Kentucky students with disabilities (SPARK). This initiative strengthens education by enhancing interagency collaboration, building strong family partnerships, supporting students and promoting the use of high-quality transition assessments to improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities

Competitive Grants from KDE (2)

FY26 Read to Achieve (RTA) Grant

- **Grant applications due:** Dec. 2 at 4 p.m. ET
- **Award Amount:** \$70,000 per year, up to four years
- **Matching Funds Requirement:** Yes

The purpose of the Read to Achieve (RTA) grant is to help teachers and library media specialists improve the reading skills of struggling readers in kindergarten through grade 3 who read at low levels and need accelerated learning. Important Update: For this grant cycle, salary is once again an allowable expense.

FY26 STAR Academy Grant

- **Grant applications due:** Dec. 11 at 4 p.m. ET
- **Award Amount:** \$1,000,000 for three-year implementation
- **Matching Funds Requirement:** No

Star Academy is designed to serve at-risk students who would benefit from a project-based, hands-on learning environment. The curriculum is for students in grades 7 and 8. Awarded districts will designate four teachers and five classrooms for the exclusive use of Star Academy students. The award amount is for Star Academy implementation and does not include faculty/staff salary expenses.

Competitive Grants from KDE (3)

FY26 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant

Grant Applications Due: Jan. 20, 2026, at 4 p.m. ET

Award Amount: \$150,000 per year for up to 3 years.

Matching Funds Requirement: No

The 21st CCLC program offers academic, artistic and cultural enrichment opportunities for students attending high-poverty and low-performing schools, helping them meet challenging state academic standards through effective out-of-school programs that improve student achievement and social development.

Applicants are responsible for monitoring KDE's Competitive Grants webpage for amendments and updates to the posted RFAs and supporting materials.

More information about grants can be found on the [KDE Competitive Grants webpage](#) or by emailing [Jennifer Bryant](#).

