

Vibrant Learning Experiences Across Kentucky

Kelly Foster, Associate Commissioner
Sarah Snipes, Division of Innovation Director
Alexa Hardin, Regional Innovation Specialist

Office of Continuous Improvement and Support



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

“Learning that matters to students”

In partnership with families and communities, students are agents of their own learning, engaged in **relevant, authentic and joyful learning** opportunities. Vibrant learning **honors students' cultural wealth, gifts and interests**. Vibrant learning culminates in the application of knowledge and skills demonstrated through **personalized products**.

How are schools across Kentucky bringing the vision of vibrant learning to life?

Common Models/Strategies for Vibrant Learning Experiences:



- Personalized Learning Pathways
- Service Learning
- Student-Driven Inquiry
- Interdisciplinary Learning
- Competency-Based Education (CBE)
- Student-Led Conferences
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Project-Based Learning (PBL)
- Gamification
- Work-Based Learning



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Relevant, Authentic Learning in Action

Tates Creek High School (Fayette County)

Educator: Cathy Sammons

Student-driven Inquiry Aligned with Science Standards and Competencies:

- Community experts facilitated activities on waste management
- Students analyzed real environmental data and engaged in scientific practices such as evaluating evidence and designing solutions
- Developed critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and civic leadership

Real-World Impact:

- Students demonstrated mastery of science concepts through community solutions
 - Recycling plastic bags into park benches
 - Creating blogs to educate residents on proper recycling practices
 - Producing podcasts promoting sustainable transportation alternatives



Sagan Goodpaster from Live Green Lex joined Cathy Sammons' Tates Creek High School (Fayette) class to teach students about solid waste management and sustainable living.



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Creating Joy Through Tabletop Role-Playing Games (TTRPGs)

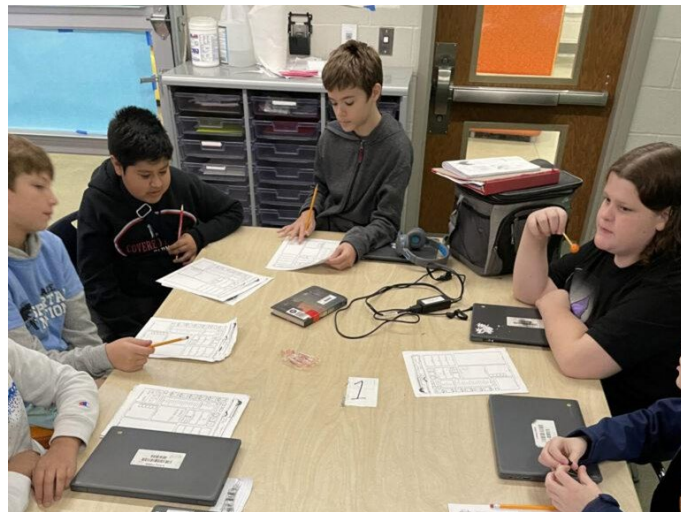
Marnel C. Moorman Middle School (Shelby County)
Educator: Justin Gadd

Learning through Play and Storytelling:

- Uses Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) to create immersive, experiential learning aligned to Shelby County's Profile of a Graduate skills (responsible collaboration, effective communication, critical thinking, etc.)
 - An Oregon Trail campaign engages students deeply in westward expansion and Manifest Destiny through role-playing scenarios and collaborative decision-making

Student-Centered Experiences:

- Students develop teamwork, problem-solving, and strategic decision-making skills while using creative writing and math within historical contexts



The Dungeons and Dragons club at Shelby County Schools provides students with an opportunity for game-based learning, helping them develop many of the skills in Shelby County's Profile of a Graduate.



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Families Connect Through Learning Exhibitions

Bardstown Elementary (Bardstown Independent)

Educator: Melissa Kyser

Showcasing Student Learning to Authentic Audiences:

- Students shared their learning and writing about a day in the life of an astronaut aboard the International Space Station (ISS)
- Students chose an artifact of their learning from the unit focused on understanding human impacts on Earth systems and outer space to share at the Exhibition Night

Real-World Community Connections:

- Parents and community members asked questions of students about their learning, prompted by their own curiosity and support materials provided by the school
- To prepare for the Exhibition Night, students and parents attended a stargazing event as part of a partnership with a local planetarium



Melissa Kyser and her students stargaze during an after school “Star Party” to observe the night sky and celestial bodies they were studying during the ISS unit.



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Learning Rooted in Local Context

Rowan County Senior High School (Rowan County)

Educator: Lindsay Johnson

Meaningful Community Engagement:

- Students engaged in round-table discussions at Morehead University with diverse local leaders (county magistrates, city council members, university professionals, etc.)
- Explored ways to actively participate and contribute to their community, aligning with Rowan County's Portrait of a Learner competencies

Local History and Creative Expression:

- Students examined historical archives from a local historian, gaining insights into Morehead local heritage
- Transformed historical documents into original poetry with support from Morehead State University English students



Rowan County Senior High School students conduct round-table discussions with community members hosted on Morehead State University's campus.



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

Cultivating Curiosity with Hands-On Learning

Second Street School (Frankfort Independent)

Educator: Dana Newland

Hands-On Agricultural Learning with Integrated Curriculum:

- Students engage in growing lettuce, herbs, radishes, and microgreens
- Activities include seed planting, compost exploration, and aquaponics system maintenance
- Lessons align with Kentucky's science, math and reading standards
- Incorporates cooking, tasting local foods, and gardening to enhance learning

Community and Nutritional Impact:

- Students collaborate with local farmers and cafeteria staff to introduce fresh produce into school meals
- Students participate in food preparation, such as baking with harvested butternut squash



FoodPrints Teacher Dana Newland helps students plant snow peas during a class with elementary students at Second Street School.

Applying Knowledge Through Authentic Products

South Marshall Middle School (Marshall County)

Educator: Kelly Locker

Student-Created and Published Book:

- *Out of the Rubble* captures firsthand and community stories of the 2021 tornado through fiction, poetry, and informational writing
- Students presented the book to Gov. Beshear who invited them to share at the Capitol during the 2026 legislative session
 - Proceeds from book sales will fund the trip, reinforcing a civic learning experience rooted in authentic writing

Real-World Literacy Skills:

- Students engaged in the full writing and publishing process, from drafting and editing to cover design and marketing
- They learned to use research and writing to meet rigorous learning goals through relevant, real-world tasks that build confidence and purpose



Pre-order cover for Out of the Rubble, a book written by 8th grade students at South Marshall Middle School reflecting on the tornadoes that impacted Kentucky in 2021



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION



Questions?

