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Superintendents Webcast

April 14, 2026



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

House Bill 257 Update

Dr. Robbie Fletcher, Commissioner of Education

Kentucky Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) Effectiveness Survey

Associate Commissioner Meredith Brewer, Ph.D., KDE's Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness

Kentucky's 1% Waiver Request

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

Carol Ann Morrison, Division Director, KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning

Drop-out Prevention for Students with Disabilities

Carol Ann Morrison, Division Director, KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning

KY Saves 529

Joe Wilcox, Institutional Relationship Manager, Ascensus

Questions and Answers

Important Dates

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Welcome and Updates

Dr. Robbie Fletcher
Commissioner of Education



KDE Seeking Feedback on Website Navigation

- KDE is inviting the public to complete a [website navigation survey](#) as part of our efforts to reorganize the website to improve the user experience.
- The survey includes questions about the ease of navigation, findability, menus and content.
- Results of the survey will inform decisions about the website's navigation and content. The survey is anonymous and should take about 5 minutes to complete.
- Please share this information with your teachers, staff and community!
- The survey will remain open through May 14.

Eastern Kentucky Districts Gather for First Reducing Chronic Absenteeism Workshop

- Five districts in Eastern Kentucky discussed ways to combat chronic absenteeism during the Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in Kentucky workshop at the Southeast South-Central Educational Cooperative office in London on March 27.
- Hosted by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and REL Appalachia, this kickoff session is the first of two workshops and three collaborative strategic planning sessions to help districts combat chronic absenteeism in their schools.
- The workshop included presentations, discussions and coaching sessions about the different resources KDE offers on [chronic absenteeism](#). KDE defines a student as chronically absent if they have missed more than 10% of the time enrolled in school.
- KDE'S goal is to reduce the average statewide absenteeism rate from 25% to 15% by 2029.
- As part of this goal, KDE is increasing outreach to schools to help increase educators' capacities to promote consistent school attendance.
- [Read more about the chronic absentee workshop on Kentucky Teacher.](#)



Spencer County Students Build Models of their Dream Homes for Dream Homearama Event

- Spencer County Middle School students showcased their math skills when they presented models of their dream homes during the Dream Homearama event on March 20.
- The Dream Homearama event was started by Michelle Gross, a math teacher at Spencer County Middle School and the [2026 Kentucky Teacher of the Year](#).
- Gross started the project about 10 years ago, but it did not begin with students building houses. She said it started to teach students how to draw blueprints so they could better understand geometry concepts.
- As the project evolved over the years, students started building models from their blueprints. A few years ago, students began presenting them to community members in the Louisville area.
- Local professionals, including realtors, construction workers and architects, came to see this year's student projects on March 20.
- [Read more about Dream Homearama on Kentucky Teacher.](#)



Lydia Hall, a 7th-grader at Spencer County Middle School, presents her project to Josh Long, a builder at Grace Construction.

Paducah Tilghman's Deatrik Kinney Named 2026 Kentucky High School Principal of the Year

- Deatrik Kinney entered his third year as principal of Paducah Tilghman High School by being recognized as the 2026 Kentucky High School Principal of the Year by the National Association of Secondary School Principals.
- Kinney started his career in 2008 teaching health and physical education at Fulton County High School. He moved to Todd County Central High School in 2016 to serve as assistant principal, then transitioned to serve as principal for three years.
- Kinney joined Paducah Tilghman High School as assistant principal and athletic director in 2021 before becoming principal in 2023.
- Kinney said he makes sure to make himself visible and approachable, taking the time to connect with students and create a climate where open communication isn't just encouraged, it's expected.
- [Read more about Kinney on Kentucky Teacher.](#)
- Congratulations to Mr. Kinney and Paducah Independent!



