



Kentucky Department of EDUCATION

Commissioner's Report February 2024



As interim education commissioner, I've had the pleasure of visiting many of our outstanding school districts, including a recent trip to Johnson County with Associate Commissioner David Couch and Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) Member Steve Trimble, both alumni of the district.

Superintendent Thom Cochran guided us through three schools, where we witnessed positive initiatives, a talented choir, and even learned about a solar-powered car being built by students.

I believe it is important for those of us in the department to visit districts when the opportunity arises so we can see how things are being implemented in schools and work together to improve the services we provide to our students.

Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD)

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) hosted a Christmas party for KSD elementary students.



The middle school student council planned and led a Christmas event on December 19 for all middle school students. The student council members made and decorated cupcakes, led a spirited "white elephant" game, and led two heated games of Christmas Bingo for prizes. The students did an excellent job demonstrating planning skills and leadership. In addition, they practiced measuring, budgeting and ASL skills!



The 49th Annual Gallaudet University Alumni Association (GUAA) Banquet was a wonderful event. A very special recognition of three of our KSD FFA members who were part of the program: Shonda Barker, Shalissa McGill, and Matthew Colbert. They did a great job and participated in tradition.

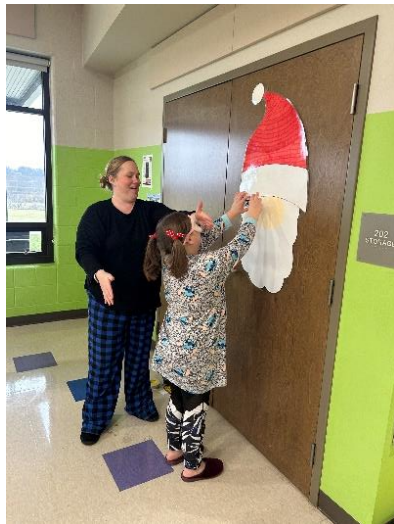


KSD students made holiday wreaths from hand tied bunches of fresh greens that they gathered from across KSD campus. A wreath was made to honor KSD's first Superintendent, Rev. John Rice Kerr and his wife at the annual graveside tribute led by members of the GUAA.





KSD Elementary School had a Polar Express party and PJ Day. They watched the Polar Express movie and had hot chocolate, popcorn, and Christmas cookies. Four KSD High School students (Ani, Shalissa, Matthew, Savannah) helped. After the party, KSD Elementary School had its Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) Reward Activity: Polar Express Workshop. All the KSD Elementary School classes met the 2nd nine weeks' goal of earning a cumulative total of at least \$1,600 in classroom Colonel cash earned for positive behaviors for the reward activity (\$1,803, to be exact).



Upcoming Events:

- January 11-14, 2024 - Middle School VEX IQ Tournament @ Tennessee School for the Deaf
- January 19-20, 2024 – Boys and Girls Basketball Tournament @ Illinois School for the Deaf
- January 24-27, 2024 – Boys and Girls Basketball Tournament (Mason Dixon) @ North Carolina School for the Deaf
- January 26-28, 2024 - Middle School Math Competition in Brandon, Florida
- February 8-11, 2024 – High School VEX Robotics Competition @ Tennessee School for the Deaf

New Staff Updates:

- Denise Krumm- Houseparent 1
- Wendell Jones- Cook 1

KSD Facilities Update:

Thomas Gym renovations are moving along very well. Completion date is set for the end of April providing there are no weather setbacks.

Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB)

- The KSB holiday concert and family holiday party were held on December 21, 2023.
- Paula Penrod, Director of the Kentucky Materials and Resource Center retired December 31 after 27 years of service.
- 3rd grader Bradley Wines was invited by the American Printing House to talk about using the abacus at an event held at the Northeast Louisville Public Library on January 4, 2024, World Braille Day.



Facilities Updates:

- The steam line for the food service building is leaking and under repair.
- Food service has a new logo on the building floors.
- Evans Dorm renovations continue. The sprinkler system froze in December 2022, causing extensive flooding throughout the building. Repairs are estimated to be complete in four to six months.