TEDS Information Deadline

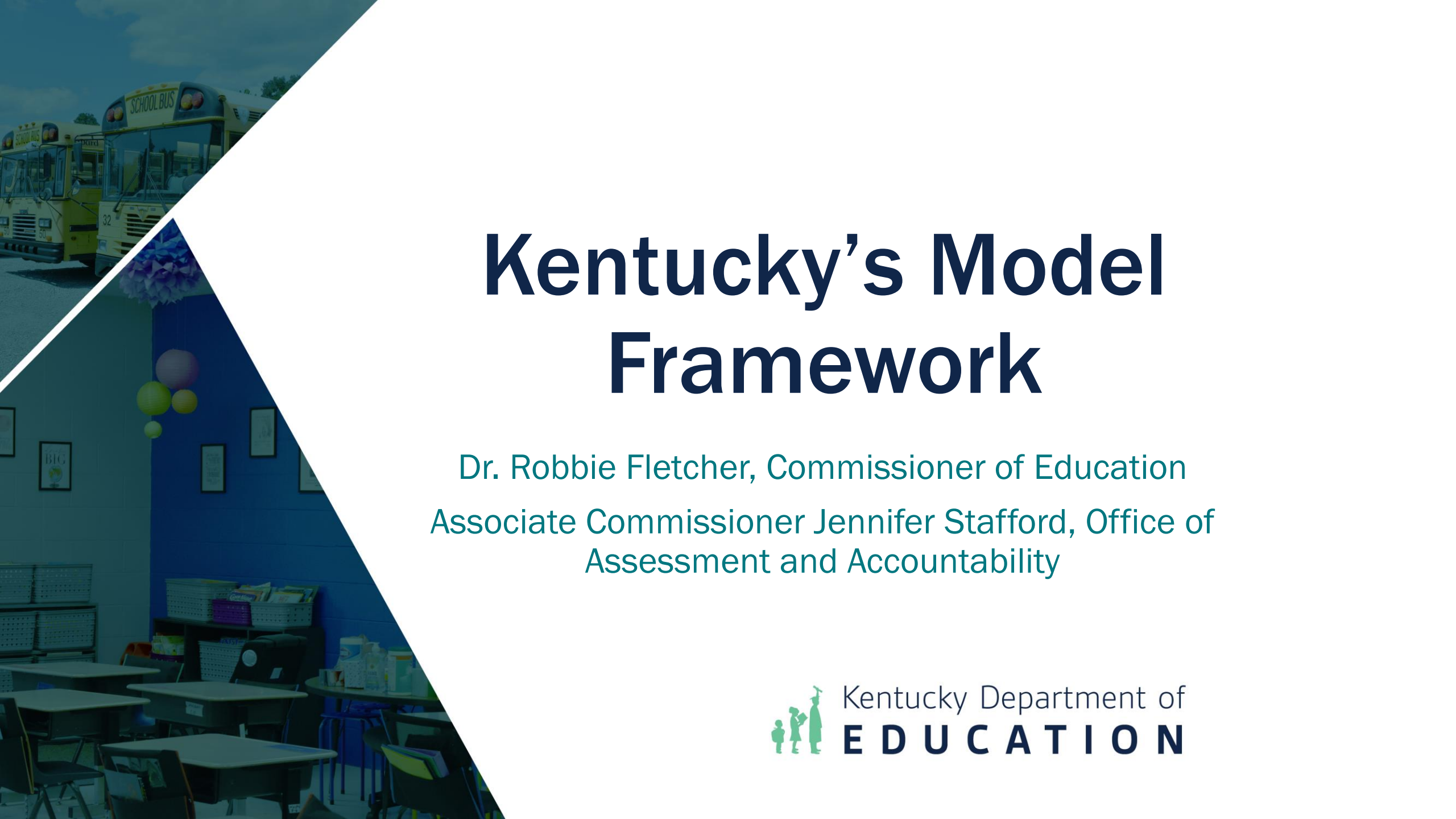
- Just a reminder: Fall 2025 Technical Education Data System (TEDS) information is due in TEDS by Dec. 1.
- Data provided through this process includes your district's weighted full-time enrollment (WFTE) which will be included in the Supplemental CTE Funding calculation for FY27.
- Reports will be pulled by KDE's Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) following the Dec. 1 deadline and sent to your district CTE point of contact for verification and return to OCTE. Detailed instructions will be sent with the report.
- This procedure differs from previous years and should ease the district burden of submission. Please ensure the CTE Point of Contact is correct before December.
- If you have any questions, please contact kdedctedataservices@education.ky.gov.

School Bus Purchasing Reminders

- The 2026 School Bus Pricing Guide for Kentucky is available on [KDE's School Buses webpage](#).
- The online bus ordering portal opened on Nov. 14. Prior to submitting an order, districts must secure board approval and obtain the necessary signatures. Orders may now be entered and supporting documentation uploaded.
- For districts intending to utilize KISTA financing, please notify RSA representative [Lincoln Theinert](#) at your earliest convenience.
- The deadline to initiate KISTA orders is Jan. 15, 2026. Additionally, please inform your designated bus dealer if KISTA will be used, as the processing timeline requires early coordination.
- If you have any questions, please contact [Carl Meehan](#).

Apply Now for the National School Bus Safety Week Poster Contest

- Thousands of school districts in more than 40 states participate in local and state-level competitions to select artwork that depicts school bus safety-related themes and encourages and promotes school bus safety.
- The winning posters are used to promote safer school transportation and will be highlighted during the next National School Bus Safety Week, which falls on the third full week of October each year.
- The 2025-2026 National School Bus Safety Week Poster Contest theme is “Safe Rides – Everyday Heroes” and the theme must be identified on the poster exactly as it is written.
- Visit the [2025-2026 National School Bus Safety Poster rules webpage](#) for more information. Posters can be drawn anytime between now and April 3. Posters must be received at KDE on or before April 18.