Kentucky Students Showcase Technology Skills During 2026 Kentucky TSA State Conference

- About 1,700 Kentucky students from across the Commonwealth showed off their technological skills during the 2026 Kentucky Technology Student Association (KYTSA) state conference on March 16-18.
- KYTSA is a career and technical student organization that supports students engaged in STEM education, in conjunction with the national TSA organization.
- More than 16,000 Kentucky students participated in the program during the 2025-2026 school year to learn through competitive events, leadership opportunities, community service and other activities.
- Several competitions involved students building something, whether that be miniature bridges made of balsa wood, kayaks made from PVC pipes or a variety of 3D printed projects.
- [Read more about the KYTSA conference on Kentucky Teacher.](#)

Pictures from the state conference on the next slide.

Career and Technical Student Organizations Spring 2026 State Leadership Conferences

- 5 state conferences completed
- 8,560+ students participated
- 347 competitive events offered
- 200+ business and industry partners engaged
- Hundreds of students advancing to national competitions
- [More information about each individual conference](#)
- Upcoming conferences include FBLA State Leadership Conference, April 27-29 at the Galt House in Louisville, and the FFA State Convention, June 9-11 at the Central Bank Center in Lexington.

Pictures from the conferences on the next slide.

Career and Technical Student Organization State Leadership Conferences



Students participating in the kayak engineering competition line up at the University of Louisville.



A HOSA-Future Health Professionals student competes in a healthcare competition.



FCCLA State President Cayden Dunn from Bowling Green High School addresses the crowd at the Galt House in Louisville.

A collage of two images: the top left shows yellow school buses with 'SCHOOL BUS' written on them, and the bottom right shows a classroom with blue walls, desks, and colorful balloons.

KDE Updates

Jennifer Ginn

KDE Director of Communications



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Competitive Grants from KDE

FY26 OCTE Middle School Career Exploration Initiative

Grant applications due: April 16 at 4 p.m. ET

Award Amount: \$5,000

Matching Funds Requirement: No

KDE is issuing a request for application for the Office of Career and Technical Education Middle School Career Exploration Initiative. The goal of this grant is that the participating middle schools will work with other grant recipients to co-create, design and pilot a quality career exploration plan during the 2026-2027 school year.

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

For more information, email [Jennifer Bryant](#).

Reminder: Gifted and Talented (GT) End-of-Year (EOY) Reporting

- Final EOY reports are due by **June 1, 2026**.
- The Summative and Validation Reports are used annually to verify district data, ensuring accurate reporting of GT student services and program requirements.
- For questions, please contact [Melissa Thompson](#), gifted education program consultant.



Registration Open for Next Kaleidoscope Community of Practice Cohort



- Kaleidoscope is designed for all K–12 special education teachers and offers free high-quality professional learning focused on specially designed instruction.
- Participants who complete all sessions will receive classroom kits featuring resources for reading, math and behavior support.
- Join a collaborative community, deepen your instructional skills and bring new tools back to your classroom.
- Learn more on the [Kaleidoscope Community of Practice webpage](#). Register before April 30.



