

Commissioner's Report – August 2025

Kentucky Board of Education

As commissioner, I am committed to increasing the Kentucky Department of Education's (KDE's) visibility and building genuine, trusting relationships with Kentucky educators, administrators, students and families. Recent efforts include meeting with members of the Kentucky General Assembly during the interim session; continued collaboration with Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) and Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) chairs regarding ways to enhance the educator workforce; and engagements with district, school and teacher leaders ahead of the new school year.



KDE staff and I continue to prioritize timely and clear updates with our district partners. We met with district officials to review the June 30 U.S. Department of Education (USED) announcement regarding the withholding of specific Elementary & Secondary Education Title program funds. In response to questions about Senate Bill 181, legislation passed during the 2025 regular legislative session that requires school districts to approve a system of communications for all forms and types of electronic communications used with students, KDE produced a [SB 181 Traceable Communication Systems FAQ](#) and discussed it with superintendents in July. My [weekly correspondence to all 171 of Kentucky's school district superintendents](#) advising them of programmatic or policy issues that affect local districts is available on KDE's website.

Regarding COVID-relief funding, KDE received some excellent news in late June regarding the \$56 million in ARP ESSER projects that were rescinded in a March 28 letter from USED Secretary Linda McMahon. I am very pleased that all the projects in Kentucky can now proceed without financial harm, particularly for KDE and the 13 districts that had unspent funds.

Lastly, the Kentucky Auditor of Public Accounts report released July 1 details the \$1.2 million special examination of KDE that was established by House Bill 825 (2024). It took many, many hours of staff time to speak with the auditors and provide the documents that were required for this deep look at how the agency operates. We had great feedback from staff and school officials in the report. In every section, the report highlights the good work agency staff have been doing to support the students and educators of Kentucky. KDE is always focused on continuous improvement, and we look forward to using this report to identify opportunities for future growth and continued improvement.

Division of State Schools Update

KY SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND (KSB)



Campus Happenings

1. Summer enrichment for KSB students took place June 2-6. Students in elementary, middle and high school attended and participated in a variety of activities focused on assistive technology, orientation and mobility, and independent living skills. Students went on field trips to the St. Matthews Police Department and Fire Department where they had the opportunity to climb in a fire truck, ambulance and police car. They also toured the historic Louisville water tower and learned how water from the Ohio River becomes water they drink at school. Middle school students learned about recycling and visited the Louisville Recycling Center. On Friday, all the students went on a field trip to the zoo.
2. Week two of summer enrichment included KSB students and students from across the Commonwealth. During the week, students stayed on campus and enjoyed water games and a visit from a Creasy Mahan Nature Preserve educator. Students learned about animals that live in the preserve and enjoyed hands-on activities that included touching birds' nests, snake skins, rocks and plants. Students also spent a day learning about building bricks and making things with engines.
3. The Summer Work Program for high school students was held during the weeks of June 9 and June 16. Twenty-three students from KSB and across the Commonwealth worked at two job sites, The Louisville Zoo and Kentucky Kingdom. The program takes place in partnership with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Students worked in a variety of positions, including grounds and maintenance, food preparation, retail and guest services.



Campus Updates

1. Scoggin/McDaniels Classroom Building: HVAC and lighting upgrades

2. Hartford Food Service Building: HVAC upgrades and ceiling repair
3. Evans Hall: Furniture installation in August
4. Gregory Rec Center: Bowling alley repair in August

New Staff

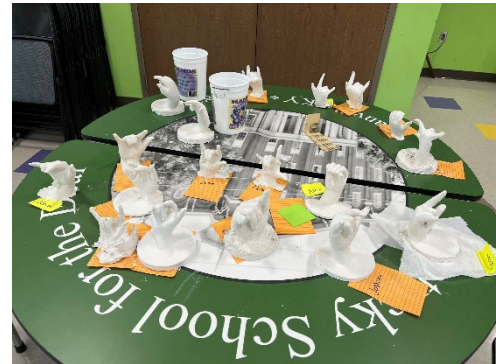
1. Interviews are in progress for open positions

