

The 2024 General Assembly adjourned April 15. Per Attorney General opinion OAG 24-04, the effective date of legislation, other than general appropriation bills and acts containing emergency or delayed effective date provisions, passed during this session is July 15.

The guidance provided below focuses on education-related bills that the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) staff identified as needing additional clarification and support. This non-regulatory document is designed to assist schools and districts by highlighting important legislative changes.

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2024-2026 Budget

[House Bill 6](#), which became effective upon passage, outlines the 2024-2026 State/Executive Branch budget. A KDE overview of the education-related budget items can be viewed in this [slide deck](#).

New Reporting Requirements

In addition to providing details on budgetary appropriations, House Bill 6 includes new reporting requirements for school districts. House Bill 6 requires each local board of education that receives state funding from the Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) program and each school to prominently display information about their students' most recent performance on the Kentucky Summative Assessment (KSA). Additionally, the Kentucky Department of Education must post a rank order by overall academic performance of all schools on its website.

Each local education agency (LEA) must prominently display on its internet landing page:

1. In not less than 16-point type, the district's percentage of students scoring:
 - Proficient in Reading
 - Distinguished in Reading
 - Proficient in Mathematics
 - Distinguished in Mathematics

A web link to the district's detailed results on the most recent KSA. Each LEA must also display the information in number 1 at **the top of each page** of the LEA's website **in a banner format**.

Each school must prominently display on its internet landing page:

1. In not less than 16-point type, the school's percentage of students scoring:
 - Proficient in Reading
 - Distinguished in Reading
 - Proficient in Mathematics
 - Distinguished in Mathematics

A web link to the school's detailed results on the most recent KSA. Each school must also display the information in number 1 at **the top of each page** of the school's website **in a banner format**.

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) must post a rank order by overall academic performance of all schools on its website. Additionally, KDE must ensure compliance of the requirements outlined above by every district and offer assistance as needed.

KDE will use accountability Overall Scores to post rank order information in spreadsheets, by level (elementary, middle, high), in the [Open House](#) section of the KDE website.

District Support

The KDE Office of Assessment and Accountability (OAA) will support districts by providing data files that include each district and school's proficient and distinguished percentages in reading and mathematics which reflect the performance of accountable students. Districts will be notified when these files are ready for sharing.

KDE will offer examples and guidance to help districts meet the specific website requirements.

Districts will be required to demonstrate compliance with these website requirements to ensure that the criteria have been met. Additional information about this assurance process will be provided at a later date.

School Health

[House Bill 22](#) relates to automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Districts are no longer required to have medical oversight of an AED program. Districts are no longer required to report use of an AED to a medical overseer, but now are required to report it to the local emergency medical service provider as soon as possible.

[House Bill 142](#) requires each local board of education to amend its written policies that prohibit the use of tobacco, alternative nicotine products and vapor products to include the distribution of evidence-based, age-appropriate prevention and cessation materials to all students at the beginning of each school year and access to evidence-based, age-appropriate nicotine prevention and cessation material throughout the school year for all students in the district. KDE will provide suggested resources to districts before the start of the next school year.

The bill also dictates certain behavior resolutions for students engaged in tobacco, alternative nicotine, or vapor products. Districts must confiscate any products found on a student under age twenty-one (21). Upon the first incident, the student must be referred to the school counselor or other school-based mental health services provider to review the adopted prevention and cessation materials. Local board policies must dictate disciplinary action for subsequent offenses; however, the bill specifies that a third or subsequent incident may result in an in-school or out-of-school suspension. Students must be provided access to prevention and cessation materials during an in-school suspension. It should be noted that these school removal consequences are permissive under the law, not required. KDE encourages districts to review the best practices for

curbing student substance use and focus on behavioral responses that support evidence-based treatment options. The Kentucky Department for Public Health recommends that school districts review best practices provided in the Public Health Law Center’s publication [Commercial Tobacco-Free K-12 School Model Policy](#).