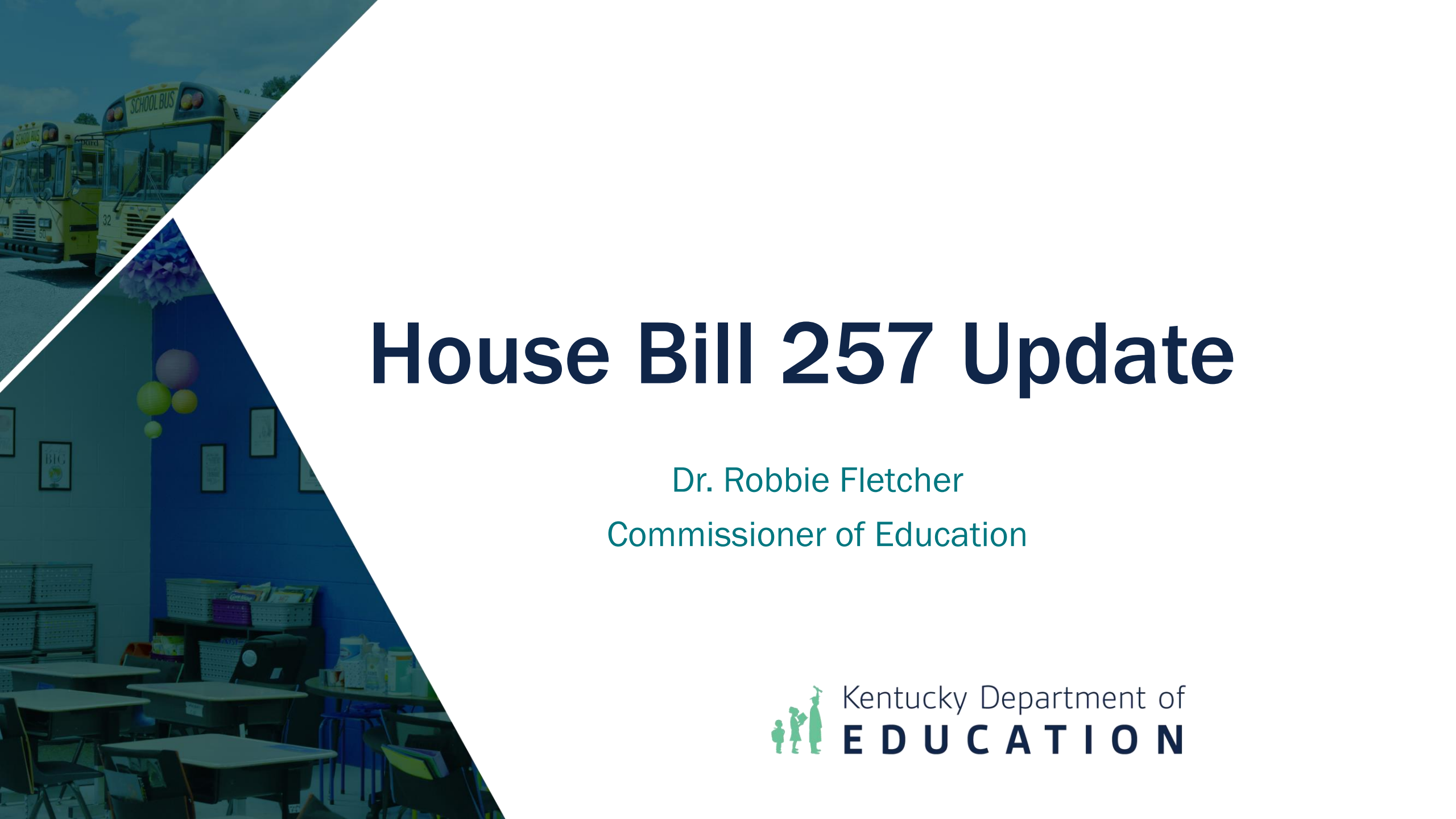
Nominations Open for 2026 Kentucky Exemplary Educators Program

- KDE is seeking recommendations of exemplary educators and leaders in the Commonwealth's public schools to join the Kentucky Exemplary Educators Program (KEEP). Recommendations must be submitted online by 11:59 p.m. CT on May 1.
- Recommendations should be made by education leaders. Self-recommendations will not be accepted.
- This is a confidential process. Candidates should not be aware of this recommendation.
- The candidate's contributions to education should be largely unheralded yet worthy of the spotlight.
- This program is open to educators of all experience levels. Candidates should be currently serving in certified teacher, specialist or principal roles in Kentucky public schools.
- For more information, please reference the [2026 KEEP guide](#).
- [Nominate an educator by submitting this online form](#).

Nominations Open for 2026 Kentucky Special Education Teacher of the Year



- Any full-time, certified public school special education teacher in Kentucky with at least five years of experience is eligible.
- Teachers may be nominated by anyone who has an interest in honoring an outstanding special educator.
- Fill out the [2026 Kentucky Special Education Teacher of the Year nomination form](#) by June 30.
- More details can be found on the [Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children Special Education Teacher of the Year website](#).



