



Kentucky Department of EDUCATION

Commissioner's Report August 2023

Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB)

KSB held four weeks of summer school, hosting 42 elementary, middle and high school students from KSB and students from districts across the Commonwealth. Students participated in field trips on the Belle of Louisville, a steam train in Bardstown, the Splashpad at the Waterfront and the Science Center. Louisville Folk School brought a variety of instruments and performed for students on two different occasions.



Eighteen students attended KSB's summer work program. The students worked at the American Printing House for the Blind, Kentucky Kingdom, and the Louisville Zoo. Students performed a variety of jobs, including braille proofreading, grounds keeping, food service and guest services (ticket taking, stocking shelves in the gift shops and greeting visitors). KSB has a partnership with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), who provides job coaches for students that need the extra assistance. Twenty-nine students attended the week-long Insight Post-secondary Prep Program at Morehead State University. Students

participated in college classes, traveled on campus, stayed in a dorm with a roommate and ate in the cafeteria. Insight has been in existence for 16 years, follows a curriculum specifically designed for students that are blind or visually impaired and is coordinated by Connie Hill.

Outreach consultants Robbin Cox and Angela Powell, in collaboration with Murray State University, the Kentucky School for the Blind Charitable Foundation and OVR, hosted the first WINSight, modeled after Insight. For more information, please follow this link: [WINSight](#)



Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD)

The school year at KSD ended with a celebration of the accomplishments of the 2023 graduating seniors. All three students received acceptance letters and plan to attend Eastern Kentucky University in the fall semester.



Additionally, Beulah Hester was awarded an honorary diploma during the graduation ceremony. Hester is 94 years old and went to school at KSD from 1937 to 1948, but left before her senior year to start a family. Despite not finishing her coursework, Ms. Hester remained committed to the school and was employed as a dorm houseparent for 30 years until she retired in 1990.



Dr. Harvey Corson, the first Deaf Superintendent at KSD from 1994-2001, met with the high school students to reflect on KSD's 200-year history. He also conducted a leadership workshop with students to help students understand the importance of their contributions to the school and community.





The KSD Advisory Board recognized Toyah Robey for her service. She retired in June after serving as principal from 2017 – 2023.



The 40th Annual Deaf Youth Sports Festival was held at KSD in July. In 1983, seven volunteers and seven participants began the “Mini Deaf Olympics” which was later renamed The Deaf Youth Sports Festival, but it is still commonly called MDO. MDO is a weeklong event in which Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH) children come together from all over the U.S. to participate in Olympic-style sporting competitions.



Shelley Badgett has been selected as the new director of special education for the Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) and the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD). She began her duties on July 1. Badgett previously served as branch manager in the Kentucky Department of Education's (KDE's) Division of IDEA Monitoring and Results. Before coming to KDE, she spent six years with the Marion County school district, where she was director of instruction and federal programs, and before that director of special education. She also spent three years in the Nelson County school district as principal of the K-8 New Haven School.



Justin Padgett, a former instructional coach at Lincoln County Middle School, was [named the new director of student life at Kentucky School for the Deaf \(KSD\)](#) on July 11. Padgett started his career as a 21st Century Community Learning Center coordinator running before- and after-school programs. He has experience teaching various grade levels and content areas.



Justin Padgett

Director of Student Life,
Kentucky School for the Deaf



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION



KSD Advisory Board Member, Debbie Martin, passed away on June 24th. She poured encouragement, hope, and love into every student she worked alongside for over 30 years on KSD's campus. She lifted up every person she worked with, no matter their role or what they brought to the table. Her impact will last for generations.

KY Tech District of Area Technology Centers (ATCs)

ATC principals and teachers attended the Kentucky Association of Career and Technical Education Summer Program in July and took part in professional/leadership development and technical upgrade training. Session topics included: ATC principal updates, CTE opening session with Dr. Todd Whitaker, CTE program and coordinator updates, and several CTE best practice update sessions.

In response to regional workforce needs, new programs will be underway in some of the ATCs for the upcoming school year:

- Campbell County ATC will offer Fire Science.
- Montgomery County ATC will offer Industrial Maintenance and Health Science.
- Webster County ATC will offer Engineering.
- Lake Cumberland Regional College and Workforce Center (ATC) will offer Diesel Technology.
- Russell ATC will offer Welding (satellite at Paul Blazer High School).
-

The following ATC's have a new principal to start the school year:

1. Letcher County ATC-Casey Breeding
2. Knott County ATC-Angel Mobley
3. Trailblazer Early College and Career Academy (Mercer Co.)-Emily Whitworth
4. Caldwell County Regional Career Center-Zach Thomas

Students from several ATC's attended various career and technical student organization national conferences this summer including: DECA, SkillsUSA, HOSA, and TSA. They competed in technical events, networked with students and professionals from around the nation and had a great time!



Hazard Community & Technical College: Lees College Campus will continue to serve as a temporary location for Breathitt County ATC during the 2023-24 school year.

The Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) is looking forward to the new academic year and the opportunity to increase student engagement and achievement.