

Commissioner's Report
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KBE Meeting
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Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) and Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) Updates

Relative to both schools, KDE staff is continuing to work on policies and procedures for personnel, communication, residential admissions and school admission. KDE has been in the process of conducting research and consulting other state schools for assistance. The policies will be ready for the Kentucky Board of Education to review in April. Progress marches on at both schools.

- **Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB)**

KSB continues to meet their Corrective Action Plan (CAP) deadlines and is actively involved in the Academic Behavioral Response to Intervention (ABRI) initiative and providing mental health services to students.

There are currently seven personnel openings at KSB: social studies teacher, two instructional assistants, two house parents, chief academic officer and an administrative secretary. Additionally, an assistive technology teacher and guidance counselor have been hired.

There is a lot of discussion happening around the principal position at KSB. Tristan Parsons continues to work hard as interim principal. The staff and community have commented on his openness and transparency. Currently, there are thirteen applicants for the position of KSB Principal. The candidates are being screened by a team of seven, including two individuals with visual impairments, alumni, a minority, two principals, a KDE representative and Georgia's state schools administrator. The screening panel has a scoring rubric for the cover letter, resume and related experience. In early February, interviews will be scheduled with the top three to five candidates. The interview panel will then come together and consist of seven individuals: three alumni with visual impairments, a minority, a parent, the director of the Charitable Foundation for the Blind and a KDE representative.

- **Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD)**

KSD has some exciting news to celebrate! Five preschool students are now attending the school. The parents are reporting that their children are happy and quickly learning American Sign Language (ASL). KDE welcomes its newest students!

KSD also continues to meet CAP deadlines and is actively involved in the Academic Behavioral Response to Intervention (ABRI) initiative and providing mental health

services to students. In addition, the staff are meeting the goals of the strategic plans with regular meetings and clear communication. The staff also have responded positively to being involved in the decision making process. Consequently, the strategic plan is improving the climate of the school and all staff is working diligently to share information weekly and seek assistance from KDE. Principal Will Begley shares the “dashboard” of information weekly with KDE/KSB Education Administrator, Linda Funke, and she utilizes the information to determine areas where KDE may be able to assist.

There are several positions currently open at KSD: director of outreach services, outreach consultant, interpreter supervisor, school psychologist, maintenance worker, eight dorm positions and two instructional assistants. An assistant principal, student development specialist (dorm supervisor), middle school English language/arts teacher, houseparent and nurse have been hired.

Kentucky Unmined Mineral Assessments

The Department of Revenue contacted KDE in early November to alert staff to a significant decrease in unmined mineral assessments which will have a significant impact on 12 school districts and their local tax revenue generated from the tax on coal assessments.

The Department of Revenue’s preliminary unmined mineral assessments have declined 43% from the prior year or \$955 million. Furthermore, the number of active mines has declined from 647 in 2006 to 184 in 2016. The estimated loss in unmined mineral tax revenue for these districts is, at a minimum, \$4.3 million. Knott County Schools is estimated to lose \$1 million.

KDE was contacted more recently by the Department of Revenue to notify staff that some of the taxpayers with unmined mineral property were protesting the valuations. This protest essentially allows the taxpayer to dispute the value and provide the Department of Revenue with more information which may lead to a lower final unmined minerals assessment and less tax revenue for the school districts. KDE has contacted each of the school districts that will be impacted by this situation to discuss their current financial standing and plans to adjust to the loss in local revenue.

Certification Regulations for Occupation-Based Career and Technical Education (CTE)

In collaboration with the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB), KDE has worked extensively to identify ways in which to expand dual credit opportunities across the state and to strengthen the current certification process for CTE teachers who pursue an occupation-based licensure. This certification option provides industry experts (who have met a minimum number of years of experience and have demonstrated specialized expertise in a technical field) the ability to pursue secondary teacher certification in their respective field and CTE program area.

The three regulations currently under review and revision are:

- **16 KAR 2:020**, *Occupation-based career and technical education certification*

- **16 KAR 6:020**, *Written examination prerequisites for occupation-based career and technical education teachers*
- **16 KAR 8:040**, *Ranking of occupation-based career and technical education teachers*

The proposed amendments seek to address a number of necessary factors. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- providing additional certification paths for new and emerging CTE career pathways,
- aligning degree requirements needed for the teaching of dual credit coursework,
- lessening the time necessary for degree and/or certification completion, and
- revising the rank system for occupation-based certified teachers.