

The background of the slide is a collage of two images. The top-left portion shows a line of yellow school buses, with the number '32' visible on the front of one. The bottom-right portion shows a classroom with blue walls, decorated with colorful balloons and framed pictures. There are several small desks and chairs arranged in the room.

Superintendents Webcast

September 9, 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

Introduction to the Family Friendly District Pilot Process

Grace McKenzie, Director of Family Friendly Schools, The Prichard Committee

Superintendent Robin Cochran, Washington County School District

Office of Special Education and Early Learning Resources

Amanda Waldroup, Assistant Director, KDE's Division of IDEA Implementation and Preschool

Local Accountability Toolkit

Sarah Snipes, Director of KDE's Division of Innovation, Office of Continuous Improvement and Support

Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness Pilot Project

Thomas Williams, Ph.D., Director of the KDE Early Learning Unit, Office of Special Education and Early Learning

Franklin County's Future Forward Education and Career Center

Associate Commissioner Gretta Hylton, Ed.D., KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning

Carol Ann Morrison, Director, KDE's Division of IDEA Monitoring and Results

Superintendent Mark Kopp, Franklin County Schools

Adam Nance, principal of the Future Forward Education and Career Center, Franklin County Schools

Questions and Answers

Important Dates

A collage of two images: the top left shows yellow school buses with 'SCHOOL BUS' and the number '32' visible; the bottom left shows a classroom with blue walls, colorful balloons, and desks.

Welcome and Updates

Dr. Robbie Fletcher
Commissioner of Education



Nine Kentucky Educators Named 2026 Teacher Achievement Award Winners

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has announced the selection of nine outstanding Kentucky educators as recipients of the 2026 Kentucky Teacher Achievement Awards.

These teachers qualify to compete for the 2026 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Award, which will be announced in October.

The nine Kentucky Teacher Achievement Award winners and their positions during the 2024-2025 school year are:



Elementary School

- Melanie Howard, Corbin Primary School (Corbin Independent)
- Michele Bradley, Crossroads Elementary School (Bath County)
- Susan Coffey, Mt. Vernon Elementary School (Rockcastle County)

Middle School

- Kimberly Stevenson, Todd County Middle School
- Kim Yates, Pineville Middle School (Pineville Independent)
- Michelle Gross, Spencer County Middle School

High School

- Devina Baker, Perry County Central High School
- Kara Byrn Dowdy, Mayfield High School (Mayfield Independent)
- Whitney M. Walker, Lafayette High School (Fayette County)

Kentucky Educators Honored with JROTC Instructor of the Year Awards



- Two Kentucky educators were honored by the U.S. Army Cadet Command 7th Brigade as winners of its 2025 Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) Instructor of the Year competition.
- The award recognizes outstanding leadership, mentorship and dedication within the JROTC program.
- **Retired Col. Mike Stewart**, senior Army instructor at John Hardin High School (Hardin County) was named the 7th Brigade's Senior Army Instructor of the Year.
- **Retired Sgt. 1st Class Ashley Wolfe**, Army instructor at Henderson County High School, was named the 7th Brigade's Army Instructor of the Year.
- Both instructors were selected after a rigorous evaluation process that assessed professional excellence, commitment to student development, community engagement and contributions to the success of their JROTC programs.

WKEC Learning Coach Recognized Nationally for Work in Positive Behavior Support



- **Kayla Jones**, a professional learning coach at the West Kentucky Educational Cooperative (WKEC), has been named to the [Association for Positive Behavior Support's](#) “Under 40 to Watch” list for her leadership in advancing positive behavior support practices in Kentucky schools.
- Jones works in the Special Educational Regional Technical Assistance Center at WKEC, where she focuses on addressing students’ social, emotional and behavioral needs.
- Her work includes supporting the implementation of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework and the Interconnected Systems Framework.
- Jones has spent 16 years working in education, including roles as a special education teacher, school counselor and now as a professional learning coach.