Kentucky's Model Framework

Dr. Robbie Fletcher, Commissioner of Education
Associate Commissioner Jennifer Stafford, Office of
Assessment and Accountability



Kentucky Department of
E D U C A T I O N



The Future of Assessment and Accountability in Kentucky

In Service to the Kentucky United We Learn Council's Moonshot:

To build a prosperous Kentucky, we will launch an accountability system that is meaningful and useful for all our learners.

In the past, systems prioritized...

Standardization

- Standardized tests for all subjects
- Instruction developed around testing offers little variance

Comparison

- Limited collaboration across districts or within communities
- Schools rated using the color system

State Control

- The state decides all measures used for accountability
- The same state accountability system for all schools

Compliance

- Accountability system designed to “meet requirements” in state and federal law
- Local improvement efforts align to requirements

Going forward, systems will support more...

Vibrant Learning

- Students have agency to demonstrate knowledge and skills in a variety of ways
- State tests meet students where they are



Collaboration

- Districts collaborate in partnership with communities
- The state supports networks of peer districts
- No more color ratings



Local Innovation

- Districts engage with communities to design custom accountability systems reflecting local values
- Some state requirements allow local choice



Feedback and Support

- All schools receive peer and expert external feedback to support improvement
- Local flexibility and data lead to customized support



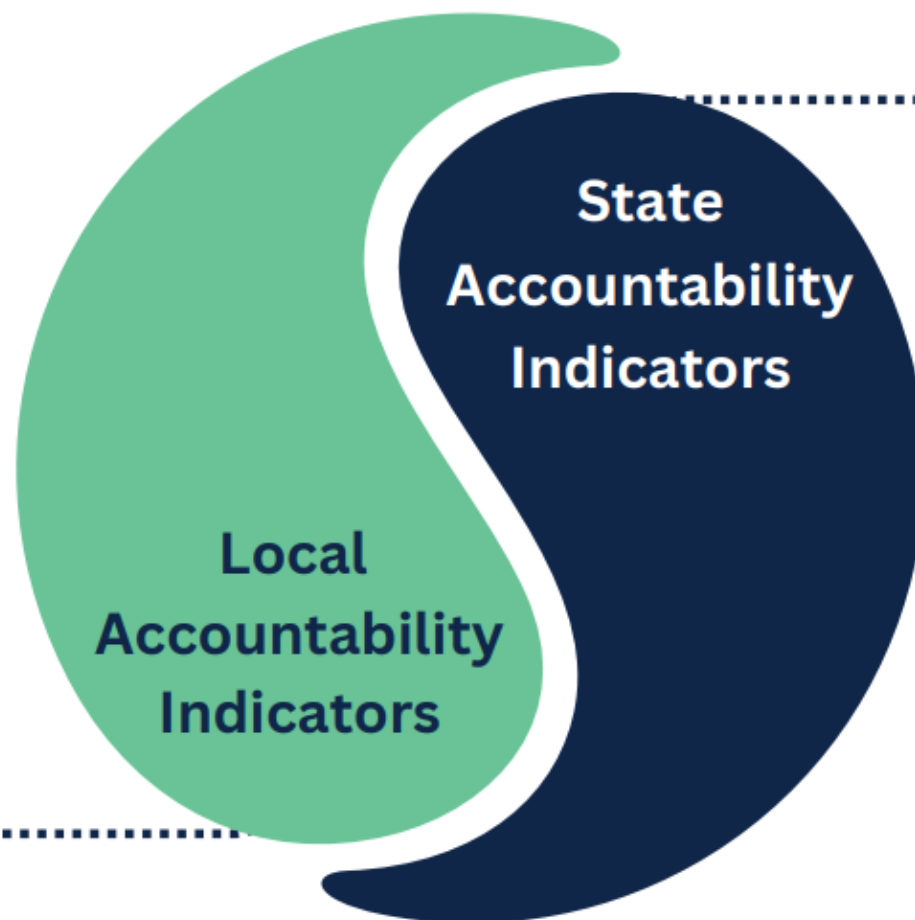
The balanced accountability system will include components that reflect local priorities, areas of choice and components that are the same for all schools.

