

## Commissioner's Report – March 2025

### Kentucky Board of Education

Furthering Kentucky's United We Learn vision and advocating the importance of a transformed educational experience for every student in the Commonwealth is one of my top priorities as commissioner. The United We Learn Vision aims to provide a reimagined assessment and accountability system that includes vibrant learning, making it meaningful and useful for all learners. Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) members and I have listened to stakeholders across Kentucky and responded to their calls for action with the development of new approaches to assessment and accountability. Ongoing feedback and guidance from broad-reaching stakeholders via meetings, surveys, focus groups, and, most recently, town hall meetings, have informed the development of a framework that may serve as a starting point for discussions with the General Assembly for consideration of legislative changes.

The journey to the latest assessment and accountability framework model has been built on inclusion, empathy, reciprocity and co-creation, as outlined in the Kentucky Board of Education's (KBE's) 2023 [A Call to Action](#). As we continue to advocate for a reimagined assessment and accountability system, I want to thank the many stakeholders who have co-created this work and expressed their goals, aspirations, and feedback in meaningful ways. This inclusive design process truly is helping bring about a bold new era of education in Kentucky.

I also want to highlight Kentucky's first statewide Agriculture Education Week, March 17-21, as an example of the "All In" approach to creating vibrant learning opportunities for students, innovation, and collaboration with our communities related to the diverse world of agriculture. This exciting new collaboration between the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, KDE and Team Kentucky was designed to broaden access to ag education and was so successful that we are already planning the next "All In for Ag Week" for Sept. 15-19, 2025.



Lastly, given recent announcements at the federal level related to the U.S. Department of Education (ED), I want to assure the Kentucky Board of Education that I, along with department staff, remain committed to our Commonwealth's students and am confident in our ability to assist districts in providing an excellent education, filled with vibrant learning experiences. It is my hope that these changes will have a minimal impact on our schools, and more importantly, on our students. We will await and share with the board any additional information we receive on how ED Secretary Linda McMahon proposes ED's closure as permitted by law.

**Office of Special Education and Early Learning  
Division of State Schools Update – March 2025**

**KY SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND (KSB)**

**Campus Happenings**

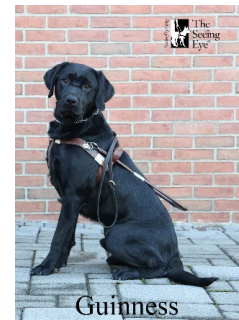
- i. The KSB students participated in the Kentucky Regional Braille Challenge on Feb. 27. Many of the students placed first, second and third in their categories.



- ii. Wildcat Wrestling and Cheer Teams competed in Nashville, TN on Jan. 25. The wrestling team placed fifth, and the cheerleaders won first place, with the spirit award and the mascot taking second place in their competition.
- iii. The Kentucky Center for Safe Schools conducted a safety audit at KSB on Feb. 13.

**New Staff**

- i. We are excited to welcome our new staff member and guide dog to Mr. Mullins, Guinness, the beautiful black labrador retriever.



**Upcoming Events**

- i. KSB two-week summer program will be held from June 2-13.



## KENTUCKY SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF (KSD)

### Campus Happenings



- i. The KSD students worked hard on bringing the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race to life on campus. Activities included prepping and giving informative presentations on various mushers, crafting the Northern lights, and trying their hands at cartography by creating a topography map of Alaska with the Iditarod Trail map, experiencing the thrill of being a musher through virtual reality, and building miniature dog sleds.
- ii. The KSD career and technical education (CTE) students participated in an educational trip to Hyster-Yale Materials Handling on March 4.
- iii. The KSD girls' basketball team placed sixth in the Mason-Dixon Tournament at the Louisiana School for the Deaf in January.



### New Staff

- i. N/A

### Upcoming Events

- i. The family weekend retreat will be held April 25-27.





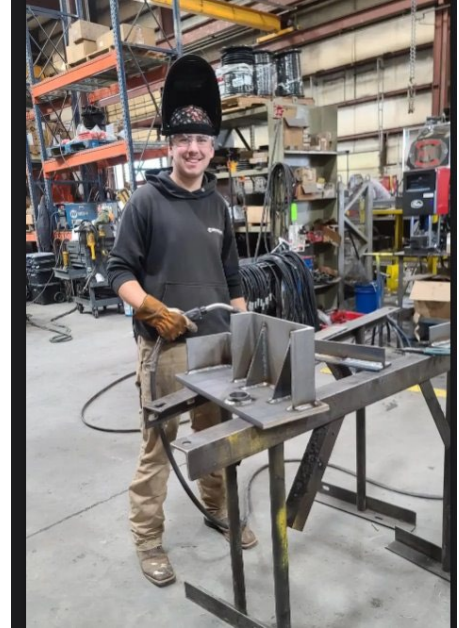
## KY Tech District of Area Technology Centers (ATCs) Commissioner Updates – March 2025

### Area Technology Centers (ATCs)

#### **Shelby County ATC**

Shelby County ATC Welding program has been blessed to work with Industry partner Process Machinery Inc. (PMI) for the last few years. PMI has donated welding supplies, a welder, and allowed a welding student to shadow and spend the day with them. We are thankful for their partnership and generous donations to our welding program.