Kentucky Students Display Agriculture Skills During School Garden Salsa Challenge

- Students gathered at the Kentucky State Fair on Aug. 18 to compete in the first School Garden Salsa Challenge.
- The Kentucky Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Lieutenant Governor's Office and KDE, invited schools to develop original salsa recipes for the competition. Almost all the ingredients were vegetables that students grew in their school gardens.
- Student teams from eight schools made their salsa at the fair using a provided kitchen on stage in front of an audience. They talked about their ingredients and processes while showing what they did.
- Participating schools were Bondurant Middle School (Franklin County), Nancy Elementary School (Pulaski County), Highland Middle School (Jefferson County), Jones Middle School (Boone County), Madisonville North Hopkins High School (Hopkins County), Menifee County Middle School, Pride Elementary School (Hopkins County) and Butler County High School.
- The challenge kicked off Kentucky's second [All In for Ag Education Week](#), which is happening Sept. 15-19



Kentucky FFA Foundation to Receive Record-breaking \$11 Million Gift from Bill Gatton Foundation



- The Kentucky FFA Foundation will receive an \$11 million gift from Bill Gatton Foundation, the largest donation to any FFA Foundation in U.S. history.
- The donation was announced during a news conference at the Kentucky State Fair. Kentucky FFA Foundation Executive Director Sheldon McKinney shared that the funds will be used to grow current programs and add new opportunities for FFA members, including:
 - Enhancements to the Kentucky FFA Leadership Training Center and the FFA camp experience;
 - More FFA camp scholarships for individual members and chapters;
 - Increased prize money for state winners of Career and Leadership Development events;
 - A foundation-led bus tour to the FFA Washington Leadership Conference for up to 100 students, as well as scholarships for students with financial need; and
 - Muhlenberg and McLean County FFA chapters will have a Forever Blue endowment, managed by the foundation, that will provide annual funds for those chapters in perpetuity.
- The Kentucky FFA Leadership Training Center in Hardinsburg will be renamed the Carol Martin Gatton Kentucky FFA Leadership Training Center in honor of this historic gift.

School Resource Officer Funding Available to Districts

- The general fund appropriation included \$18 million in fiscal year 2025-2026 to KDE to assist local districts in funding salaries for school resource officers, as defined in [KRS 158.441](#), on a reimbursement basis.
- In accordance with [House Bill 622](#), KDE shall reimburse local school districts up to \$20,000 for each campus employing at least one on-site full-time certified school resource officer. Once each local district has staffed and continues to maintain one school resource officer for each campus in that district, the local district is then eligible to apply for reimbursement for additional assistance in funding salaries for school resource officers, except that the assistance allowed under this paragraph shall be limited to:
 - Funding available; and
 - No more than one school resource officer for each academic building.
- Monthly grants shall first be applied to the per-campus requirement across all local districts and then to districts that meet the per-campus requirement and have additional school resource officers, but only to the extent that funding is available.
- In order to meet the requirement outlined above, KDE is asking districts that will seek reimbursement to complete the [School Resource Officer Funding Intent to Participate form](#) by Sept. 15. Information provided in the survey will determine funding amounts available to districts for SRO funding.
- For questions, contact [Karen Wirth](#) or [Lalah Brewer](#).

A collage of two images: the top left shows yellow school buses with 'SCHOOL BUS' written on them, and the bottom left shows a classroom with desks, chairs, and a blue wall decorated with balloons and framed pictures.

KDE Updates

Jennifer Ginn

KDE Director of Communications



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Competitive Grants from KDE

The FY26 grant year begins on July 1, 2025, and ends on June 30, 2026. FY26 refers to the year the grant will be awarded, not when projects are expected to begin. Refer to the posted RFA for specific timelines.

FY26 CTE Innovation and Support Grant

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.

Competitive Grants from KDE (2)

FY26 Read to Achieve (RTA) Grant

Grant applications due: Nov. 3 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 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.

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](#).

KDE Looking for New Members for KSD Advisory Board

- The purpose of the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) Advisory Board is to act in an advisory capacity to assist school leadership and make recommendations to the commissioner of education concerning all areas relating to the effective operation of the school. A majority of the board's membership shall be persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
- The membership shall be statewide and consist of:
 - Two parents of Deaf children;
 - One professional in the education of the Deaf;
 - One former student of the Kentucky School for the Deaf;
 - One member of the Kentucky Association for the Deaf;
 - Two members representing school districts; and
 - Two members at large.
- Self-nominations are being accepted for a member of the Kentucky Association for the Deaf and a school district representative. [Self-nominations](#) must be submitted to [Shannon Sparkman](#) by **Sep. 11 at 4 p.m. ET.**

Applications Open for 2026 U.S. Senate Youth Program

- The 2026 U.S. Senate Youth Program is a merit-based program that takes the most outstanding high school students from around the country to Washington, D.C., for a week-long study of the federal government and the people who lead it.
- Two Kentucky high school students will be selected this fall as delegates and will each receive a \$10,000 college scholarship in the name of the U.S. Senate, with encouragement to continue coursework in history, government and public affairs.
- High school teachers and principals are encouraged to nominate qualified high school juniors and seniors to apply. [Applications for the 2025 USSYP program](#) are available online and are due Sept. 29.