The bill also requires local boards of education to submit the number of behavior incidents for tobacco, alternative nicotine products and vape products to the KDE annually, as well as whether medical intervention was provided as a result of the incident. Specific instructions for documenting this in Infinite Campus will be distributed by KDE prior to the start of the next school year.

[House Bill 169](#) amends KRS 158.162 to now require districts to have an AED in a public, readily accessible, well-marked location in every school building and, as funds become available, at school-sanctioned athletic events and practices. The amendment expands the AED requirement to elementary schools, which was omitted in the previous version of the law. Further, districts must report to KDE, by November 1 of each year, the number and location of each AED; the name, school and training date of each employee and coach trained in AED use; and the progress made at having an AED at each school-sanctioned athletic competition and practice. KDE is working to finalize the reporting mechanism and format for districts to submit the required report.

[House Bill 829](#) encompasses a variety of requirements related to medical cannabis. Section 4 of the bill requires local boards of education to amend policies related to medical cannabis use. These amended policies must either prohibit or permit the use of medical cannabis on school property by a pupil who is a registered and qualified patient. Additionally, they must allow parents or legal guardians to administer medical cannabis, ensure that medical cannabis is administered out of view of other students, and includes a process by which the school nurse or other staff member may refuse to administer or supervise the administration of medical cannabis.

Curriculum and Instruction

[House Bill 162](#) amends several statutes and creates new sections of KRS Chapter 158 and Chapter 164 in an effort to create long-term, systemic improvement in mathematics outcomes. HB 162, Section 2(1)(b) provides that “[a]ll students in kindergarten through grade three (3) needing to make accelerated progress toward proficiency in mathematics based on data from valid and reliable universal screening and diagnostic assessments receive high quality, evidence-based mathematics instruction and intervention aligned to grade-level learning as established in the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Mathematics*.”

To successfully support students needing acceleration, HB 162, Section 4(1) requires the establishment of a multitiered system of supports (MTSS) that “shall include evidence-based mathematics instruction, intervention and instructional strategies for district-wide use for students in kindergarten through grade three (3).”

All students in kindergarten through grade three (3) identified as needing accelerated progress toward proficient performance in mathematics will be provided with intensive intervention and direct instruction that addresses students’ individual differences and enables students to receive in-school instructional services and enrichment programming using evidence-based mathematics instruction.

Comprehensive actions to improve mathematics outcomes fall into multiple areas (detailed below):

State support strategies

- Statewide professional learning to support kindergarten through grade eight (8) teachers with evidence-based mathematics instruction, instructional materials and assessment in mathematics.
- Grants will be provided to support the adoption of required high-quality instructional resources for mathematics determined by the department to be reliable, valid and aligned to the *Kentucky Academic Standards for Mathematics* for kindergarten through grade three (3).

Early intervention and instruction

- Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, students in kindergarten through grade three (3) shall be given a universal screener, determined by KDE to be valid and reliable, within the first thirty (30) calendar days of the school year.
- Students identified as needing acceleration, based on the results of the universal screener, shall be given a mathematics diagnostic assessment determined by KDE to be valid and reliable, within the first forty-five (45) calendar days.
- Implementation of an MTSS to support and engage all students in learning to apply mathematical content and practices at a proficient level and ensure all students routinely have opportunities to experience high-quality mathematics instruction, learn challenging, grade-level appropriate mathematics content and practices, and receive the necessary support to make progress toward proficiency.

Mathematics improvement plan/Mathematics improvement team

- Students identified as needing accelerated intervention in kindergarten through grade three (3) shall receive a mathematics improvement plan based on the results of the approved diagnostic assessment, within the first sixty (60) calendar days of the school year.

- The mathematics improvement plan is developed and monitored by a mathematics improvement team, which consists of the student’s parents/guardians, teachers (including those who are knowledgeable of the mathematics curriculum and evidence-based mathematics resources), and any other specialized certified school employees, including coaches and special education teachers.
- In compliance with 20 U.S.C. sec. 1414(a)(1)(E), screening of a student to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation shall not be considered an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services, and nothing in HB 162, Section 4 shall limit a school district from completing an initial evaluation of a student suspected of having a disability.