*Sara G. Meadway, Shelby County ATC*



#### **Four Rivers Academy**

Four Rivers Career Academy Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) chapter was one of two Kentucky schools to achieve the Thrive level. This allows them to have two student spots for this year's International Career Development Conference in Anaheim California.

Morgan Wade is just in her second year at Four Rivers Career Academy. She is developing a culture of confidence in her program and her students striving to achieve at local, regional, state and national levels. Congratulations to Advisor Morgan Wade and her DECA students at the Four Rivers Academy.

*Brett Johnson, Principal  
Four Rivers Academy*



**Bullitt County ATC**

Bullitt County ATC would like to thank Challenger Lifts for donating around \$18,000 worth of Snap-On tools and equipment to the automotive and welding programs.

We were very blessed this year that our industry partners were able to donate in excess of \$40,000 to help fund our program and project-based learning (PBL).

*Darrell Vincent, Principal  
Bullitt County ATC*

**Trailblazer Early College and Career Academy (ECCA)**

Both of our nursing instructors are in the classroom and they're doing an amazing job! A warm welcome to Trailblazers Chaeli Adkins and Kristin Ballard-Kietzerow!



David Darnall has been named student of the week. As a senior health science student. He has excelled in Phlebotomy and has also been an excellent recruiter for the program.



Hayden Young won 1st place out of 70 welders at the Bluegrass Welding Series Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW) competition on Nov 1. His goal is to make welding a career and his hard work and perseverance shows!

*Emily Whitworth, Principal,  
ECCA, Harrodsburg*



**Wayne County Area Technology Center (WC ATC)***Snipped from Wayne County School District*

Jun 21, 2024- The Wayne County Board of Education unanimously approved funding for the Wayne County Area Technology Center (WC ATC) Special Education part-time positions as a result of a successful pilot year in 2023-24.



The board approved a \$30,000 contribution towards student achievement for students enrolled at the ATC. At the start of the past school year, there were 22 students failing classes offered at the ATC building. Once, the three retired teachers were hired to assist students as resource teachers who provided extra support; zero students were identified as failing on the last assessment. The program provided the recent summer Work Boot Camp a virtual reality promotional program to attract younger students to the ATC, and mainly intervention services during the entire school year.

The pilot project grant totaled \$140,000 this past year and WC ATC was one of four participating schools who took advantage of this grant opportunity.

WC ATC Principal John Kennett noted, “This program helped our kids tremendously.” He praised his teacher’s efforts to promote student success through this grant.

He was efficient on who he chose to implement this program, so he did not have to take any existing teachers out of the classroom. Fortunately, retired teachers Noel Vaughn, Jason Kennett and Micha Hicks agreed to accept the part-time positions.

**Letcher County ATC**

We are excited to partner with HOMES Inc. this year, offering our co-op students from Letcher County Area Technology Center the opportunity to apply their training and make valuable contributions in a real-world environment. HOMES has played a crucial role in Letcher County by addressing the housing needs of residents affected by the 2022 flooding.



*Casey Breeding, Principal, Letcher County ATC*





# Kentucky Department of **EDUCATION**

## Greenup County ATC



Future Farmers of America (FFA)- The Greenup County ATC has had a HUGE start back to school! Our FFA just completed the Greenup County Fair and our students broke their record for largest youth livestock sale EVER! Our students sold 121 animals and brought in \$225,000! HUGE CONGRATS to Abby Imel for being the #1 FFA Junior Dairy Judge in the State! Robin Webb even served as ring steward! We are SO PROUD of our FFA and our sponsors, Carrie Davis and Madison Stachler-Greene! It is ALWAYS a GREAT day to be a Greenup County Musketeer!

*Stacey Thompson, Principal  
Greenup County ATC*

## Belfry ATC



We partnered with DNA Construction and collected flood relief supplies for Tennessee and North Carolina. We collected the supplies and DNA Construction delivered two 16 foot trailer loads.

*Belfry ATC, Bobby Branham*



# Kentucky Department of **EDUCATION**

## Southern Kentucky Early College and Career Academy (SKECC)



Health Sciences students enjoy their days with Cameron Carr-Calvert with Western Kentucky University's (WKU) Area Health Education Center (AHEC) program. They are learning medical skills such as suturing and intubation.

*SKECC – Stesha Flowers*