House Bill 257 Update

Dr. Robbie Fletcher
Commissioner of Education



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Comparing House Bill 257 with Model Framework 4.0

The original Model Framework 4.0 and the final bill version assign the accountability system into two categories:

1. State accountability indicators that meet federal requirements for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) designation (beginning with data from the 2026-2027 school year).
2. Local accountability indicators with required options and inclusion that are NOT USED in calculations for CSI designation.
In the bill, the phrase “local indicators of quality” replaces the phrase “local accountability.”

Category	Component	Model Framework 4.0	Final Bill Version (4.1.26)
State	Assessment	Reading and mathematics are used in the calculation for CSI status. - Adaptive test - Provides grade level equivalency AND grade level content proficiency	Reading, mathematics, science and social studies are used for CSI calculation. - Adaptive tests are not used. - Provides grade level content proficiency in the same manner as the current state assessments
State	Assessment	Science is assessed and reportedly individually, but it is not used in the CSI calculation.	Reading, mathematics, science and social studies are used for CSI calculation.
State	Assessment	Social studies and writing would be removed from the state assessment but required in the local accountability model.	Reading, mathematics, science and social studies are used for CSI calculation and continue to include constructed (written) responses. On-demand writing and editing mechanics are not tested using statewide assessments, reducing testing time for the students. Districts may determine additional methods for assessing writing as part of the local indicators of quality. <i>Removing the On-Demand portion will save money and potentially shorten the time required to have accountability results publicly available.</i> Writing continues to be emphasized. Each superintendent must adopt and publish a writing program that includes disciplinary-specific writing across the curriculum. KDE must provide school districts with guidelines and professional learning opportunities to support authentic and disciplinary-specific writing across the curriculum.