Family and community engagement

- Parents/guardians of students in kindergarten through grade three (3) identified as needing accelerated progress in mathematics shall be provided with resources to encourage mathematics success at home in addition to written quarterly progress reports containing the information provided in the mathematics improvement plan.

Strategies for postsecondary preservice teacher programs

- Teacher preparation programs for elementary regular education shall include kindergarten through grade three (3) evidence-based instructional strategies, KDE-identified high-quality instructional resources, and assessment programming and processes for mathematics.
- Teacher candidates completing field experience and student teaching shall be placed with experienced teachers who model effective use of evidence-based instructional strategies, high-quality instructional resources, assessment data to design instruction and intervention, and progress monitoring of student performance.
- The Education Professional Standards Board shall develop and maintain a list of approved mathematics teacher preparation assessments, develop an evaluation rubric for observing teacher candidates with a focus on mathematics content and pedagogical knowledge, and report program data to an external evaluator for analysis of postsecondary teacher preparation programs with the goal of increasing new teacher candidate success in mathematics instruction, content knowledge and skills.

For more details on the requirements provided under HB 162, please access the [Kentucky Numeracy Counts Act Implementation Timeline guidance document](#).

[House Bill 535](#) amends KRS 158.141 to require, **beginning with students entering grade 9 in the 2025-2026 academic year**, a one-half credit course in civic literacy or a civics test for graduation. This requirement also applies to students participating in the Early Graduation Program

established under [KRS 158.142](#). The current civics test requirements provided under KRS 158.141 will remain in place for the 2024-2025 school year.

HB 535 allows local school districts to **choose one of two options** that shall be required for graduates of the school district:

1. A one-half credit course in civic literacy that shall include but not be limited to instruction in the following areas:
 - An overview of America's founding history, including but not limited to key texts; the role and operations of local, state, and national governments; the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; federalism; civil liberties; and civil rights;
 - Principles of the United States government;
 - The Constitution of Kentucky and the Constitution of the United States;
 - Institutions of the United States government and the responsibilities of the executive branch, legislative branch and judicial branch;
 - State government and local governments and the role of each;
 - Political parties and interest groups;
 - Campaigns and elections;
 - United States Congress;
 - Domestic policy;
 - Foreign policy;
 - Comparative systems;
 - International relations; and
 - Major issues facing government.

Or the school district can choose the option to administer a civics test per the requirements provided below:

2. A civics test composed of 100 questions drawn from those that are set forth within the civics test administered by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to persons seeking to become naturalized citizens. Should the local board of education choose the option to administer the civics test, the following parameters must be met:
 - Students shall be provided with the opportunity to take the test as many times as necessary for the student to pass the test **without the use of instructional aids** during testing, including but not limited to textbooks and internet browser searching.
 - A student shall be considered to have **successfully completed the test if at least 70% of the questions are answered correctly.**

- A student who has passed a similar test within the previous five (5) years may provide the board with evidence of successful completion and shall not be required to take the test.
- **By September 1, 2026, and each year thereafter**, each school district requiring a civics test for graduation **shall submit annual testing data** to the Kentucky Department of Education, which shall include:
 - The first-time successful completion rate of the civics test; and
 - The average number of times a student takes the civics test for successful completion.
- Schools and districts must meet the requirements and accommodations of a student's individualized education program (IEP) as defined in [KRS 158.281](#) or a Section 504 Plan as defined in [KRS 156.027](#).

For additional information, access the [Considerations for Implementing HB 535 Civic Literacy Requirement supplemental guidance document](#).

[House Bill 695](#) establishes the Adaptive Kindergarten Readiness pilot project to provide preschool children with access to educational technology programs that use family engagement to improve kindergarten readiness. KDE will oversee the project implementation, which will be carried out by a selected provider. During the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years (contingent upon available funding), the pilot project will provide a cohort of eligible children with access to an educational technology program that utilizes family engagement to deliver age-appropriate instruction in reading that may be implemented in the home or in child care centers, offers optional instruction in mathematics and science, aligns with relevant state standards for preschool, assists with the objectives of Head Start, assists children with disabilities in preparing for kindergarten, and meets the benchmarks for evidence-based programs established by the United States Department of Education.

