

*Commissioner's Report
Stephen L. Pruitt, Ph.D.
Kentucky Board of Education Meeting
October 4, 2017*

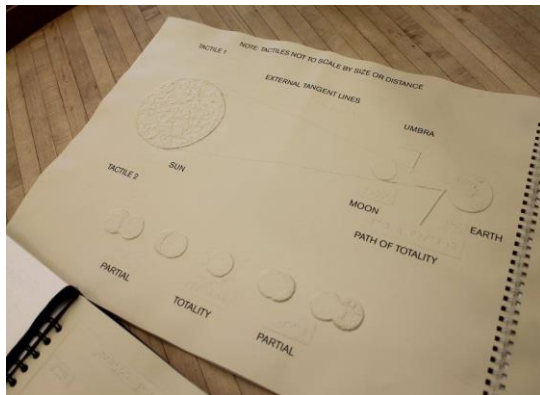
Kentucky School for the Blind Update (KSB)

KSB began the 2017-18 school year on August 14 with the theme, "Under Construction." Principal Jackie Williams worked tirelessly this summer to hire well qualified and motivated staff members to start the school year. This summer was also a busy time for administrators as all administrative staff members began classwork for their Teachers of Visually Impaired (TVI) certifications through the University of Kentucky (UK). Staff and parents have already noticed and communicated to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) a positive change in the climate of the school. These positive changes and climate are even evident through the lively decorations displayed throughout the school.



This summer's solar eclipse also was a big event at the KSB. The American Printing House for the Blind, located next door, created technology for a tactile experience for KSB students. This technology consisted of a grid of pins that raised and lowered to mimic images of the eclipse stages. This is the first time KSB students were able to "view" such a phenomenon. Students also experienced the eclipse through raised paper representations. Additionally, those students with low vision viewed the eclipse through typical eclipse glasses. It was a unique experience for all of the KSB students.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfH3gSpcHlw&feature=youtu.be>



Other highlights from the summer included the building of cedar vegetable boxes. KSB science teachers worked with students to build these boxes as many students had never used power tools. Look for more updates as students plan the next phase of this project which includes planting the boxes this upcoming spring.



Kentucky School for the Deaf Update (KSD)

KSD began the school year on August 14. Opening day was met with much excitement and enthusiasm as new staff were introduced and plans were made for a productive school year. Staff were equally as happy to begin the year with the recently adopted Communication Policy.

August 24 was another important day for KSD as the new principal, Toyah Robey, was introduced. Ms. Robey was greeted with warm welcomes, posters and smiles as both staff and

students were pleased to have her. Ms. Robey signed all of their names as she was introduced to them.



Summer events also were not sparse at KSD. The state fair proved to be an exciting time for students as the KSD culinary team competed for the first time and won second place. The judges were very impressed with the team’s food presentation and flavor. Additionally, students in culinary classes are looking forward to beginning a new venture in hydroponic gardening this school year. They have three towers with which they will be growing various vegetables.



KSD continues its work with behavior management, specifically Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). To kick off the new school year on a positive note, students participated in a special exercise that included a funeral where students “buried” negative words.



The solar eclipse also was a big event at KSD as teachers took full advantage of this valuable learning experience. Every precaution was made to ensure all students participated and viewed the eclipse safely before, during and after this historical event. Preschoolers especially enjoyed the solar viewing with their specially made Cheerio boxes.



Release of 2016-17 Accountability Data

Assessment and accountability data for the 2016-17 year was released to the public on September 29. While there are many aspects of the data that warrant celebration, we must also acknowledge the continued areas where opportunity for improvement exists.

Overall, achievement increased slightly at the elementary and middle school levels, but was down somewhat at the high school levels. Achievement gaps between different groups of

students persisted in many areas and will be a major focus of KDE, schools and districts under the new accountability system.

Next-Generation Learner Component Scores ¹						
	Year	Achievement	Gap	Growth	College/Career Readiness ²	Graduation Rate
Elementary	2013	69.9	42.1	59.9	n/a	n/a
	2014	72.6	45.4	59.8	n/a	n/a
	2015	69.2	42.6	59.8	n/a	n/a
	2016	68.3	43.5	61.4	n/a	n/a
	2017	68.6	26.6	59.0	n/a	n/a
Middle	2013	69.0	39.9	59.9	47.2	n/a
	2014	70.6	41.9	59.9	47.8	n/a
	2015	66.8	38.0	59.9	43.9	n/a
	2016	68.1	24.9	58.8	n/a	n/a
	2017	68.4	42.5	59.2	n/a	n/a
High	2013	60.7	33.7	57.2	60.8	86.1
	2014	62.0	35.1	56.3	72.4	88.0
	2015	62.4	36.4	57.1	79.0	89.0
	2016	63.4	35.9	57.3	81.9	89.7
	2017	62.3	23.9	n/a	77.8	90.2

¹ These figures represent point totals, rather than percentages.

