

Commissioner's Report

December 2024

Stakeholder input has been—and continues to be—instrumental in shaping the direction of the Kentucky United We Learn (KUWL) Council's efforts to transform the Commonwealth's assessment and accountability systems. During the council's October convening, members discussed prototype 4.0 results and the importance of creating a system that supports vibrant learning experiences and accurately reflects student growth.



Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) staff and its partners reviewed feedback from the convening and presented a new assessment and accountability framework to KUWL members last month. KDE's Division Director Jennifer Stafford, Ed.D., provided an update on the proposed framework during the recent Local Superintendents Advisory Council meeting. I look forward to hearing from more stakeholders regarding this proposed framework through a series of regional town halls across the state starting in January. Meaningful feedback and ongoing collaborations embody the "all in" approach needed as we continue to push toward offering high-quality and vibrant experiences for all our learners.

In other news, a recent competitive federal grant award from the U.S. Department of Education illustrates KDE's commitment to advance statewide literacy outcomes. We are excited about the opportunities the five-year, almost \$55 million Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant—the largest CLSD grant Kentucky has received—will provide in advancing literacy skills in Kentucky. We also celebrate that last month the U.S. Department of Labor recognized KDE's Office of Career and Technical Education—the only state education agency and only entity from Kentucky to receive the honor—with an Apprenticeship Ambassador Certificate of Recognition for our efforts to expand and diversify registered apprenticeship programs.

Since my last report I attended the Council of Chief School Officers National Policy Forum in Phoenix, which allowed me to network with other state chiefs and to learn from national leaders on topics such as artificial intelligence, the future of assessment, improving student outcomes in math, and strategies for teacher recruitment and retention. I also have visited several school districts, watched vibrant student learning experiences in action, and sought feedback from students and school leaders about the future of education in Kentucky.

Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD)

Campus Happenings:

- The KSD Future Farmers of America (FFA) Officer Team had an amazing time visiting Indianapolis for the 97th National FFA Convention week!
- Johanna Lucht, NASA's first deaf engineer, visited KSD and shared insights about her career. It was a great opportunity for KSD students to meet her and learn that deaf people can excel at any profession they choose.
- Two KSD high school students successfully passed and earned the drone unmanned flight TRUST certification, also known as The Recreational Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Safety Test.



Campus Updates:

- The stair railing project at Jacobs Hall is complete.
- A concrete pad and sidewalk have been poured for the greenhouse at the Argo building. Interior projects are moving along as scheduled.
- The Thomas gymnasium project is in its final stage. Some replacement ductwork dampers are to be finished.
- New window coverings for Grow Hall will be installed soon.
- Middleton Hall is ready to go out for bid.

New Staff:

- Trevon Smith- Houseparent 1
- Rachel Followell- Administrative Specialist Senior

Upcoming Events:

- Dec. 12- Gallaudet & Clerc Banquet
- Dec. 13- Jacobs Hall Museum Christmas Tour

Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB)

Campus Happenings:

- On Oct. 29, the second Abacus Bee took place at KSB. Twenty-one students from around the Commonwealth, including nine from KSB, participated in contests focused on mental math and using an abacus. Parents took part in sessions with topics such as Daily Living Skills, Outreach Services, and using an abacus.
- Students and staff participated in White Cane Day on Oct. 15, which was held at the Clifton Library. Community partners set up booths and activities for the public to learn about the white cane.
- On Nov. 7, high school students attended a post-secondary fair at Trinity High School.



Campus Updates:

- Using American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds, two sensory rooms were designed for both dorms on campus.
- The Gregory Recreation Center Bowling Alley has received capital project funds and will be repaired soon.
- The installation of the new geo-thermal HVAC project began the week of Nov. 4. This will eventually replace the current system.

Upcoming Events:

- Dec. 5- Peggy Sinclair-Morris, KSB principal, and Emily Campbell, KSB music teacher, will travel to Washington, D.C., to see ornaments designed by KSB students being hung on the National Christmas Tree.
- Dec. 20- KSB elementary students will perform the annual holiday concert, followed by a brunch for families and a visit by Santa.

KY Tech District of Area Technology Centers (ATCs)

The 50-state operated Area Technology Centers (ATCs) are All In to provide relevant and rigorous career and technical instruction to over 20,000 students from 120 of Kentucky's local school districts plus provide parent school choice to home and private schooled students.

The ATCs provide a holistic approach to education by working to promote the development of technical, academic and employability skills, postsecondary readiness, industry-recognized credential attainment, CTE dual credit opportunities, work-based learning opportunities, and career and technical student organizations (CTSOs) that offer co-curricular resources and opportunities for students in the form of leadership development through activities, community service and competitions.

Clark County ATC - Carpentry/Health Science partnership

Gladys Velasquez Diaz is a Health Science student at Clark County ATC who is enrolled in the Pre-Nursing and Phlebotomy pathways. She is an ESL student and is currently working on attaining her Medical Interpreters certification outside of school. Because she has successfully completed all required Health Science classes, she is serving as a translator for ELL students in the Carpentry program so they can learn skills that will benefit them. She has helped with translation of safety tests as well as other critical things needed for their success in the carpentry program.