Eligible children are defined as being 4 or 5 years old and not currently enrolled in kindergarten in a public school district, but eligible to enroll during the following school year. HB 695 requires 40% of enrollment be reserved for children with a household income of no more than 200% of the federal poverty level. Related to pilot project access, the bill requires that families with a household income of no more than 400% of the federal poverty level be provided a computer or tablet and access to internet services, which will reduce barriers to the program.

Districts will receive further communication upon the selection of a service provider, which will develop a recruitment plan for family participation in the pilot project.

[Senate Bill 167](#) requires cursive writing as a course of study in all elementary schools **beginning in the 2025-2026 school year**. Local schools and districts shall ensure proficiency in cursive

writing by the end of grade five (5). Grade 2 and grade 3 standards for cursive writing are provided in the [Kentucky Academic Standards for Reading and Writing](#).

Section 2 amends the definition of writing to mean “a purposeful act of thinking and expression that uses language to explore ideas and communicate meaning to others. Writing is a complex, multifaceted act of communication and is distinct from basic handwriting or penmanship.” Access the KDE’s [writing program guidelines](#) for more information on including an effective writing program within the curriculum.

Educator Workforce

[House Bill 300](#) amends KRS 161.120 to impose strict timelines on the review and processing of complaints of educator misconduct. This includes the requirement that KDE staff for the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) conduct an initial review of a completed complaint within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt to determine whether there is sufficient evidence that a violation has occurred. The bill also provides for the dismissal of complaints that are not reviewed by the EPSB in the timelines prescribed by the bill.

The EPSB will update 16 KAR 1:030 and the *Procedures Relating to EPSB Action on an Educator’s Certification* to comply with the requirements of House Bill 300. These updates will be released later this summer. Superintendents still have a statutory duty to report educator misconduct to the EPSB, and that report must be made within thirty (30) calendar days. To assist staff in complying with the timelines created by House Bill 300, it is imperative that all reports and complaints submitted to the EPSB contain the full facts and circumstances upon submission and that all relevant documents and records, including investigations, are filed with the complaint. Questions regarding a Superintendent’s Duty to report can be directed to epsbeducatorethics@education.ky.gov.

[House Bill 354](#) amends KRS 61.637 and 78.5540 to require KDE, beginning August 1, 2024, to reimburse the Kentucky Retirement Systems or the County Employees Retirement System for the cost of the health insurance premium, not to exceed the cost of the single premium, paid by the system to provide coverage for retirees who participated in a hazardous position prior to July 1, 2003, and who is re-employed by a local school board. KDE is working to finalize the reimbursement process and will provide additional information to districts as soon as possible in advance of the August 1, 2024, effective date.

[House Bill 377](#) creates two programs aimed at teacher recruitment and retention to be administered by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA). Section 1 of this act establishes the Teacher Recruitment Student Loan Forgiveness Pilot Program to encourage and assist individuals in becoming certified teachers in Kentucky. Under this program, KHEAA

may provide teacher recruitment awards to eligible students who demonstrate financial need and are pursuing initial teacher certification. Eligible students accepted into a teacher preparation program may be awarded up to \$5,000 per semester or summer term. Eligible students who have declared a major of teacher preparation may be awarded a maximum of \$2,500 per semester or summer term. Recipients shall render one (1) year of qualified teaching service for each semester of award received.

Section 2 of the act establishes the Student Teacher Stipend Program to reduce financial barriers to students completing educator preparation programs. Beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year, KHEAA may award a stipend of up to \$5,000 to an eligible student during the academic term in which the student is completing student teaching.

