



Dr. Robbie Fletcher
Commissioner of Education

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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June 6, 2025

Sarah Wasson, Superintendent
Powell County School District
691 Breckinridge Street
Stanton, KY 40380

Dear Superintendent Wasson:

As you know, one goal of Kentucky Statewide Consolidated Monitoring (KSCM) is to help create opportunities for the programs in our schools and districts to look at new ways to collaborate and collectively meet our ultimate goal: increasing student achievement while closing gaps and positioning our students to be college- and career-ready. The team members from your visit have engaged in this collaborative process in order to produce the attached Consolidated Monitoring Report.

During the 2024-25 school year, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) conducted monitoring in the Powell County School District. During this process, KDE program staff, utilizing program-specific monitoring tools, conducted on-site visits for the following programs:

- Title I, Part A
- Title II, Part A
- Title IV, Part A
- Title V, Part B
- Alternative Education Programs
- Preschool
- Procurement

Each program involved in the KSCM has an impact on our goal. For example, Title II, Part A focuses on improving teacher and principal quality to ensure that all students have equal access to highly qualified and effective teachers and leaders. Title I programs provide not only funding, but also guidance on working with disadvantaged students.

This report is the result of what can be best described as a “snapshot” of the district taken during our visit. It begins with identifying “effective practices.” These are individual program practices that the team felt were effective, and in some cases innovative. We strongly suggest that the practices identified be submitted to the [KDE Best Practices website](#).

Each district program has already been provided an individual report as required by federal or state law. All findings will need to be addressed by district program areas as specified in the individual reports.

In the meantime, if you have questions regarding specific program monitoring requirements, please contact the individual program contacts listed in this report. If you have questions concerning the consolidated monitoring process, please contact [Erin Sudduth](#) by email or by phone at (502) 564-3791, Ext. 4021. Information regarding education programs within the state of Kentucky may also be found at the [KDE website](#).

Thank you for your work in improving Kentucky's education programs to better serve our children.

Sincerely,

Kelly Foster, Ed.D.
Associate Commissioner
Office of Continuous Improvement and Support
Kentucky Department of Education

KF/TR/ES/vb

Attachment: Consolidated Monitoring Report for Powell County Public Schools

2024-2025 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

District: Powell County

Date(s) of Visit: March 25-26, 2025

Team Leads:

- Title I, Part A – Erica Tipton
- Title II, Part A – Dana Kelly
- Title IV, Part A – Lee Bowling
- Title V, Part B – Shashawna Dotson
- Alternative Education Programs – Leticia Porter
- Preschool – Tammy Rutherford

Effective Practice No. 1: Community

Program(s) Addressed: Title I, Part A; Title IV, Part A

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 1

Powell County demonstrates a commitment to community engagement through well-established partnerships with organizations such as Kiwanis and Partners for Rural Impact (PRI). These collaborations offer students enriching, no-cost learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom, including community-based events like visits to the Gorge Underground and the Reptile Zoo, which promote experiential learning. Additionally, under Title IV, Part A, the district has implemented a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan, consistently consulting with local partners and gathering input throughout the year. This ongoing collaboration reflects a deliberate and effective approach to fostering community involvement that contributes to student success.

Effective Practice No. 2: Finance

Program(s) Addressed: Title I, Part A; Title II, Part A; Title IV, Part A; Title V, Part B

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 2

Powell County demonstrates effective fiscal management through strategic resource allocation and alignment of financial planning across programs. All applicable federal programs consistently matched spending plans with actual expenditures. Activities such as reallocating funds to address evolving needs, eliminating redundancy and maintaining strong oversight through internal tools like inventory or staffing spreadsheets reflect a commitment to the integrity of internal processes and procedures. Ongoing and documented collaboration between the program coordinators and finance officer demonstrates that funds are managed in a way that ensures intentionality and timely usage of federal funds.

Effective Practice No. 3: Professional Development

Program(s) Addressed: Title II, Part A; Preschool

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 3

The district places a strong emphasis on meaningful professional development that enhances staff effectiveness and student outcomes. Under Title II, Part A, the district provides well-structured professional learning opportunities that are aligned with educator needs and designed to support continuous growth. The Title II, Part A coordinator plays a key role in this work, communicating new professional learning opportunities in a timely and accessible manner. School leaders consistently reported positive working relationships with the district, particularly highlighting the collaborative support they receive for professional learning. In the preschool program, there is clear evidence that

professional development is directly connected to staff roles, with multiple trainings offered to support the revised All STARS quality initiative. These combined efforts reflect a commitment to ensuring that instructional staff are well-equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for high-quality teaching and learning.