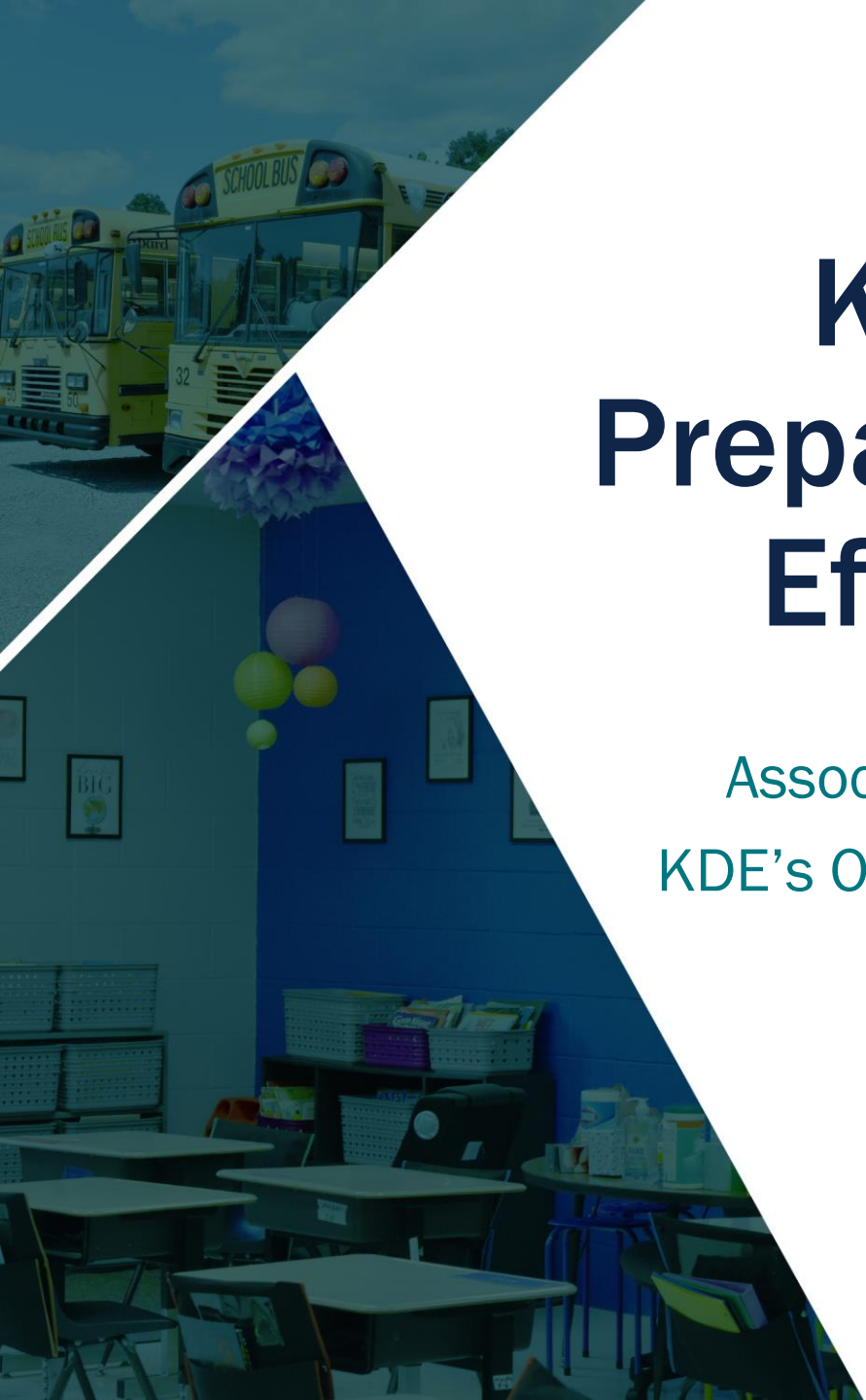
Category	Component	Model Framework 4.0	Final Bill Version (4.1.26)
State	Change vs. Student Growth	Individual student growth replaces change in the CSI calculation.	Evaluation of each state indicator for Change is eliminated. Individual student growth in reading and mathematics is included as a new state indicator.
State	Other Required Indicators	Transition readiness, graduation rate, English language progress are included in the CSI calculation to meet federal requirements.	Transition readiness, graduation rate, English language progress are included in the CSI calculation and meet federal requirements.
State	Other Required Indicators	Climate and Safety Survey Data is included in the CSI calculation to meet federal requirements.	Chronic Absenteeism replaces Climate and Safety Survey Data for the CSI calculation to meet federal requirements.
State	Other Required Indicators (initially reported only)	N/A	Targeted quality measures of change from prior school year on percentages of teachers with advanced credentials, grade 8 students earning high school credit, and graduates who have completed the FAFSA are required to be reported in the School Report Card until June 2030. Beginning July 2030, targeted quality measures would become required state indicators in the CSI calculation with a cumulative weight of no less than 5%.

Note: KDE must study middle school mathematics and advanced mathematics coursework opportunities and submit a report to the Legislative Research Committee for referral to the Interim Joint Committee on Education by Nov. 1, 2026.

Category	Component	Model Framework 4.0	Final Bill Version (4.1.26)
Local	Implementation	Using piloting, sustaining and sustainability phases, all districts SHALL have a local accountability model within the next 4 years.	Districts MAY implement a system of locally developed indicators.
Local	Implementation	Using piloting, sustaining and sustainability phases, all districts SHALL have a local accountability model within the next 4 years.	A one-time financial incentive of \$15,000 per district may be allocated to offset costs incurred in the development of locally developed indicators of quality. The bill does not include an appropriation of funding.
Local	Requirements	Each local accountability model shall include vibrant learning experiences, writing, social studies and locally determined indicators of performance. KDE would supply social studies/writing assessments or districts could develop their own method of assessing.	Each system of local indicators of quality must be aligned with Kentucky's Academic Standards, allow all students to demonstrate knowledge and skills in real-world applications, and must include vibrant learning experiences and locally determined indicators of performance.
Local	Requirements	Provide disaggregated data when applicable based on student demographics.	Provide disaggregated data when applicable based on student demographics.