KHEAA shall set the requirements for and administer both programs. Both programs and awards are contingent on available funding. House Bill 377 contained an emergency clause and became effective upon the governor's signature on April 9, 2024. Any questions about the Teacher Recruitment Student Loan Forgiveness Pilot Program or the Student Teacher Stipend Program should be directed to [KHEAA](#).

[House Bill 387](#) amends KRS 161.102 to create three substitute teacher certifications and set the education requirements and allowable employment for each. The first certificate is a one-year emergency substitute certificate. This certificate required candidates to have at least sixty-four (64) hours of college credit, but now candidates with a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalency may qualify for a one-year emergency substitute certificate. This certificate is not valid for full-time employment with a school district as a substitute teacher and is not valid for the replacement of the teacher of record for more than twenty consecutive instructional days.

The second certificate is a five-year substitute certificate available to candidates with a bachelor's degree. The third certificate is a 10-year certificate available to candidates who previously held a Kentucky teaching certificate which required completing a four-year teacher preparation program and a bachelor's degree. Also, candidates who currently hold or previously held a valid out-of-state teaching certificate requiring completion of a four (4) year teacher preparation program and a bachelor's degree qualify for the 10-year substitute certificate. The Education Professional Standards Board will update the regulations on substitute teacher certification in accordance with the provisions of House Bill 387 and release guidance this summer.

Section 2 of House Bill 387 also allows KDE to enter into an agreement with a building and construction trade organization to develop a training program for school counselors. The training

program's purpose shall be to promote building and construction trades and training facilities available to students by making counselors aware of what is available to them.

[Senate Bill 265](#) impacts teacher certification and new teacher induction. Section 1 of the bill amends KRS 161.030 to remove the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) and direct that teacher certification shall be awarded upon successful completion of an educator preparation program or alternative certification pathway and passing of the required assessment and shall not be dependent on employment.

Section 2 creates a new teacher induction and mentor program. The Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) is tasked with developing standards and guidance for the program, and districts are directed to provide an induction program for teachers in their first year of teaching. Sections 3-5 of the bill amend various statutes to remove references to KTIP.

Section 6 of the bill amends KRS 161.048 to make changes to the alternative routes to teacher certification. While there are no changes to Option 4 or Option 9, the other routes include the following updates:

Option 1, Exceptional Work Experience: The application is no longer submitted by the district but will be submitted by the applicant. An offer of employment will not be required for initial certification, but candidates will be required to complete one year of successful teaching experience and have a recommendation from the employing district before being issued the professional certificate.

Option 2, Local District Training Program: Initial certification under this route no longer requires an offer of employment, but candidates will be required to complete one year of successful teaching experience and have a recommendation from the employing district before being issued the professional certificate. Currently there are no Option 2 programs in operation.

Option 3, College Faculty Route: Initial certification under this route no longer requires an offer of employment, but candidates will be required to complete one year of successful teaching experience and have a recommendation from the employing district before being issued the professional certificate.

Option 5, Veterans of Armed Forces: The application is no longer submitted by the district but will be submitted by the applicant. An offer of employment will not be required for initial certification, but candidates will be required to complete one year of successful teaching experience and have a recommendation from the employing district before being issued the professional certificate.

Option 6, University Alternative Program: Candidates will be required to complete one year of successful teaching experience and have a recommendation from the employing district before being issued the professional certificate.

Option 7, Institute Route: Candidates are no longer required to complete an admission assessment or pass the academic content assessment before issuance of the provisional certificate and may be issued the provisional certificate upon enrollment in the institute. Candidates will have to pass the academic content assessment, complete one year of successful teaching experience, and have a recommendation from the employing district before being issued the professional certificate.

Option 8, Teach for America: Initial certification under this route no longer requires an offer of employment, but candidates will be required to complete one year of successful teaching experience and have a recommendation from the employing district before being issued the professional certificate.

Senate Bill 265 contained an emergency clause and became effective on the governor's signature on April 9, 2024. The EPSB is working to update certification regulations to comply with Senate 265 and is developing standards and guidance for the new teacher induction and mentor program. The KDE Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness will host a webcast this summer to provide a certification update.