Flexibility in Administration and Inclusion

- Locally-Determined Indicators
- Interim Assessments
 - Reading
 - Math
- Science Off-Grade Testing

Required with Options

- Vibrant Learning Experiences
- Writing
- Social Studies



Meets Federal Requirements

- Summative Performance
 - Reading
 - Math
- Individual Student Growth
- Transition Readiness & Graduation Rate
- English Language Progress
- Climate and Safety Survey
- *Science Assessment -*

Students must be tested in science using a common statewide measure. However, districts may choose to include it in local accountability and add additional competency based measures.

Together, these components support a local Portrait of a Learner, drive continuous improvement, and foster personalized, student-centered experiences.

Districts will design and implement local accountability systems - with state and peer support - on a timeline that sets everyone up for success.

1

Pilot Phase

Continue with a representative pilot group of districts to design and implement local accountability systems. This phase focuses on testing key components, gathering feedback, identifying challenges, and refining processes.

2

Expansion Phase

Expand local accountability systems to more districts, applying lessons from the pilot. State invests in high-quality professional learning systems and strong communities of practice for local system design and stakeholder engagement.

3

Sustainability Phase

Local accountability systems are scaled across the state with active networks for shared learning, system review, and continuous improvement.

KENTUCKY UNITED WE LEARN COUNCIL'S: JOURNEY TO THE MOON

"To build a prosperous Kentucky, we will launch an accountability system that is meaningful and useful to all our learners."

Goal:
Approved Reimagined
Accountability System

SUMMER 2026



*KDE - Kentucky Department of Education
**KBE - Kentucky Board of Education

Kentucky
UNITED WE LEARN
COUNCIL

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Kentucky Board of Education and Education Professional Standards Board 2026 Legislative Priorities

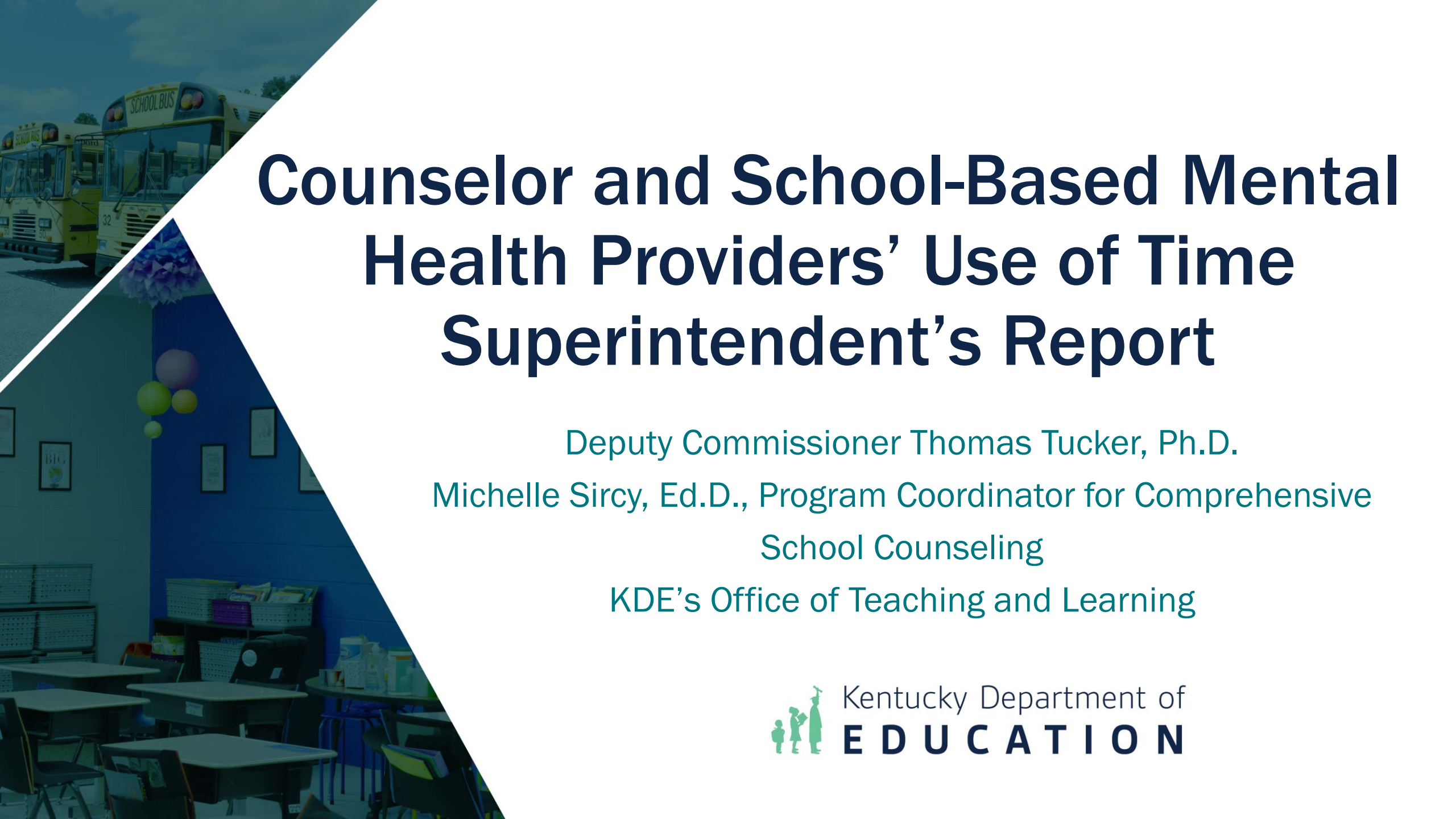
Brian Perry, Ph.D., KDE's Director of Government Relations