Category	Component	Model Framework 4.0	Final Bill Version (4.1.26)
Local	Requirements	Develop a publicly available display of local indicators/data.	Develop a publicly available display of local indicators/data.
Local	Assistance	KDE shall provide technical assistance through the hiring of 6 regional specialists.	KDE must offer technical assistance to local school districts in their development of locally developed indicators of quality. The bill does not include an appropriation of funding.
Local	Other assessments	Inclusion of interim assessment in reading and mathematics that are aligned with the summative assessments to provide formative data for districts. This information MAY be included in local accountability models. Also, utilizing state-developed interim assessments would eliminate one testing window in the current practice on interim assessments/state testing.	Interim assessments are not included.

Category	Component	Model Framework 4.0	Final Bill Version (4.1.26)
Local	Other assessments	Currently, science is assessed once in each of the elementary, middle and high school grade bands. Science off-grade assessments would be provided for formative data for districts and MAY be used in local accountability models.	Science assessments are administered (SEE ABOVE) in the grade band levels, but “off grade” assessment are not included.
Local	Other	An external evaluator would review all local accountability models on a 3-year cycle.	No external evaluator is included. The bill does not include an appropriation of funding.

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Kentucky Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) Effectiveness Survey

Associate Commissioner Meredith Brewer, Ph.D.
KDE's Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness

Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Feedback

- Request from Kentucky EPPs for feedback on the preparation of new faculty members.
- Participation in the survey is optional.
- Superintendents will receive the survey link accompanied by a request to forward to building administrators.
- The survey will remain open until Monday, June 1.

School Classification

- Select the classification that best describes your school.
 - Early Childhood/Preschool
 - Elementary School (K-5)
 - Middle School (6-8)
 - High School (9-12)
 - Career and Technical Education Center
 - Other (please specify)



Defining New Faculty Members

“During the 2025-2026 academic year, I hired at least one teacher with less than three years of teaching experience who was prepared by a Kentucky EPP.”

- If no, survey concludes.
- If yes, survey continues.



EPP Selection

- Please select the Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) that prepared the inexperienced (less than three years of teaching experience) faculty members you hired during the 2025-2026 academic year.
- NOTE: If your new, inexperienced faculty were prepared by different EPPs, you will have an opportunity to submit responses for additional EPPs.



Requested Feedback

In your opinion, how effectively did the EPP prepare the new faculty members you hired during the 2025-2026 academic year in the following areas?

- Aligned to EPP standards
 - Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC)
 - Kentucky Teacher Performance Standards (KTPS)
 - Danielson Framework
- Levels: Ineffective, Developing, Accomplished, Exemplary
- Example statements:
 - Create an environment that supports individual and collaborative learning.
 - Seek opportunities to collaborate with others to support student learning.



Open Response

- Based on the performance of the inexperienced teachers (0-3 years of experience) you hired, what did the EPP do well?
- Based on the performance of the inexperienced teachers (0-3 years of experience) you hired, how could the EPP do better?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about the completers from this EPP that can help us understand your responses above?

Survey Logic

- “I had new, inexperienced faculty members hired during the 2025-2026 academic year who were prepared by a different EPP.”
 - If answer is “yes,” the survey will repeat for new EPP.
 - If answer is “no,” the survey will conclude and can be submitted.

Questions about the Kentucky EPP Effectiveness Survey?

Meredith Brewer, Ph.D.

Associate Commissioner

Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness

meredith.brewer@education.ky.gov

(502) 892-6569

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Kentucky's 1% Waiver Request

Associate Commissioner Gretta Hylton, Ed.D.
Carol Ann Morrison, Division Director of IDEA Monitoring and Results

KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning

Kentucky's 1% Waiver Request (1)

On Aug. 12, 2025, KDE sent the U.S. Department of Education's (USED's) Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) a request for a waiver from the enforcement of a provision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which does not permit states to assess more than 1% of the total numbers of assessed students in the state using an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS).

On Feb. 12, 2026, OESE declined to grant Kentucky's waiver request and placed a grant condition on Kentucky's fiscal year 2026 Title 1, Part A award.

Removing the Grant Condition

Submit an updated plan for reducing the rate of AA-AAAS participation in future years to come into compliance with the 1% requirement.

