

**Interim Commissioner's Report to the Kentucky Board of Education
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Major Department Projects and Initiatives (June 2018-August 2018)

- Strategic plan implementation: communication and data collection
- Academic standards review and revision
- Accountability system implementation
- School Improvement/Continuous Improvement
- Department reorganization
- Campaign: What Will You Be KY?

Visits & Speaking (August 2018-October 2018)

- Meade County Schools Opening Day, August 6th, Brandenburg
- Pikeville Independent Schools Opening Day, Pikeville, August 8th
- Superintendents, 98th House District (Rep. Danny Bentley), Greenup, KY, August 8th
- BMW (Black Males Working) Program Kickoff, Lexington, August 11th
- Fairview Independent Schools Opening Day, Ashland, KY, August 13th
- Central Kentucky Education Cooperative, Lexington, KY, August 15th
- Northern KY Superintendents and General Assembly Members, Burlington, KY, August 14th
- Superintendents, 27th Senate District (Sen. Steve West), Maysville, KY, August 27th & 31st
- State of Education in the Commonwealth Address, Jessamine County, August 28th
- Ohio Valley Education Cooperative (OVEC), August 29th, Shelbyville
- CCSSO National Career Development Summit, Washington, DC, September 12th
- National Governor's Association (NGA) Education Policy Advisor's Institute, Little Rock, AK, September 13th
- Bridging the Gap Community Group, Versailles, September 24th
- Glasgow Independent Schools, Supt. Keith Hale, September 28th
- Superintendents, 23rd House District (Rep. Steve Riley), Glasgow, KY, September 28th

Upcoming Visits & Speaking

- Asbury University, Wilmore, October 3rd
- National Forum to Advance Rural Education, Denver, CO, October 10th
- Paris Independent Schools, October 12th
- Trimble County Schools, October 15th
- Trigg County Schools, October 16th
- National Association of Pupil Services Administrators, Covington, October 15th
- AEI Future of American Education Working Group, Washington DC, October 19th
- Kentucky Association of Assessment Coordinators, Louisville, October 23rd
- Carter G. Woodson Academy, Fayette County, October 23rd
- CCSSO Annual Policy Forum, Long Beach, CA, November 11-14
- Kentucky Association of Elementary School Principals, Louisville, November 19th
- Kentucky Farm Bureau State Convention, Louisville, November 29th
- Frederick Douglass High School, Fayette County, December 3rd
- Bryan Station High School, Fayette County, December 3rd
- National Summit on Education Reform, Washington, DC, December 6th

- KASA Annual Summer Leadership Institute, Louisville, July 19th

Education Professional Standards Boards' (EPSB) Waiving of Rank II Requirement

At the August 20th meeting of the EPSB, the board waived the requirement currently in regulation for an educator to obtain a Rank II. KRS 161.1211 defines Rank II as “Those holding regular certificates and who have a master’s degree in a subject field approved by the Education Professional Standards Board or equivalent continuing education.”

While the KDE was supportive of removing the requirement, the recommendation to do so came from a committee of stakeholders brought together to review and make recommendations concerning expanding the options available to educators to earn Rank II. Additionally, over the last two years, the board and former EPSB agency staff heard concerns from educators and legislators regarding the financial burden that the Rank II requirement places on new educators. Further, at its June 18th meeting, the board was presented with research which showed that a master’s degree did not reduce attrition, and that there is a lack of data to show that a master’s degree increases teacher effectiveness.

While educators are not required to obtain Rank II, they are still able to pursue one. As well, by statute, earning Rank II continues to be incentivized with additional pay. We believe many educators will continue to earn Rank II to advance in the profession, in their careers, and to obtain a salary increase.

State of Education in the Commonwealth Address

On August 28th in Jessamine County, I delivered the 2018 State of Education in the Commonwealth Address. Leaders and stakeholders at the state and local levels, including members of the KBE were in attendance. The event was also live streamed, giving interested viewers the opportunity to view the address online.

I used the address as an opportunity to assess education progress in the Commonwealth over the last three to five years. While noting the historic progress Kentucky has made educationally since the early 1990s, including its high school graduation rate, I noted that our progress has stalled, with little to no movement in state assessment results. But even more troubling than the lack of progress on assessments are the data showing that many Kentucky high school graduates exit high school without the readiness necessary to successfully transition to college or the workforce.

In closing, I made the point that beginning to move again toward improvement in student learning and improved educational, employment, and earnings outcomes for high school graduates will require that we recognize the challenges, raise our expectations for our students and our system, and commit to needed reform to better prepare our students for college, careers, and life.