School Transportation

[House Bill 446](#) requires each local board of education to adopt a transportation services policy based on the statewide transportation services policy guidelines and the statewide student discipline guidelines. The new policy must ensure student and staff safety on school transportation. The policy shall be updated no less frequently than every two (2) years, with the first update being completed by the first instructional day of the 2024-2025 school year. Additionally, districts must ensure that two-way communication exists between bus drivers and other employees, volunteers or contractors and the supervisor, superintendent or other administrator as necessary to carry out the discipline policies. Policies must include the following elements:

- Procedures for identifying, documenting and reporting incidents of bullying, incidents of violations in behavior policy and other statutorily required incident reporting.
- Procedures for investigating and responding to a report.
- A method of protecting a complainant from retaliation.
- A process that allows the vehicle operator to refuse further transportation of a student whose behavior violation places the student or others at risk of physical harm or otherwise makes it unsafe for the driver to continue transporting students.

- A requirement that the superintendent or designee issue an interim or final determination of disciplinary action within one week of the report being submitted.
- A process allowing the operator of a vehicle to file a written or electronic complaint of misconduct, including a recommendation regarding revocation of the student's transportation privileges and to be heard in any disciplinary proceedings against a student.
- A requirement that any recommendation by the operator of a vehicle shall be considered by the superintendent or designee as a factor in the interim or final disciplinary decision.
- A requirement that the operator of a vehicle, to the extent permitted by law, receive written notice from the superintendent or designee of the investigation, disciplinary action imposed and rationale.
- A disciplinary structure that provides interventions or disciplinary consequences that reflect the severity of the violation, and increased intervention and consequences upon subsequent violations of the policy.
- The standard of behavior expected from parents or guardians of students being transported by or for the district while interacting with district transportation staff and the consequences of failure to follow the standards.
- References to relevant criminal violations based on potential misconduct covered by the policy.
- A process for the operator of a vehicle, upon the reinstatement of a student's transportation privileges, to elect to receive an alternate route assignment in lieu of transporting the student.

Every student in the district and at least one parent or guardian of each student must acknowledge in writing the receipt, comprehension and agreement of adherence to the transportation safety policy within seven days of the student's first day of attendance during each school year. Failure to submit the written acknowledgement may be grounds for revocation of transportation privileges.

In developing and implementing new policies, districts are advised that all federal transportation laws continue to apply, including those for students with disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, and students engaged in the foster care system.

[House Bill 447](#) relates to student transportation in passenger vehicles other than school buses. Districts are permitted to transport students in vehicles owned or leased by the district that are designed to transport nine (9) or fewer passengers, including the driver. To utilize such vehicles for daily transport, the district must have a KDE-approved alternative transportation plan. Additional information about the process for plan submission will be provided to districts at a later date.

Vehicles must be marked clearly as transporting students and subject to a safety inspection every thirty (30) days. Drivers must have a valid class D operator's license. The Kentucky Board of Education will promulgate regulations setting forth the minimum standards and specifications for vehicles, along with insurance requirements. Regulations will include minimum route safety standards, driver qualifications and training. Drivers will be subject to drug testing, background checks, driving history and criminal offense reporting. A driver transporting students without a valid license shall be subject to criminal penalties.

[Senate Bill 18](#) relates to permissible equipment, supplies and accessories that districts may use on school buses. KDE will provide a list of standards and specifications for accessory equipment, supplies and replacement equipment to the Finance and Administration Cabinet for the purposes of maintaining price contract lists.

Career and Technical Education

[House Bill 499](#) makes changes to the funding allocation process for state supplemental career and technical education (CTE) grant funds. Previously, a district's allocation calculation was based only on student enrollment in qualifying CTE programs. This bill changes the funding calculation to be based on sixty percent (60%) enrollment funding and (40%) performance funding. Districts will receive funding incentives based on the number of 12th-grade students who have obtained concentrator status in their CTE program, passed an industry certification or CTE end-of-program assessment, earned a grade of "C" or higher in a CTE dual credit course, or completed three hundred (300) or more hours in a CTE cooperative education (co-op), internship, or apprenticeship course. The bill eliminates the former mid-year adjustment, making district initial allocations their final allocation and creates a process for districts to apply to use a portion of their grant funding in middle grades.