Submit evidence that the plan and timeline are made publicly available on the state's website when the plan is provided to OESE.

Demonstrate progress in reducing the percentage of students tested on alternate assessments in the 2025-2026 school year.

Qualify for a waiver in the 2026-2027 school year; or demonstrate that it has otherwise assessed less than 1% of students with alternate assessments in the 2025-2026 school year.

KDE's Response

Commissioner Fletcher emailed Kentucky's superintendents notifying them of the 1% waiver denial, the grant condition and the requirements for removing the grant condition. Associate Commissioner Hylton emailed directors of special education notifying them with the same information.

KDE staff members met with Special Education Regional Technical Assistance Center (SERTAC) directors to share information about the waiver denial and to call on SERTACs for assistance with addressing the 1% participation rate.

KDE hosted training for all SERTAC directors and other SERTAC staff to support school districts by assisting with student record reviews and training related to alternate assessment participation.

KDE's Response (continued)

Following training, SERTAC directors began contacting local school districts in their region to offer support by reviewing decisions made for participation in the alternate assessment and ensuring appropriate decisions are made for students.

KDE is monitoring estimated alternate assessment participation data weekly to determine if the supports are helping to decrease the anticipated participation rate. Current data trends show Kentucky will increase participation rates with the 2025-2026 assessment if nothing changes.

KDE will continue to communicate with USED regarding this matter and will continue to update districts as we learn more.

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Drop-out Prevention for Students with Disabilities

Carol Ann Morrison, Division Director

KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning

Drop-Out Prevention for Students with Disabilities (1)

- KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning (OSEEL) will offer increased technical assistance to support districts in locating and enrolling transient students with disabilities.
- OSEEL staff will support districts by bridging communication between agencies.
- Beginning in May, OSEEL staff will contact directors of special education to offer technical assistance to districts identified with transient students with disabilities who have left the school district and have not re-enrolled in another district.

The background of the slide is a dark blue space-themed illustration. On the left, a child's head is shown in profile, wearing a white and gold space helmet with a clear visor. The child is looking upwards towards a starry sky. Several white stars of varying sizes are scattered across the sky, some with long, thin white trails. In the upper right, there are three larger, colorful stars (yellow, orange, and red) with bright, multi-colored trails radiating from them. At the bottom of the slide, there is a white, cloud-like border.

KY Saves 529

**KY's College Savings Plan and a
No-Cost Employee Benefit**

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Broker Dealer Services, LLC. Not intended for print or distribution.
Current as of February 2026.

Joe Wilcox
Institutional Relationship Manager



KY Saves 529

**Kentucky's State-sponsored college savings plan, administered by
KHEAA since 1990**

Benefits and Features

- Tax-deferred growth*
- Tax-free distributions*
- Flexible & affordable
- Attractive investment options
- Gifting and rewards options

Special In-state benefits for KY Saves 529 savers:

Kentucky in-state tuition rates

- For vested participation
 - 8 continuous years and
 - \$2,400 balance

Financial Aid

- Savings not included in determining Kentucky need-based student aid

*Earnings on non-qualified distributions may be subject to federal income tax and a 10% federal penalty tax, as well as state and local income taxes.

Tax and other benefits are contingent on meeting other requirements and certain distributions are subject to federal, state, and local taxes.





Benefits



Employers

- No Cost or Contracts
- Easy to implement
- Financial Wellness in the workplace
- Help attract and retain top talent
- Dedicated plan representative



Employees

- Professionally managed investments
- Tax advantages
- Save on autopilot
- Flexible: savings can be used for eligible colleges, trade school, career training and more





Meet Me at KASBO



KASBO Spring Conference 2026

May 6-8

Crown Plaza, Louisville, KY





Participate in our Promotion



1

Open a new KY
Saves 529 account
with promo code:
START100

2

When you do, we'll
contribute \$100
(first 150 accounts only)¹

Get started.