2018 Release of Assessment and Accountability Results

On Wednesday September 26th, the KDE released assessment and accountability results for the 2017-2018 school year. During this year of transition into Kentucky’s new accountability system, as required by federal and state law, we identified schools performing in the bottom 5% of Kentucky schools by level, designated as CSI (Continuous Support and Improvement) schools; as well as schools where one or more populations of students performed extremely low, designated as TSI (Targeted Support and Improvement) schools. In order to be designated as a CSI or a TSI school, the performance of the school (CSI) or the student population within the school (TSI) had to fall below the KBE-approved cut scores on each of the three indicator areas in the accountability system. For elementary and middle schools, those indicators were proficiency in reading and mathematics (K-PREP), a separate academic indicator (performance in science, social studies, and writing), and

growth. For high schools, the three indicators were proficiency in reading and mathematics (ACT scores), graduation rate, and transition readiness (including academic and career readiness).

Overall, for the last five years, there has been little to no change in Kentucky's assessment results. The one exception where notable progress has been made is with middle school reading scores. Additionally, overall, we have made little to no progress with closing racial/ethnic and socioeconomic achievement gaps. The Office of Assessment and Accountability will provide a detailed discussion of the latest state assessment results during the October 2nd meeting of the KBE

Accountability System: Growth Indicator Workgroup

The implementation of any new accountability system comes with questions and challenges. Across the state, most of the questions and concerns shared with the KDE have pertained to our methodology for calculating student growth. In general, we have had questions about details of our methodology for calculating growth, whether the methodology used is appropriate, and how educators should interpret and use results from the growth indicator to inform and/or improve their practice.

I share some of the concerns voiced by educators, and as such, I have asked Associate Commissioner Rhonda Simms to convene a workgroup of key stakeholders from across the commonwealth to review our current growth calculation methodology and make recommendations to the KDE for improving it for next year's accountability reporting.

I would like our growth measure to be relatively easy to explain and understand, while also appropriate for school accountability purposes and informing educators' practice. I thank the members of this work group in advance for their willingness to tackle this issue, and I look forward to receiving their recommendations.

Vendor Selected for College Admissions Test

We are pleased to announce that ACT has been selected as the vendor for the college admissions exam, required as part of the state testing program. The new college admission's contract with ACT is for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years and can be renewed for an additional four years.

KDE's primary use of the college admissions exam is to measure students' level of readiness for college in core academic content areas. Meeting CPE-designated benchmarks on the ACT is one way students may demonstrate academic readiness in the Transition Readiness indicator of the state's accountability system for schools, and as part of the proposed high school graduation requirements.

Beyond the state's use of results, the state-administered college admissions exam also benefits students, their parents and educators in several ways. Administering the college admissions exam as part of required state testing permits students to take the exam at no cost to them. The exam is administered during the school day, providing equitable access for all students to participate.

The exam score results give students and educators a measure of students' academic strengths and weaknesses, allowing educators to make informed instructional decisions and allowing students to demonstrate or learn of their ability to succeed in college or in dual credit courses while still in high school. As a result, students can become more engaged in preparation and planning for postsecondary opportunities. Additionally, many organizations that offer merit or academic scholarships identify and award financial assistance based on scores from a college admissions exam.

Campaign: What Will You Be KY?

Our “What Will You Be KY” campaign continues. Launched in July at the KY Association of Career and Technical Education’s (KACTE) Summer Program, the statewide campaign is intended to get students to begin exploring career options early, ideally by middle schools. It is targeted at stakeholder groups including students, parents, educators, and business and industry partners. Thus far, the campaign and some of its featured students have been covered by Wave 3 TV in Louisville, and most recently, in a soon-to-be-aired televised forum on KET focused on education and workforce.

We continue to solicit stories about career preparation, career choice, and career success. If you or someone you know has a story to share, please email us at: WhatWillYouBeKY@education.ky.gov. Also, please follow the campaign’s social media handles on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

Department Reorganization Plan

We anticipate the KDE’s reorganization to be implemented effective November 1st. A few key elements of the reorganized structure of the department include:

- Redistributing the current functions of the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) to different offices. OTL’s current Associate Commissioner, Dr. Amanda Ellis, will be joining me in the Commissioner’s Office to play a broader leadership role in the department.
- Elevating the current Division of Learning Services to become the Office of Special Education and Early Learning.
- The current Office of Assessment and Accountability will become the Office of Standards, Assessment, and Accountability.
- Establishment of divisions within the new Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness.
- Moving the current Division of Communications to the Office of the Commissioner.

These changes are intended to create greater efficiency in the department and better align the department’s organizational structure with our identified priorities.