Effective Practice No. 4: Leadership

Program(s) Addressed: Title I, Part A; Preschool

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 4

Powell County demonstrates strong leadership characterized by transparency, responsiveness and a data-driven approach. District leadership fosters continuous improvement through consistent communication and thoughtful resource evaluation, ensuring alignment between federal expenditures and educational goals. In the preschool program, staff expressed a high level of appreciation for the supportive leadership provided by both the district preschool director and school-level administrative teams. This unified leadership approach enhances program effectiveness and contributes to a positive, productive and collaborative environment that benefits both staff and students.

Effective Practice No. 5: Communication

Program(s) Addressed: Title I, Part A; Title II, Part A; Title IV, Part A

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 5

Powell County demonstrates a commitment to clear, consistent and collaborative communication across federal programs. The district prioritizes transparency and keeps staff well-informed through regular updates and ongoing consultation. Documented evidence and school-level interviews consistently confirmed that district staff provide effective communication and responsive technical assistance. The federal programs coordinators maintain collaboration with school administrators, supporting the development, implementation and evaluation of program initiatives. This ongoing communication enables the district to address needs, make informed decisions and deliver targeted support effectively.

Opportunity for Improvement No. 1: Student Services and Plans

Programs Addressed: Title I, Part A; Alternative Education

Summary of Opportunity for Improvement No. 1

While the district has some strengths in student services, especially through targeted efforts at the high school, there is a need for more consistent, comprehensive support structures. Both Title I, Part A and the Alternative Education Program (AEP) identified areas for improvement, particularly in addressing social-emotional learning (SEL), behavior management and individualized student planning. Excessive classroom removals point to a need for districtwide discipline reform rooted in SEL principles. Additionally, the lack of completed and utilized Individual Learning Plans for Alternative Programs (ILPAs), minimal behavioral data collection and limited postsecondary planning support underscore systemic gaps that hinder student growth and long-term success at the AEP.

Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s) for Opportunity for Improvement No. 1

Under Title V, funds have been used to provide focused staffing and intentional behavioral interventions. These efforts have contributed positive results, including reduced suspension rates, improved attendance, higher academic performance and strengthened relationships with families. To bridge disparities in student services, the district should consider scaling up the effective practices seen

in the high school's Title V implementation – such as dedicated support staff and structured behavior systems – across all programs, including the AEP. This will help ensure all students have access to the support necessary for academic and personal success.

A key step in this process is the incorporation of more intentional, accessible and proactive counseling and mental health services at the AEP. Establishing regular access to school-based mental health professionals, providing counseling options and ensuring trauma-informed approaches are embedded in daily practice will address the complex needs of AEP students and support long-term stability.

In addition, the district should develop and implement clear entrance and exit criteria for the AEP, including transition plans tailored to each student's academic, behavioral and social-emotional goals. These plans should be developed collaboratively with students, families and staff, and include supports that prepare students for reintegration into traditional settings or for graduation and postsecondary success. Postsecondary and transition planning should be embedded into daily programming for students, particularly in the AEP. This could include activities such as resume building, job exploration, life skills instruction and structured mentoring.

To ensure consistent support across both campuses, consider expanding the duties of the high school dropout coordinator to include direct support to students enrolled in the AEP. This role could involve regular check-ins with AEP students, coordination with families, oversight of transition plans and collaboration with AEP staff to align supports and track progress toward individual goals.

The district is encouraged to expand ongoing professional learning opportunities such as trauma-informed care, restorative practices and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) implementation to help reduce disciplinary removals and improve student well-being.

By aligning these targeted supports and staffing expansions with proven strategies already in use at the high school level, Powell County can create a more cohesive and equitable system that supports the diverse needs of all learners.

Final Overview

Powell County demonstrates a commitment to student success through its proactive approach to resource allocation, community engagement and leadership. The district has made notable strides in fostering positive relationships between schools, families and local organizations, creating enriching learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom. Effective fiscal management and a strong emphasis on professional development ensure that staff are equipped with the tools and support they need to be successful.

The district has established several effective processes and procedures that guide equitable support for students across schools. However, similar structures – such as clearly defined entrance and exit criteria and consistent academic and behavioral support – should be implemented at the AEP to ensure those students also benefit from the district's strategic planning and support systems. While existing services demonstrate a commitment to removing barriers for most students, it is essential that students in the AEP setting are not overlooked. They should receive equitable access to the resources, interventions and opportunities necessary for educational success. By building on these existing strengths and ensuring that critical systems are extended to all students, Powell County can continue advancing its mission of supporting every learner.