New Staff Updates:

- Anna Garland - Safety Administrator

Upcoming Events:

- KSB wrestling and cheerleading teams will travel to the Illinois School for the Blind January 19-21 for the North Central Association of Schools for the Blind wrestling and cheerleading tournament.
- The Kentucky Braille Challenge will take place on KSB's campus on February 22, 2024, hosting students from across the Commonwealth.
- Five KSB students will compete in the first National Abacus Bee Finals in Louisville, March 22-23. They will compete against other students that are blind and visually impaired from around the country.

Area Technology Centers (ATCs)

The 50-state operated Area Technology Centers (ATCs) are continuing to provide relevant and rigorous career and technical instruction to over 20,000 students this term. The ATCs are working to promote career and technical student organizations (CTSOs) which offer co-curricular resources and opportunities for students in the form of leadership development through activities, community service and competitions.

Barren County ATC

Students representing all career and technical education programs and their corresponding career and technical student organizations at Barren County ATC braved the cold temperatures and rainy weather on Saturday, December 2, 2023, to enter their float into one of the largest nighttime parades held in Kentucky. Barren County ATC had a huge showing with the largest turnout of participants including 12 staff members and more than 40 FBLA, HOSA and SkillsUSA student members. The float was a inter-disciplinary, collaborative project that earned First Place in the school category at the Glasgow Christmas Parade!



Shelby County ATC

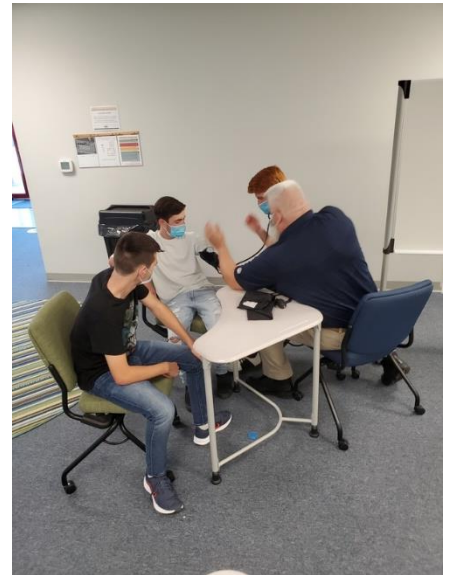
Students at Shelby County ATC are participating in work-based learning opportunities, program showcase opportunities and earning high demand valid industry certifications. Currently, 11 certified Dental Assistants are interning in local dentists' offices, 25 additional seniors are participating in relevant and aligned, CTE work-based learning opportunities, 2 machine tool students have earned 3 rigorous NIMS certifications including Measurement, Materials & Safety, Job Planning, Benchwork & Layout and Milling I. Shelby County ATC will also represent CTE at the upcoming KSBA meeting for the CTE Showcase for Transportation and Manufacturing programs.

Bullitt County ATC

The EMT program at Bullitt County ATC continues to prepare students for this high demand health care occupation. Sheryn Shofner, NREMP-T-P, Training Director with Bullitt County Emergency Medical Services reports that “the program is working very much as intended, and that we are seeing benefit from the investments”. This program



allows students to begin their EMT training while at the ATC; giving them a jump start on their future. Many students have continued their education and experience to attain advanced certificates including Advanced EMT certification, Paramedic license and NREMT Paramedic license.



Caldwell County ATC

The Caldwell County Area Technology Center is pleased to announce the awarding of a substantial grant totaling \$14,000. This grant will be allocated to cover their Project Lead The Way participation



fees and instructor training for the next two years. The West Kentucky Educational Cooperative has generously contributed \$6,000 specifically designated for the enhancement of the ATCs computer science program. The technology investment will include the purchase of 10 Finch Robotics kits and 10 Lego Robotics kits, further fortifying the ATCs commitment to advancing career and technical education.

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.