KDE Seeking Public Comment on Current Mathematics Standards

- KDE seeks input from all stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, students, families, business and community members.
- The [public comment survey](#) is open through **Oct. 3**.
- Information has been shared via a [KDE press release](#). Additional announcements will appear in the Commissioner's Weekly Message and the Standards Newsletter.
- Please share with those within your local community.
- Questions may be directed to KDE Division Director [Chrystal Rowland](#).



OTL Seeks Mathematics Standards Committee Members

- The [application for participation on the mathematics standards review committees](#) is open through **Oct. 3.**
- Please share with mathematics teachers, instructional leads and building administrators.
- Information has been shared via a [KDE press release on Aug. 29.](#) More information will appear in the Commissioner's Weekly Message and the Standards Newsletter.
- Questions may be directed to KDE Division Director [Chrystal Rowland.](#)



The background of the slide is a composite image. The top left shows two yellow school buses, one with the number 32. The bottom left shows a classroom with blue walls, decorated with balloons and framed pictures, with several small desks and chairs.

Introduction to the Family Friendly District Pilot Process

Grace McKenzie, Director of Family Friendly Schools, The
Prichard Committee
Superintendent Robin Cochran, Washington County School
District



Introduction to the Family Friendly District Certification Process



The Prichard Committee

Building a Groundswell for a Big Bold Future

Family Friendly District



Family Friendly District certification shows that a **critical mass of schools** have met Family Friendly School certification, and the district has **established the norms and structures** at the district level to institutionalize family and community partnership as a core element of effective education practice at every level within the district.

SHIFTS TO SUPPORT PARTNERSHIPS



Outdated

- One-size fits all
- Focus on events and volunteering
- Deficit-based
- Doing "for" or "to" families
- Random acts of family engagement
- Ignores barriers to family engagement



Evidence-based

- Differentiated opportunities
- Focus on trusting relationships
- Asset-based
- Creating "with" families
- Planned and systemic
- Works to break down barriers to participation

This work is about creating
systems so all students can
thrive.



The Prichard Committee
Building a Groundswell for a Big Bold Future

Core Elements of Family Friendly Districts



District Family Friendly Feedback Group

- Members are families that provide district level feedback

District Family Engagement Action Team

- Members represent families, district staff, school staff, and community members
- Members evaluate the district based on Family Friendly District Self-Assessment
- Members complete Family Engagement Training
- Members gathers, reviews, and implement changes based on family and school leader feedback

Core Elements of Family Friendly Districts (2)



District is ready to apply for certification if:

- The District Family Engagement Action Team assess that the district is at a level 3 in all 5 critical attributes
- The district can provide evidence of implementation at level 3 in all 5 critical attributes
- **The district has met a Family Friendly School certification percentage requirement through a district process for self-evaluation.**
- The district can show how they are making changes based on feedback from families and school leaders

District materials will be publicly available in January 2026.

Hear from Robin Cochran



**Robin Cochran, superintendent of
Washington County Schools**

Family Friendly School Process



Step 1: Form a Team (5 members, at least 2 educators, 1 admin and 2 parents who are not school employees or related to other team members)

- Team Lead register for the Certification Course
- Team members register for the Partnership 101 Course

Step 2: Collect Information and Make a Plan

- Complete the Family Friendly School Self-Assessment
- Survey your school families & gather feedback.
- Make a plan

Step 3: Implementing the Plan and Collecting Evidence in your ePortfolio:

- Implement the activities your team decided on and collect evidence.
- Collect evidence of these activities to add to your ePortfolio.
- Continue to gather feedback from families. Purposely seek feedback from families who may not have responded to your survey.
- Continue to make adjustments to your work based on feedback from families.

