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Superintendents Webcast

July 7, 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

New Waiver Request Forms

Todd Allen, KDE Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel

Announcing a New K–8 Social Studies Curriculum for Kentucky

Micki Marinelli, Chief Academic Officer, KDE's Office of Teaching and Learning

2026-2027 Improvement Planning Platform Update

Associate Commissioner Kelly Foster, KDE's Office of Continuous Improvement and Support

Questions and Answers

Important Dates

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Welcome and Updates

Dr. Robbie Fletcher
Commissioner of Education



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

Nine Educators Named 2027 Teacher Achievement Award Winners

KDE announced nine Kentucky educators as recipients of the 2027 Kentucky Teacher Achievement Awards. These teachers are also nominees for the 2027 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Award, which will be announced in September.

The nine winners and where they taught during the 2025-2026 school year are:

Elementary School

- Nikki Janiak, Estes Elementary School (Owensboro Independent)
- Kellie Moses, Garth Elementary School (Scott County)
- Amanda O'Bryan, Old Mill Elementary School (Bullitt County)

Middle School

- Katherine Sigmon Berner, Baker Intermediate School (Clark County)
- Gregory Edens, Rosspoint Elementary School (Harlan County)
- Trino Grau, Bryan Station Middle School (Fayette County)

High School

- Paula Gieseke, Christian County High School
- Brandon Riddle, duPont Manual High School (Jefferson County)
- Molly Seifert, Beechwood High School (Beechwood Independent)



Sixteen New Members Selected for 2026-2027 Commissioner's Student Advisory Council

- Established to gather student feedback on critical issues impacting students and schools, the council connects Kentucky students with KDE staff to develop ideas to strengthen student voice and transform education.
- The new members, who will join nine returning members, are:
 - **Mallehwar Jayaraman Suresh**, 12th grade, Western Hills (Franklin County);
 - **Jeremiah Stephens**, 12th grade, duPont Manual High School (Jefferson County);
 - **Amelia Hassett**, 12th grade, J. Graham Brown High School (Jefferson County);
 - **Ava Adame**, 12th grade, McCracken County High School;
 - **Lina Berhane**, 12th grade, Daviess County High School;
 - **Lindsey Wireman**, 12th grade, Magoffin High School;
 - **Gracy Hill**, 12th grade, South Warren County High School;
 - **Rhianna Harrell**, 12th grade, Christian County High School;
 - **Anikaa Sharma**, 11th grade, Pikeville Independent High School;
 - **Noah Ward**, 11th grade, Thomas Nelson High School (Nelson County);
 - **Saachi Thomas**, 11th grade, Paul Laurence High School (Fayette County);
 - **Colin Gearhart**, 11th grade, Floyd Central High School (Floyd County);
 - **Ava June Tackett**, 11th grade, Johnson County High School;
 - **Ellie Gallager**, 11th grade, Bracken County High School;
 - **Farrahlauren Terrado**, 10th grade, Central Hardin High School (Hardin County); and
 - **Ezra Anglin**, 10th grade, Lafayette High School (Fayette County).

Kentucky High School Transformation Work Group Holds Final Meeting in June

- The National Association of State Boards of Education invited the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) to participate in its [High School Transformation State Network](#), which builds the capacity of state boards to enable rich student experiences that foster content mastery and durable skills.
- Work Group Chair Juston Pate, who also serves on the KBE, said throughout their four meetings, the group discussed how to strengthen engagement in high schools for all students.
- They identified the five most pressing issues surrounding high school transformation based on prior input from the Kentucky United We Learn (KUWL) Council: how to push beyond the status quo, equitable access and funding, trust, building a system around vibrant learning, and teacher training and certification.
- Members referred their recommendations around high school transformation to the KUWL Council for continued research and input.