HB 499 also requires that CTE programs meet the requirements of [Perkins V](#) to be eligible for supplemental CTE grant funds.

Pursuant to the bill, KDE will monitor the use of funds and will publish district's grant allocations by enrollment and performance funding to the department's website. The KDE Office of Career and Technical Education has published a [Frequently Asked Questions document](#) for grant recipients.

[Senate Bill 164](#) allows articulation agreements between licensed proprietary schools and local school districts or state-operated area technology centers. SB 164 requires the Department of Housing, Buildings and Construction to recognize and honor those agreements to allow for equivalencies to licensure requirements, provided the licensed proprietary school be a

department-approved education provider or have a training course that is acceptable to the department. SB 164 requires no action by the KDE.

Student Enrollment and Attendance

[House Bill 471](#) waives the requirement for parents of a military family to appear in person for enrollment or course registration, including enrollment in specific school or programs within the district.

[House Bill 611](#) makes changes to the timeline for processing truancy violations. The director of pupil personnel shall report any student who has been absent without excuse for fifteen (15) or more days during the school year to the county attorney for determination of appropriate court intervention. The bill also makes some clarifications to the processes for the county attorney and court-designated worker.

School Facilities

[House Bill 727](#) authorizes districts to issue general obligation bonds. KDE is working with the School Facilities Construction Commission as well as the Finance and Administration Cabinet to provide guidance related to the implementation of these sections. The measure also contains sections extending HB 678 (2022) facility flexibility for districts. HB 6 (2024) also contains language extending HB 678 language through FY 2026. HB 727, effective July 15, 2024, contains additional language not found in HB 6 wherein KDE will continue to assist and provide guidance to requesting local boards, any project request or submission awaiting KDE approval prior to the effective date of the bill shall be subject to the provisions of HB 727, and there is no waiver of prior approval for any projects requiring prior SEA approval pursuant to federal. Effectively, districts should continue to operate under the provisions of HB 678 through the next biennium.

School Safety

[Senate Bill 2](#) expands upon the School Safety and Resiliency Act of 2019.

- This bill creates a new school security program called “Guardians.” Information regarding the Guardians program will be forthcoming from the [Kentucky Center for School Safety](#).
- Additionally, the bill requires that school counselors spend at least sixty percent (60%) of their time providing direct services to students. Direct services are defined in the bill as “in-person or virtual services provided directly to a student by a school counselor, including but not limited to individual counseling, group counseling, and individual student planning, scheduling, and registration.”

- The bill also expands the work of the trauma informed team. This team is charged with:
 - Supporting school personnel in implementing the school’s trauma informed approach;
 - Identifying ways to recognize and respond to mental health issues; and
 - Identifying ways to build resiliency and wellness in all students.
- Schools and districts must now submit an annual record of the trauma informed team’s work and the district’s trauma informed approach plan to KDE. This information will be used to generate reports to the legislature, inform technical assistance and develop professional learning opportunities. Specific details regarding the format and submission process for this record is forthcoming.
- The bill requires the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security (KOHS) to maintain and update its anonymous reporting tool. Information regarding the tool’s updates will be forthcoming from the [KOHS](#).
- The bill requires that each school provides two evidence-based suicide prevention awareness lessons each year, one by September 15 and the second by January 15. Students who are absent on the day of the lesson must be given an opportunity to receive the lesson at a later time. Options for delivering this training will be communicated prior to the start of the school year.
- The bill creates a new “school mapping data” project that will support first responders in responding to emergencies. Information regarding this process will be forthcoming from the [Kentucky Center for School Safety](#).