² College/Career-Readiness (CCR) includes a bonus calculation. The percentage of high school graduates that are college/career ready for 2017 is 65.1, while CCT percentage with the bonus is 77.8.

The percentage of Kentucky public school students graduating from high school has continued to increase and more students took rigorous Advanced Placement tests and earned a qualifying score of 3 or higher.

As a result of the transition to a new accountability system, this year's release does not include overall accountability scores, classifications or rankings for schools and districts, although KDE will continue to support low-performing schools and districts during the transition period. This year's release includes achievement, gap, growth, college- and career-readiness and graduation

rate data. Data from Program Reviews, which Senate Bill 1 eliminated, is reported if a school or district chose to do so.

KDE’s School Report Card (SRC) website has begun modeling the dashboard concept that will be utilized in the new accountability system for reporting data. A formal Request for Proposals (RFP) will be released soon to identify a vendor that can assist KDE with design and development of the new SRC.

Budget Update

On September 8, 2017, the State Budget Director, citing a projected budgetary shortfall, requested KDE to submit a preliminary plan to reduce KDE’s 2018 fiscal year budget by \$69.5 million (17.4% of total annual general fund budget minus SEEK and local district health insurance). KDE submitted its response on Monday, September 25, 2017. The preliminary plan proposes a \$22.8 million reduction. While the proffered proposal does not realize the requested reduction, it will have significant impact on local school districts.

Four decision rules were utilized to guide the decision-making process. Those were to:

- Limit the impact to classrooms and instruction;
- Limit the impact on school staffing;
- Maximize flexibility to superintendents to help them manage through the reduction; and
- Be mindful of districts already facing financial hardships.

A webinar was hosted for district superintendents and education constituents regarding this matter on September 26. A link to the webinar can be found here: <http://mediaportal.education.ky.gov/>.

The proposed funding reductions involve the following:

Proposed FY 2018 General Fund Reductions to K-12 Education	Amount
KDE Frankfort Based Staff and Operating	\$ 2,600,000
Professional Development - Flex Focus	\$ 4,563,800
Textbooks/Instructional Devices - Flex Focus	\$ 8,260,700
Family Resource/Youth Services Centers (FRYSC's)	\$ 4,536,911
Professional Growth Fund	\$ 700,000
Fed. Programs & Educator Effectiveness - MERR Scholarships (Unused funds)	\$ 315,900
Local Districts Life Insurance	\$ 224,800
Education of State Agency Children (KECSAC) - Administration	\$ 51,835

Advance Kentucky	\$ 104,400
Appalachian Tutoring	\$ 17,300
Collaborative Ctr for Literacy Development (CCLD)	\$ 89,227
Georgia Chaffee (TAPP)	\$ 227,900
Heuser Hearing & Language Academy	\$ 8,700
Lexington Hearing & Speech Center	\$ 8,700
Safe Schools - Administration	\$ 95,700
Save the Children	\$ 470,700
Teach for America	\$ 125,000
Visually Impaired Preschool Services (VIPS)	\$ 8,700
Writing Project	\$ 440,000
Total Proposed Reduction	\$ 22,850,273

At this time, the plan is preliminary. Additional details will be provided as they become available.

New KDE Employees

KDE would like to welcome the following new employees:

- **Office of Education Technology**
 - Nathan Rome, Resource Management Analyst III, Division of School Technology Services
 - Matthew Rogers, Systems Technician Specialist I, Division of School Technology Services
- **Office of Finance and Operations**
 - Serena Bellamy, Administrative Specialist II, Division of School and Community Nutrition
- **Office of Teaching and Learning**
 - Jocelyne Waddle, Education Administration Program Consultant II, Division of Next Generation Professionals

- **TEAM MEMBER OF THE MONTH - SEPTEMBER**

- Victoria Fields, Safe Schools Program Consultant, Division of Student Success, Office of Continuous Improvement & Support