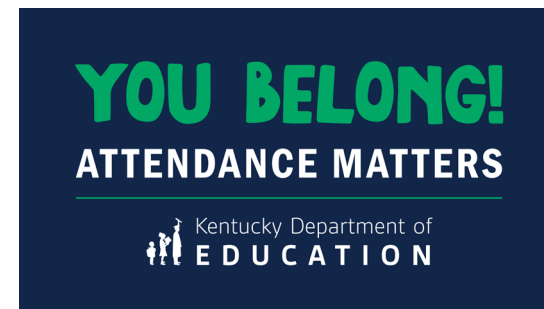
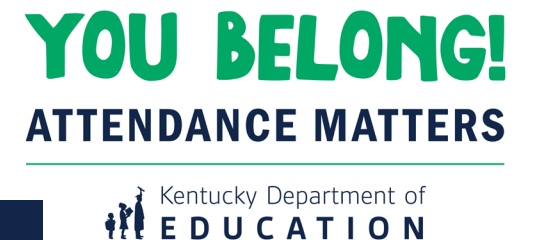
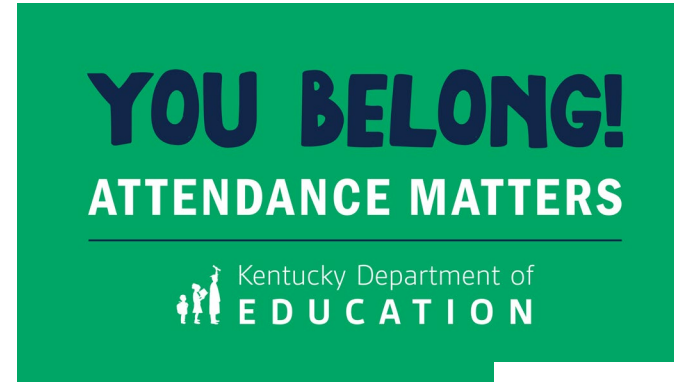


KBE Discusses Next Steps with Assessment and Accountability

- During the [Kentucky Board of Education \(KBE\) meeting June 3-4](#), board members discussed the future of assessment and accountability in Kentucky following legislative changes earlier this year.
- [House Bill \(HB\) 257](#), passed during the Kentucky General Assembly's 2026 regular session, provides districts the flexibility to work more closely with their communities to establish priorities for their schools and help ensure all students have access to vibrant learning experiences.
- Over the next few months, leaders with KDE will continue to meet with stakeholder groups as the department proposes regulations surrounding assessment and accountability for the KBE to begin considering in August.
- [Read more about the June KBE meeting on Kentucky Teacher.](#)

New You Belong! Attendance Matters Resource

- KDE staff have created three new images for districts, schools and other members of your community to share on their digital signs.
- The images continue KDE's You Belong! Attendance Matters campaign, which stresses the importance of regular school attendance.
- The images are available on [KDE's You Belong! webpage](#).
- Please share this information with your schools and leaders in your community!



Important Due Dates Available

- [The 2026-2027 Important Due Dates for Superintendents document is available on SharePoint.](#)
- Please refer to this document for important deadlines, the laws related to those deadlines and KDE contact information if you have questions or need assistance.

Kentucky Earns Highest Federal IDEA Determination for 17 Consecutive Years

- The U.S. Department of Education's (USED's) Office of Special Education Programs recognized Kentucky as meeting the requirements and purposes of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- This marks the 17th consecutive year Kentucky has earned the highest possible federal determination states can receive for implementation of the IDEA.
- Kentucky is one of only four states to have at least 17 consecutive years of earning the Meets Requirements designation, the other three being Missouri, Kansas and Pennsylvania.
- Part B of the IDEA governs how special education and related services are provided to school-aged children (ages 3-21) with disabilities. Kentucky's Part B program is administered by the KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning.
- Thank you for your commitment to ensuring Kentucky's special education students get the services they need!

Kentucky Reads to Succeed Summer Conference



The annual Kentucky Reads to Succeed Summer Conference was attended by 1,600 educators, administrators and district leaders.

- The third-annual Kentucky Reads to Succeed Summer Conference experienced huge success this year, with 1,600 educators, administrators and district leaders in attendance.
- Hosted by KDE at the Galt House in Louisville on June 8-9, the conference featured 73 breakout sessions designed to support classroom teachers, interventionists, instructional coaches, principals and district leaders.
- In previous years, the conference took place on one day, but it expanded this year to be a day and a half.
- The conference takes place each summer and is available for free to any Kentucky public educator. The conference is funded by Senate Bill 9 (2022), the [Reads to Succeed Act](#).