KBE 2026 Legislative Priorities

1. Continue the work of Kentucky United We Learn (KUWL) in partnership with the KUWL Council
2. Support the Educator Workforce
3. Secure Additional Funding for Key Initiatives
4. Statutory Updates and Clean-up
5. Facilities
6. Review and Update Substitute Teaching Statute (KRS 161.102(5))
7. Continue the historic investment in career and technical education by addressing current funding inequities between area technology centers and local centers

Education Professional Standards Board 2026 Legislative Priorities

- Ensuring Ethical Educators
- Mentoring and Induction
- Financial Incentives
- Elevating the Profession
- Statutory Cleanup

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Counselor and School-Based Mental Health Providers' Use of Time Superintendent's Report

Deputy Commissioner Thomas Tucker, Ph.D.

Michelle Sircy, Ed.D., Program Coordinator for Comprehensive
School Counseling

KDE's Office of Teaching and Learning

Per KRS 158.4416(3)(f), by Nov. 1 of each year, "the local school district superintendent shall report to the department ...

- a. the number of school-based mental health service providers;
- b. the position held;
- c. placement in the district;
- d. certification or licensure held;
- e. the source of funding for each position;
- f. a summary of the job duties and work undertaken by each school-based mental health service provider;
- g. and the approximate percent of time devoted to each duty over the course of the year."

[KRS 156.4416\(3\)\(h\)](#) further requires KDE to collect the information reported by each district superintendent for submission to the Interim Joint Committee on Education. Definitions for school-based mental health services providers are provided under [KRS 158.4416\(1\)](#).

Questions

For technical questions or assistance, please contact Leslie McKinney at Leslie.mckinney@education.ky.gov.

If you require clarification or have any questions regarding the survey, please feel free to contact Michelle Sircy at Michelle.sircy@education.ky.gov.

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Question and Answer Session

(Submit Questions in Teams)

KDE Leadership



Important Dates

Public Release of Assessment, Accountability Data

Nov. 19 at 12:01 a.m. ET

Local Superintendents Advisory Council

Nov. 25

Thanksgiving Holidays, KDE Closed

Nov. 27-28

Kentucky Board of Education

Dec. 3-4

Superintendents Webcast

Dec. 11

Education Professional Standards Board

Dec. 16