- ✓ To open your account, download our app or go to ky529.com
- ✓ No minimum contribution to start
- ✓ Set up automatic contributions² from your paycheck—start or stop at any time
- ✓ Savings are tax-deferred



Learn more at
kysaves.com/start100
or scan the QR code.



¹\$100 contributions are subject to availability of funds and limited to the first 150 accounts. Must use promo code START100 during online enrollment. The \$100 contribution will be made into the qualifying account within four weeks.

²A plan of regular investment cannot assure a profit or protect against a loss in a declining market.



Important Legal Information

For more information about the Kentucky Educational Savings Plan Trust (KY Saves 529), call 855-840-4855 or visit www.ky529.com to obtain a Program Description, which includes investment objectives, risks, charges, expenses, and other important information. Read and consider it carefully before investing.

Before you invest, consider whether your or the beneficiary's home state offers any state tax or other state benefits such as financial aid, scholarship funds, and protection from creditors that are only available for investments in that state's qualified tuition program.

KY Saves 529 is administered by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority. Ascensus College Savings Recordkeeping Services, LLC, is the Program Manager. The Program Manager and its affiliates have overall responsibility for the program's day-to-day operations, including investment advisory services, recordkeeping, and administrative services.

Investment returns will vary depending upon the performance of the Investment Options you choose. Depending on market conditions, you could lose all or a portion of your money by investing in KY Saves 529. Account Owners assume all investment risks as well as responsibility for any federal and state tax consequences.

Investments are not FDIC insured, may lose value and are not bank guaranteed.



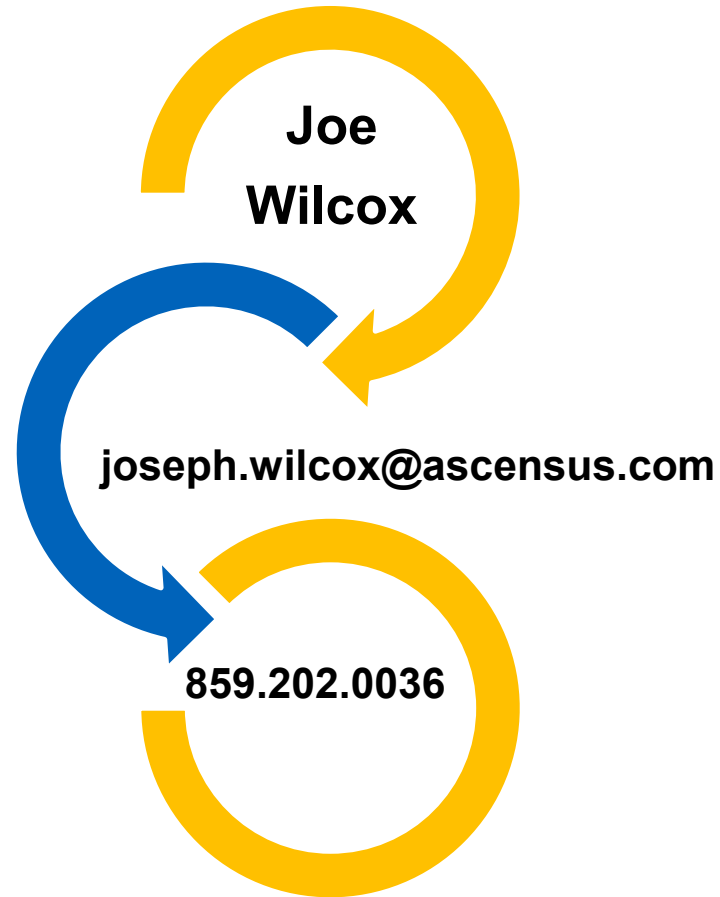


Thank you!

I am here to help



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Question and Answer Session

(Submit Questions in Teams)

KDE Leadership

Important Dates

Education Professional Standards Board

April 21

STLP State Championship

April 24

Commissioner's Student Advisory Council (in-person)

April 28

Superintendents Advisory Council

May 5

Kentucky Board of Education (virtual)

May 6

Superintendents Webcast

May 12