Floyd County ATC Receives Abandoned Mine Lands Grant

Dr. Jeff Shannon, Principal of Floyd Co Area Technology Center (ATC), secured an \$812,000 Abandoned Mine Lands grant that was awarded at the SOAR Summit in Pikeville, KY. These funds will be used for design and grading, new drainage controls and repairs to the building including tile, plumbing and lighting.



Meade County College and Career Center

Meade County College and Career Center is leveraging immersive virtual reality (VR) technology to enhance its Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. This innovative approach aims to increase accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring that students of all abilities have equal opportunities to engage in hands-on learning experiences. By integrating VR into the curriculum, the ATC center is strengthening support systems for all students, allowing them to explore various career paths and technical skills in a more interactive and personalized environment. The use of immersive VR technology is a significant step toward preparing students for the future workforce.



Community Partnerships

Harrison County ATC

The Harrison County Area Technology Center Advanced Manufacturing Program hosted a tour from Kentucky Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME) Chapter Founder Dennis Parker along with a group from Washington, D.C., and South Africa that are looking to start a FAME Chapter in South Africa. The group toured our Advanced Manufacturing Program

and listened to our programs Instructor Ms. Christina Combs talk about her experience with KY FAME and the Toyota Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT) program.

Ms. Combs was in the first graduation class from the Toyota AMT Program that uses the KY FAME chapter model of combining education and actual workplace experience. Ms. Combs was also the first female to graduate from that program, as well as the first person to graduate from that program and then go on to teach those principles in a secondary classroom (high school) format.



Breckinridge County ATC

Atlas Machine partnered with Welder's Supply, MSC and Cutting Tools to donate \$13,500 to Breckinridge County ATC's Computerized Manufacturing and Machining (CMM) program. In addition, Atlas provided a separate \$5,000 donation to be divided between the CMM and Welding programs.

HOSA had a record-breaking fundraising campaign this year. They sold approximately 3,000 mums to raise money for their memorial scholarship program.

Rockcastle County ATC

On August 13, Rockcastle County ATC partnered with Rockcastle County High School to host a First Responders review of school safety plans and policies. Representatives from the Kentucky State Police, Mount Vernon Police Department, Rockcastle County Sheriff Department, Rockcastle EMS and 911, Mount Vernon and Brodhead Fire Departments, and Rockcastle Emergency Coordinators reviewed school emergency/safety plans. Additionally, they toured

the schools and became more familiar with the overall layouts. All participants were then fed pizza and drinks in appreciation for their service.

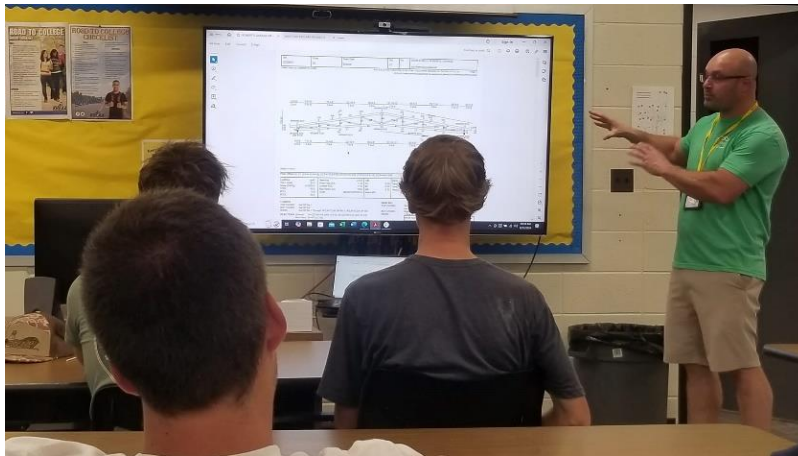
Bullitt County ATC

Eleven of fifteen Bullitt County ATC Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) students attended the Bullitt County First Responders Luncheon hosted by the Bullitt County Chamber of Commerce. Since the program began in 2021, Bullitt County ATC students make up nearly 10% of the Bullitt County EMS. Many of the graduates of the first cohort are now Advanced EMTs and Paramedics. One of those students serves as the only paramedic in Spencer County. This program has addressed the needs of our county and has produced students that are authentically Community Contributors.



Mayfield/Graves ATC

Mayfield/Graves Area Technology Center's (ATC) Power in Partnership series continued with speakers in the Machine Tool, Carpentry, and Computer Science programs. Morgan Puckett and Michelle Arnett from Centrifugal Technologies Inc. spoke to our machining students about machining jobs available locally; Brad Power from Power Truss showed carpentry students some of the software he uses in designing both small residential and multi-million-dollar projects; and Nick Johnson from FNB talked to students about how he uses computer science skills to mitigate the bank's risks. This has been a great program and partnership with Graves County Economic Development.



Work Based Learning (WBL) Opportunities

Bell County ATC

Two Bell County ATC Network Administration pathway students completed a WBL Plan and Agreement and job application with the Bell County School District. These students will be employed by the Bell County school district in co-op with the district's IT department.



Mason County Career Magnet school (Mason County ATC)

Mason County Career Magnet school is excited to have two Computerized Manufacturing and Machining students begin co-ops at Stober Drives Inc. Stober interviewed all interested students in Mr. Wenz's class at the end of last school year and selected two students to begin working two days per week at their Maysville facility. Upon completion of the co-op, the two students will have the opportunity to interview for full-time apprenticeship positions.