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KDE Updates

Jennifer Ginn

KDE Director of Communications



OSEEL Myth Buster Series

- As a follow-up to the recent Superintendent Focus Group on IDEA Monitoring, KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning (OSEEL) is launching a new Myth Busters series through its weekly *News You Can Use* publication.
- The series will address common misconceptions heard from districts across the Commonwealth.
- Please share this [OSEEL Myth Buster Topic Submission Form](#) so district staff can anonymously share questions, concerns or misconceptions they would like for KDE to address.
- This effort is part of KDE's broader commitment to strengthening communication, increasing transparency and ensuring districts have clear, accurate and actionable information to support their work under IDEA.

Kentucky Numeracy Counts Academies: Applications NOW OPEN!

KCM K-5 Teacher Academies (2nd Cohort)

- A 2-year hybrid learning experience for K-5 educators, launching **Summer 2026**
- Features in-person summer launch sessions plus synchronous and asynchronous virtual learning for Kentucky K-5 math teachers
- Application available on the [KCM website](#)

PIMSER Leadership Academies

- Launching **Summer 2026** with a mix of in-person, synchronous virtual and asynchronous virtual learning
- Prioritizes instructional leaders (district leaders, building principals, assistant principals, etc.) from schools with teachers in the KCM K-5 Teacher Academies
- Application available on the [PIMSER website](#)

EPIC Numeracy Alliance

- A 2-year professional learning grounded in *Patterns* by Carnegie Learning with a mix of in-person, synchronous live virtual and asynchronous virtual learning
- Across both grade-bands (Intermediate 3-5 and Middle Grades 6-8), the Alliance focuses on building teacher skill, increasing self-efficacy in delivering grade-level mathematics, and supporting continuous improvement through collaboration among teachers and leaders.
- For more information, visit the [EPIC Numeracy webpage](#).

Cohort 5 of LETRS for Educators and LETRS for Administrators

- [Registration for Cohort 5 of LETRS](#) is open through Aug. 21.
- Limited licenses are available. First come, first served.
- One registration document for both courses.
- Open to K-5 public school educators who teach reading or work with K-5 students (e.g., core and special education teachers, reading specialists, interventionists, English language development teachers, administrators).
- Professional learning for Cohort 5 begins in October.

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New Waiver Request Forms

Todd Allen, KDE Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel

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Announcing a New K–8 Social Studies Curriculum for Kentucky

Our Commonwealth, Our Nation, Our World

Micki Marinelli, Chief Academic Officer
Office of Teaching and Learning
micki.ray@education.ky.gov



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A New Statewide Partnership

- KDE and the Core Knowledge Foundation (CKF) are partnering to develop a new K-8 Social Studies curriculum
- Built specifically for Kentucky students and educators; directly aligned to the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Social Studies*
- Designed as a High-Quality Instructional Resource (HQIR) aligned to the *KAS*

Responding to District Need

- Districts have consistently requested high-quality, standards-aligned social studies materials
- Current market options often require significant adaptation
- This partnership allows Kentucky to develop materials anchored in the *KAS for Social Studies* from the outset.

HQIR Built *from* Kentucky – Not Adapted *to* Kentucky

Design model:

- Aligned to the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)*
- Reflects Kentucky communities, civic life, economics, geography and history
- Ensures access to rigorous, coherent social studies instruction statewide for K-8
- Knowledge-rich and research-based
- Comprehensive: Texts, tasks and assessments
- Relevant and accessible for ALL learners

Coherent Knowledge Building (K-8)

- Organized around grade-level themes from the *KAS for Social Studies* that build knowledge cumulatively across K-8
- Integrates civics, economics, geography and history
 - Title: *Our Commonwealth, Our Nation, Our World (OCNW)*
 - Shorthand: *Our Commonwealth*
- Connects learning to Kentucky places, stories and contexts from your local communities
- Drives disciplinary inquiry
- Builds student knowledge that will be applied through inquiry
 - Asking questions
 - Evaluating evidence; analyzing sources
 - Developing and communicating informed conclusions
 - Engaging in meaningful, vibrant civic thinking

Building Strong Readers Through Social Studies Knowledge

- Coherent social studies content builds the background knowledge students need to read and understand complex texts
- Regular engagement with meaningful social studies (and science) instruction strengthens vocabulary, comprehension and academic language
- Supports KDE's vision that literacy development is grounded in knowledge-rich instruction

Students become stronger readers *because* they are learning meaningful content.

