President's Report

Kentucky Board of Education - October 2026

Intentional advising is key to Kentucky's college-going future



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President, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

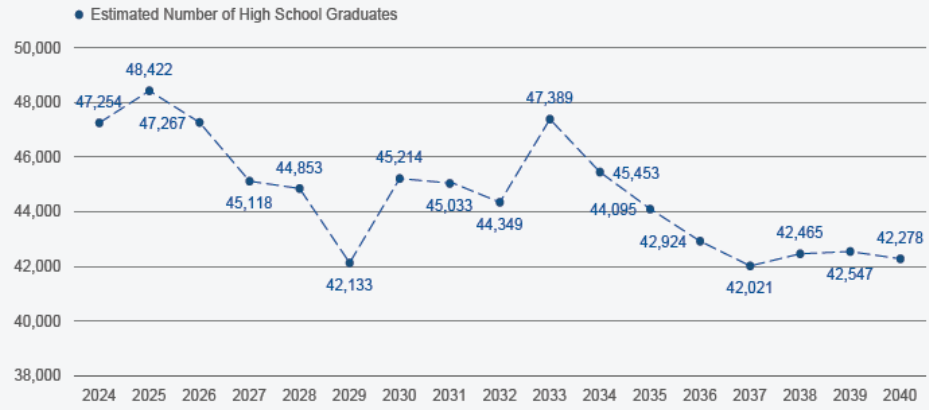
Every student who will graduate from a Kentucky public high school between now and 2040 has already been born. That certainty is what makes the Council on Postsecondary Education's new analysis, *Kentucky's Enrollment Squeeze*, so urgent for both of our boards.

The report projects that Kentucky's public high school graduating class will shrink from 47,254 in 2024 to about 42,300 by 2040, a decline of roughly 10.5%. At the same time, the share of those graduates who enroll directly in a Kentucky college has fallen from 56% for the class of 2011 to 47.5% for the class of 2024.

Together, those trends create a squeeze. Even if the college-going rate stopped falling today, about 2,400 fewer recent graduates would enter Kentucky colleges each year by 2040. To keep enrollment at 2024 levels, the rate must climb to nearly 50% by 2030 and about 53% by 2040. Halting the decline is not enough. The rate has to rise.

Figure 1 | Projected 10.5% decline in Kentucky high school graduating cohorts

Based on 2024 actual graduates and estimated numbers to 2040 using Kentucky Department of Education enrollment data



Source: KDE enrollment records; NCHS birth records; CPE analysis.

That rise will not come from a single application drive in senior year. Students decide whether college is for them over many years, as they discover their interests, connect those interests to careers, and learn what education those careers require. When that process is left to chance, too many students, especially those without a family history of college, never see postsecondary education as part of their future. Intentional, sequenced advising that begins in middle school is how we change that.

Kentucky already has the foundation. Every student is required to have an Individual Learning Plan, and the ILP can be far more than a compliance exercise. Used well, it becomes a living roadmap that connects each student's goals to coursework, career exploration and postsecondary planning.

We encourage every school to make the ILP central to its advising by using the free tools on Futuriti.org, CPE's college and career exploration resource for Kentucky students. Futuriti includes the Kentucky Postsecondary Advising Framework Scope and Sequence, which gives schools a grade-by-grade plan for the conversations and activities that prepare students for life after high school. It helps counselors, teachers and families share responsibility for advising and ensures no student reaches senior year without a plan. Futuriti has also partnered with Level-All to provide a free ILP collection tool, available now to every Kentucky district. Three districts have already signed on and begun using the tool's ILP lessons with students.

Learn more at https://futuriti.org/page/level-all.

The class of 2040 is in preschool today. The work of preparing those students starts now.

Figure 2 | Kentucky's in-state college-going rate must rise to about 53% by 2040 just to hold enrollment steady



Source: KYSTATS college-going data; cohort-progression projections based on KDE enrollment and NCHS birth records.

CPE Futuriti
Your Individual Learning Plan (ILP), powered by Futuriti + Level All

HIGHER EDUCATION Matters

A PERSONAL INVITATION FOR
THE KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Monday, November 2, 2026 · Bowling Green

You're Invited.

2026 Student Access Summit

ABCs of Student Access: Accelerating Access, Breaking Barriers and Creating Connections

K–12 and postsecondary leaders from across the Commonwealth are coming together to help more Kentucky students move confidently from high school to what's next. As the board guiding Kentucky's public schools, your perspective belongs in this conversation, and we would be honored to have you join us.

A ACCELERATING ACCESS

Hear CPE President Dr. Aaron Thompson on the 2026 My Kentucky Future Act, and a national keynote on proactive admissions from Dr. Taylor Odle.

B BREAKING BARRIERS

Twelve breakout sessions from Kentucky educators on middle school college access, CTE, transition planning, AI in advising and more.

C CREATING CONNECTIONS

A closing panel on how early advising with Futuriti, Level All and Common App can show students the possibilities of Kentucky's workforce.

Be in the room at 12:45 PM for a special announcement: a new way for every Kentucky school district to intentionally advise students and meet ILP requirements, **for free**.

WHEN

Monday, November 2, 2026
7:30 AM – 4:30 PM CST

WHERE

Knicely Conference Center
Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green

REGISTER

Scan to register
https://cpe.ky.gov/events/access-summit/index.html