Step 4: Share your ePortfolio and complete an internal review process

- Submit your ePortfolio

What can you do now?



- 1) If you want to get sneak peak at materials for district certification, complete the interest form.
- 2) If you want to take steps towards Family Friendly District certification, set the expectation that schools will begin the process to get Family Friendly certified and begin feedback loops, so you know where they are in the process.

CONTACT US



BUILD A GROUNDSWELL WITH US

Grace McKenzie
Family Friendly Schools Director

grace@PrichardCommittee.org

859-358-3156



THE PRICHARD COMMITTEE

2285 Executive Dr, Lexington, KY 40505

Admin@PrichardCommittee.org

(859) 233-9849

www.PrichardCommittee.org

The Prichard Committee

The background of the slide is a composite image. The top left portion shows a line of yellow school buses, with the number '32' visible on the front of one. The bottom left portion shows a classroom with blue walls, decorated with colorful balloons and framed pictures. There are several small white tables and chairs arranged in the room.

Office of Special Education and Early Learning Resources

Amanda Waldroup, Assistant Director
KDE's Division of IDEA Implementation and
Preschool

OSEEL Behavior Resources

Video Series Designed for Special Education Teachers



Classroom Set-Up



Precorrection



Calming Practices



Visual Supports



Reinforcement and
Feedback



Individualized Break
Systems



Sensory Supports



Social Narratives



Supporting Bus
Behavior



[Effective Classroom Strategies
for Students with Disabilities](#)



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Effective Classroom Strategies for Students with Disabilities

Strategy 9: Supporting Bus Behavior

Functions of Behaviors on the Bus

Meeting sensory needs

Demonstrating a deficit in social-emotional processes

Requiring a higher level of structure

Gaining social attention



Providing Structure



Visuals to count the number of bus stops until

Bus behavior co

Busy bag of act

Bus specific tok

Partnering with Bus Drivers

Share behavior plans for transportation specific strategies.

Provide training on use of specific materials or strategies.

Plan for frequent communication.



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Math Resources to Support Students with Disabilities

Video Series

- Designed to help educators implement math teaching practices across multiple grade levels
- Demonstrates the use of math manipulatives to support students with disabilities
- Videos are less than 10 minutes



[Mathematics Instructional Strategy Video Series to Support Students with Disabilities](#)



Additional Math Resources to Support Students with Disabilities

Math Teaching Practice Video Series

- 10-part video series on the eight mathematics teaching practices
- Models the use of teaching practices with avatar students across all grade bands
- Videos are around 5 minutes or less



Instructional Resources

- Kentucky Mathematics Toolkit to Support Students with Disabilities
- Kentucky Foundational Literacy Toolkit to Support Students with Disabilities
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) video series



[Instructional Resources webpage](#)

Kaleidoscope Project for Teachers



Kaleidoscope



For more information, contact [Rebecca Turner](#)

Community of Practice (CoP) designed for special education teachers

- Focus: Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) in math, literacy and behavior
- 5 Sessions (18 hours of professional development)
- Classroom kit for teachers who complete all 5 sessions



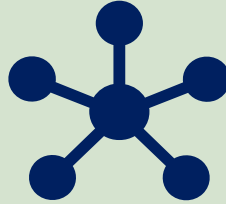
Benefits to Participation



SUPPORT ON MATH,
LITERACY AND
BEHAVIOR SDI



MULTIPLE TEACHING
KITS



NETWORK
OPPORTUNITIES



REFLECTION TOOL TO
SUPPORT TEACHING
PRACTICES



SDI PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING COMMUNITY



CULMINATING PROJECT—
RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

“The Kaleidoscope program has been invaluable in growing my teaching practice. They have given me skills to analyze student data and match the best instruction to increase student growth. I would recommend new and old teachers participate in this program.”

– Participant, Angela Dye

Quote Source: [Kentucky Teacher](#)



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Contact Information



Veronica Sullivan, Director
Division of IDEA Implementation and Preschool
veronica.sullivan@education.ky.gov
(502) 564-4970, ext. 4414



Amanda Waldroup, Assistant Director
Division of IDEA Implementation and Preschool
amanda.waldroup@education.ky.gov
(502) 564-4970, ext. 4506

The background of the slide is a collage. The top left shows a line of yellow school buses, with the number '32' visible on the front of one. The bottom left shows a classroom with blue walls, decorated with colorful balloons (purple, yellow, and green) and framed pictures. There are several small white tables and chairs arranged in the room.