Why Core Knowledge Foundation (CKF)?

- CKF brings deep expertise in knowledge-rich curriculum design
- KDE ensures alignment to Kentucky's standards and priorities
- Shared goal: An open-source, opt-in HQIR that reflects Kentucky's vision for vibrant, meaningful social studies instruction for ALL K-8 students
- Materials will be:
 - FREE for digital download (all units and lesson plans)
 - Assessments and answer keys will “live” on [KyLearningHub.org](https://www.kylearninghub.org), accessible with district/school email address for log-in
 - Low-cost print student workbook options available

What to Expect

- 2027-2028: K, Grade 3, Grade 5, Grade 8
- 2028-2029: Grades 1, 2, 4, 6, 7
- Comprehensive professional learning will accompany release:
 - Regional in-person curriculum-based professional learning (CBPL) summer sessions
 - Live, virtual follow-up CBPL throughout the academic year
 - Self-paced asynchronous modules on [KyLearningHub.org](https://www.kylearninghub.org)
- Ongoing updates from KDE as development progresses

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2026-2027 Improvement Planning Platform Update

Associate Commissioner Kelly Foster
KDE's Office of Continuous Improvement and Support



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2026-2027 Improvement Planning

- The Cognia Improvement Platform is being updated with a redesigned interface that provides a more user-friendly experience and stronger connections across the four phases of the improvement planning process.
 - As part of this update, we are making changes to platform administration to ensure schools and systems have appropriate access and support.

Email to Add System Platform Administrator

- Each district must identify a point of contact to serve as a system administrator who will be able to add users at building and system levels, as well as view all aspects of the platform.
- To provide this updated contact, superintendents (Heads of Institutions) will receive an email from “Amy Shank via Smartsheet automations@app.smartsheet.com” on July 8.
- Requests are **due July 26**.
- Updates will be made by clicking the “Open Request” button to be taken to a unique link for your system.

Email to Add System Platform Administrator (2)

RE: System Platform Administrator



Amy Shank via Smartsheet <automation@app.smartsheet.com>
To: Rachael Havey

Retention Policy: Cognia_Inbox (7 years)

Expires: 6/27/2033

Mon 6/29/2026 4:14 PM

If there are problems with how this message is displayed, click here to view it in a web browser.

Start your reply all with: [Thank you!](#) [Got it, thanks!](#) [Received, thank you.](#) [Feedback](#)



This Message originated outside your organization.



The Cognia® Improvement Platform is launching in August and how you complete your improvement planning process will be changing. We are asking your system head of institution to add an additional point of contact as a system platform administrator. Please use the "Open Request" button below to add in your new contact person's name and email.

If you have any questions or need to update the system head of institution or primary contact, please contact Julia Rawlings, Senior Director with Cognia, at julia.rawlings@cognia.org.

[Open request](#)



Kentucky Department of
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Training Dates and Locations

Date	Location
Aug. 19	Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative (KVEC) 412 Roy Campbell Drive, Hazard, KY
Aug. 25	Western Kentucky Educational Cooperative (WKEC) 201 General Services Building, Murray, KY
Aug. 26	Green River Regional Educational Cooperative (GRREC) 230 Technology Way, Bowling Green, KY
Sept. 8	Lexington Northeast Christian Church 990 Star Shoot Parkway, Lexington, KY
Sept. 9	Central Bank Center 430 W. Vine St., Lexington, KY
Sept. 15	Center for Professional Learning (Jefferson County Public Schools) 3909 Atkinson Square Drive, Flex Room #1, Louisville, KY
Sept. 16	Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services (NKCES) 5516 East Alexandria Pike, Cold Springs, KY
Sept. 21 – 22	Kentucky Continuous Improvement Summit (Central Bank Center) 430 W. Vine Street, Lexington, KY

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Question and Answer Session

(Submit Questions in Teams)

KDE Leadership



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Important Dates

Education Professional Standards Board

July 13

Kentucky United We Learn Council (in-person)

July 24

Local Superintendents Advisory Council

July 28

Kentucky Board of Education (Kentucky School for the Blind)

Aug. 5-6

Superintendents Webcast

Aug. 11



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