

## **Commissioner's Report**

### **Commissioner of Education Jason E. Glass, Ed.D.**

#### **KDE Welcomes New Staff**

New staff who joined KDE since the board's August regular meeting are listed below by office:

##### *Office of Finance and Operations*

9/1/2021 Perla Hernandez

9/16/2021 Tanesha Keene

9/16/2021 Kendall Hall

##### *Office of Career and Technical Education*

9/16/2021 Maria Bailey

##### *Office of Continuous Improvement and Support*

9/16/2021 Marsha VanHook

#### **Congratulations to five Kentucky schools named 2021 Blue Ribbon winners**

The U. S. Department of Education recently named five Kentucky public schools as 2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools based on their overall academic excellence.

The five schools and their districts are:

- Anchorage Independent School (Anchorage Independent)
- Gamaliel Elementary School (Monroe County)
- Greathouse/Shryock Traditional Elementary School (Jefferson County)
- Heath Elementary School (McCracken County)
- Rosa Parks Elementary School (Fayette County)

The Kentucky schools are among the 325 public and private elementary, middle and high schools across the country recognized this year.

The 2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Awards Ceremony is slated for early November in National Harbor, Maryland.

Congratulations to these five Kentucky schools.

## **Willie Edward Taylor Carver Jr. named 2022 Kentucky Teacher of the Year**

Willie Edward Taylor Carver Jr., who is an English and French teacher at Montgomery County High School, was named the 2022 Kentucky Teacher of the Year on September 9th.

Carver also was named the Kentucky High School Teacher of the Year. He is in his 10th year of teaching at Montgomery County High School.

Also selected were the Kentucky Middle School and Elementary School Teachers of the Year. They are:

- **Hallie Booth**, an 8th-grade math teacher at Ballyshannon Middle School (Boone County); and
- **Ashley Ritchie**, a 2nd-grade teacher at Beechwood Elementary School (Beechwood Independent).

Carver will have the opportunity to serve a semester-long sabbatical with KDE and will represent the state in the National Teacher of the Year competition.

The winning teachers were chosen from the 24 outstanding educators, who all received the 2022 Valvoline Teacher Achievement Award.

This is the 21st year Valvoline has partnered with KDE to honor Kentucky educators.

Congratulations to the three teachers of the year.

## **Three finalists for the 2021 Special Education Teacher of the Year award**

Three teachers have been named finalists for the 2021 Special Education Teacher of the Year award.

The award is sponsored by KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning and the Kentucky Council for Exceptional Children (KYCEC). It recognizes an outstanding teacher in the field of special education.

The three finalists are:

- **Stacie Hutchison**, Glasgow High School (Glasgow Independent)
- **Christy Pellerin**, Hillard Collins Elementary School (Boone County)
- **Jennifer Packwood**, Newport High School (Newport Independent)

Nominees applied with three letters of recommendation, including one from their principal or supervisor and one from their district director of special education. Finalists also were required to submit a short video.

Each finalist will be awarded a one-year KYCEC membership and a cash prize of \$250 from KYCEC and the Kentucky Council for Administrators of Special Education (KYCASE).

The Special Education Teacher of the Year will receive \$500 from the KYCEC and KYCASE, along with a scholarship to attend the Special Education Legislative Summit in Washington, D.C.

The winner will be announced at the annual KYCEC conference November 21st-23rd in Louisville.

### **Update on Kentucky Area Technology Centers (ATCs)**

During July and August, open houses were held at Wayne County Area Technology Center (ATC), Estill County ATC and Lake Cumberland ATC, in recognition of their new facilities. The new facilities offer state-of-the-art equipment and instructional opportunities for students.

The 52 ATCs are currently implementing universal masking for the protection of staff and students. Additionally, the ATCs are utilizing Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to provide after-school remediation and address areas of lost learning from the 2020-2021 academic year.

Twenty-one ATCs are working with Northern Kentucky University and Kentucky Campus Compact to secure career coaches to work with ATC students on postsecondary goals. The ATC field staff are also conducting fall site visits and working with ATCs on improvement plans, rigorous and relevant instruction, and providing a layer of support for emotional well-being throughout the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Kentucky School for the Blind**

The Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) had a great start to the 2021-2022 school year.

Registration day, held on August 8, 2021, was the first event of the new school year for students



and families. Registration day is a time for families to visit the KSB campus with students to tour campus, meet staff, hear about important information relative to the school and complete necessary paperwork for the new school year. Families, students and staff were greeted by a Kona ice truck and a DJ playing 80's tunes in line with the theme for the year, "Back to the Future, KSB Students and Staff Are Out of This World." KSB welcomed 62 students to the campus. In-person instruction began August 9, 2021.



KSB continues to implement COVID-19 mitigation strategies to keep students and staff safe and healthy. Some of these strategies include universal masking, social distancing, deep cleaning and frequent hand washing.



In athletics this year, KSB has 14 students participating in track and field as part of the North Central Association for Schools for the Blind. Students will be competing in a virtual track conference on September 28th and 29th. KSB students will compete against students from the Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, Illinois, and Missouri

Schools for the Blind.

## **Kentucky School for the Deaf**

Registration Day was held on August 8, 2021. While registration day is typically held inside the school buildings, KSD staff moved as much as possible outside as a COVID-19 mitigation strategy and to allow for increased social distancing while students and families were on campus. The



leadership team met with families to discuss COVID-19 procedures and expectations in place to keep students and staff safe and healthy. Some of these procedures include universal masking, social distancing, deep cleaning and frequent handwashing. Staff grilled food for students and families and had the snow cone truck on campus as a treat for them. In-person instruction began for students on August 9, 2021. Staff spent time during the first week of school focusing on the KSD PRIDE Expectations and COVID-19 procedures.

KSD hired a part-time American Sign Language (ASL) specialist. It is critical for KSD students to build a strong foundation in ASL. Strong ASL skills are vital for success with English as well as a strong

predictor for school success. Pictured below is a newly enrolled student showing off her ASL vocabulary!

KSD staff continue to work on the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) accreditation self-study process this school year. KSD sent surveys to all staff, families and stakeholders. Data collected from surveys will be analyzed and utilized to inform the KSD strategic plan.

KSD is currently in the process of updating several of the instructional and student life common areas with more deaf-friendly furniture.

Construction projects are continuing and include Jacobs Hall boiler project, which is almost complete, roofing and HVAC projects on Thomas, Kerr and Middleton, and repair of the pool.



The campus beautification project is continuing with work around the greenhouse and planting of trees and shrubbery this fall as the weather cools.

KSD was invited to host approximately 15 teachers from all over the nation through the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) to tour KSD's Ag program and farm. KSD partners with Centre College to grow produce that can be used by each schools' food program. Produce grown this year includes zucchini, squash, beans, kale, corn, watermelon, peppers and a variety of tomatoes.