Section 5 amends KRS 158.4416 to provide new definitions for the following:

- "Direct services" means in-person or virtual services provided directly to a student by a school counselor, including but not limited to individual counseling, group counseling, and individual student planning, scheduling, and registration.
- "Indirect services" means services provided on behalf of a student as a result of interactions with others, including but not limited to consultation and collaboration with parents, teachers and other educators.
- "School psychologist" means an individual who holds a valid school psychology certificate issued in accordance with the administrative regulations of the Education Professional Standards Board.
- "School social worker" means an individual who holds a valid school social work certificate issued in accordance with the administrative regulations of the Education Professional Standards Board.
- "Trauma" means physical, emotional or life-threatening harm.

Section 5 also amends the definitions for “school-based mental health services provider” and “trauma-informed approach” provided under KRS 158.4416.

Section 9, subsection (6)(c) amends requirements for school district employees with job duties requiring direct contact with students in grades four (4) through twelve (12) to receive a minimum of one (1) hour of high-quality evidence-based suicide prevention training each school year, including risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, response procedures, referral, postvention, and the recognition of signs and symptoms of possible mental illness.

SB 2 defines “postvention” as a series of planned supports and interventions with persons affected by a suicide for the purpose of facilitating the grieving or adjustment process, stabilizing the environment, reducing the risk of negative behaviors and limiting the risk of further suicides through contagion.

[Senate Bill 11](#) requires court-designated workers to notify the superintendent of a public school district, or the principal of a nonpublic school, if a student is charged with a felony or a misdemeanor involving a controlled substance, the possession, carrying, or use of a deadly weapon, physical injury to another person, sexual contact, sexual intercourse, or deviate sexual intercourse. If a charge is dismissed or if the student successfully completes a diversion program, the court-designated worker must notify the superintendent, or principal of a nonpublic school, at which time the institution is required to destroy all records of the incident or notification. School districts may not remove records of incidents that occurred on school property and have subsequently been recorded as behavior incidents in Infinite Campus (IC), however, the charge indicator in IC can be deselected upon the notification by the court-designated worker.

Local Boards of Education

[House Bill 449](#) amends KRS 160.180 to provide additional types of evidence to document a board of education candidate's completion of 12th grade. The bill also addresses the certification and training of school board members, specifying the training requirements they must fulfill. The Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA) is the Kentucky Board of Education designated provider of most training to local board of education members. KSBA also tracks all local board member training. KSBA will implement HB 449 amendments in its local board member training programs.

Kentucky Department of Education

[House Bill 825](#) requires that the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) conduct a special examination of the Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky School for the Blind, Kentucky School for the

Deaf and state area technology centers, assessing the “extent to which [KDE] complies with statutory mandates and requirements.” The special examination must assess KDE’s “operational effectiveness relating to the efficient management, control, and operation of the schools, departments, projects, and initiatives under its jurisdiction, including identification of those departments, projects, and initiatives that do not serve to improve the educational outcomes of the Commonwealth’s students.” An initial preliminary report of the results shall be submitted to the Legislative Research Commission by October 15, 2024, with a final report to be submitted and presented to the Interim Joint Committee on Education by July 1, 2025.

As KDE receives significant state and federal funding to support the Commonwealth's 171 local school districts, the state-operated schools -- including the Kentucky School for the Deaf and the Kentucky School for the Blind -- and the statewide system of area technology centers, KDE takes its responsibility as the steward of this funding seriously. To that end, KDE understand the importance of financial and programmatic audits to assist in ensuring that it manages funds effectively and implements programs with fidelity. KDE always welcomes findings that help it improve processes.

KDE participates in various financial audits and performance audits each year. Some are conducted annually, while others are more periodic in nature. These audits are conducted by the Kentucky APA, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The results of audits and any corrective actions taken by the agency are available for public review.

By the nature of any audit, time spent by staff in assisting auditors impacts the level of service in day-to-day operations for local school districts and other interested constituents. However, KDE will strive to minimize any delay in service to local school districts, while remaining available and responsive to the work of the APA as it conducts the HB 825 special examination.