Local Accountability Toolkit

Sarah Snipes, Director of KDE's Division of Innovation
KDE's Office of Continuous Improvement and Support

Context and Purpose

Kentucky's *United We Learn* vision calls for a more meaningful accountability system.

The **Local Accountability Design Guide and Toolkit** supports districts in designing systems that:

- Elevate *student agency* and *vibrant learning experiences*
- Reflect *community values and priorities*
- Measure *student success* more holistically

Goal: provide districts with practical supports to design credible, transparent and community-driven systems.

Why It's Valuable to Districts

Local Accountability strengthens trust between schools and communities.

This guidance provides *structure* and *flexibility* - districts can tailor measures while aligning with Kentucky's shared vision.

Helps identify what matters most:

- Vibrant learning experiences anchored in rigorous academic content knowledge and durable life skills
- Local priorities

Supports districts in preparing for a **reimagined future of assessment and accountability.**



What's Inside the Design Guide



Framework and Principles: foundations for local accountability

Step-by-Step Process: from community engagement to indicator selection to pilot testing

Tools and Templates: rubrics, planning sheets, sample dashboards

Case Studies: examples from Kentucky districts

Upcoming Learning Opportunities



Continuous Improvement Summit

- Monday, Sept. 22, 1:15 - 2:15 p.m. ET
- Tuesday, Sept. 23, 1:45 - 2:45 p.m. ET

Coming soon:

- Regional Foundational Sessions
- Local Accountability Series

Access and Support

The Local Accountability Design Guide and Toolkit is available on KDE's Innovation webpage:

[Local Accountability Design Guide and Toolkit](#)

For questions, support or consultation:

Rob Collins, Innovative Programs Consultant

Robert.Collins@education.ky.gov



A special thanks to our partners who helped develop this resource:

- University of Kentucky's Center for Next Generation Leadership
- OVEC's ElevatED Studios
- Kentucky district leaders



Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness Pilot Project

Thomas Williams, Ph.D., Director of the KDE Early
Learning Unit

Office of Special Education and Early Learning

What is the Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness Pilot Project?

- Age of Learning is offering a no-cost, online educational experience for preschool-aged learners who may not be attending state-funded preschool programs.
 - This work is the result of House Bill 695 (2024), sponsored by Rep. Kevin Jackson.
 - Children whose families have a household income of no more than 200% of the federal poverty level are prioritized in the application requirements.
 - District and school staff may contact [Samantha Barbagli](#) at Age of Learning with questions.
 - Families may apply for this opportunity on the [Age of Learning website](#).
- * A flyer is available to share with families.

The background of the slide is a collage. The top left shows two yellow school buses, one with the number 32. The bottom left shows a classroom with blue walls, colorful balloons, and several small desks with chairs.

Franklin County's Future Forward Education and Career Center

Associate Commissioner Gretta Hylton, Ed.D.,
KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning
Carol Ann Morrison, Director, KDE's Division of IDEA Monitoring
and Results

Superintendent Mark Kopp, Franklin County Schools
Adam Nance, principal of the Future Forward Education and
Career Center, Franklin County Schools

The background of the slide is a collage. The top left shows a line of yellow school buses, with the number '32' visible on the front of one. The bottom left shows a classroom with blue walls, decorated with colorful balloons and framed pictures. There are several small desks and chairs in the classroom.

Question and Answer Session

(Submit Questions in Teams)

KDE Leadership



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

The background of the slide is a composite image. The top left shows a line of yellow school buses, with the number '32' visible on the front of one. The bottom left shows a classroom with blue walls, decorated with colorful balloons and framed pictures. Desks and chairs are arranged in the room.

Important Dates

All in for Ag Education Week

Sept. 15-19

Continuous Improvement Summit

Sept. 22-23

Local Superintendents Advisory Council

Sept. 23

Kentucky Board of Education

Oct. 1-2

Teacher of the Year Recognition Ceremony

Oct. 7

Superintendents Webcast

Oct. 14

Education Professional Standards Board

Oct. 21



Kentucky Department of

E D U C A T I O N