Upcoming Events

1. Aug. 4 - Opening day for staff
2. Aug. 10 – Registration
3. Aug. 11 – First day of school

Division of State Schools Update

KENTUCKY SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF (KSD)



Campus Happenings

1. KSD held a Summer Program for elementary and middle school students from June 9 - 13 with "Future Deaf Scientists" as the theme. The program included several field trips, such as visits to the Rebecca Ruth Candy Factory, Pizza Inn, Waffle Stop Cafe, Danville Dollhouse Museum, the Art Center of the Bluegrass, Pioneer Playhouse, Danville High School (for a community children's event) and Chick-fil-A. Students participated in hands-on activities where they created slime, made salamanders, practiced American Sign Language (ASL) handshapes and dyed shirts.
2. KSD held an Agriculture Camp from June 15 - 23 for high school students. The campers had a fantastic week visiting the University of Kentucky, where they explored the Arboretum and the Food Connection Learning Lab. Campers enjoyed a guided tour led by Chef Temurbek Burihanov and toured the Memorial Coliseum. Additionally, they visited Cornoet's Farm Fresh Market and Wildcat Dairy Farm Cheese Shop, gaining valuable experience and knowledge throughout their excursions. The students participated in a cooking competition, cooked delicious

meals and invited some staff from KSD, who thoroughly enjoyed the food. The campers had an exciting weekend camping at Lake Cumberland.

Campus Updates

1. Argo Hall: Waiting for dust collector arrival and installation
2. Campus Wide: Painted railings
3. Middleton Hall: Demolition in progress
4. Thomas Gym: New tile and carpet installation
5. Jacobs Hall: Windows replacement upcoming

New Staff

1. Zack Lee- Maintenance
2. Manny Navarrette- Elementary teacher
3. Rebecca Hall- High school math teacher

Upcoming Events

1. August 7- Opening day for staff
2. August 10- Registration day for students
3. August 11- First day of school
4. August 18- First day of preschool

Kentucky Tech System of Area Technology Centers (ATCs) Updates

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 115 of Kentucky’s local school districts.

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, Career and Technical Education (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.

Student opportunities never stop at the ATCs. The ATCs had a busy summer with National CTSO competitions, job fairs, student career exploration events and hiring new staff.

2023-2024 Kentucky Tech Accountability

<u>Career Readiness</u>	<u>Total Industry Certifications</u>	<u>Total End-of-Program Assessments</u>	<u>Total CTE Dual Credit</u>	<u>Total WBL Opportunities</u>	<u>Concentrators & Completers</u>
<u>67.99%</u>	<u>5,350</u>	<u>536</u>	<u>2,682</u>	<u>155</u>	<u>8,721</u>

The Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) is proud to share the impressive outcomes from the ATCs’ CTE programs, which continue to deliver meaningful opportunities for student success and workforce readiness.

The ATC career readiness rate reached an outstanding 67.99%, a clear indicator that ATC students are gaining the skills and competencies needed to thrive in today’s job market. ATC students earned 5,350 industry-recognized certifications, demonstrating not only program participation, but achievement in high-demand career fields.

The ATCs also saw 536 Articulated End-of-Program Assessments completed, reflecting the ATCs’ commitment to high academic, employability and technical standards across all pathways.

In addition, 2,682 ATC students were enrolled in CTE dual credit courses, giving them a head start on college and career credentials while still in high school.

Hands-on, vibrant learning experiences remain a core component of CTE and ATCs, with 155 work-based learning opportunities offered to connect classroom knowledge with real-world practice.

The ATCs supported a strong pipeline of future professionals, with a total of 8,721 students identified as CTE concentrators and completers.

Letcher County ATC

Letcher County ATC, serving students from Letcher County Schools and Jenkins Independent, is proud to share exciting progress as they continue to focus on student success and career readiness! Dual Credit Growth: This year, 66% of our seniors earned dual credit—up from just 41% last year! New dual credit opportunities were added in Diesel, Carpentry, Building Construction Technology, and Engineering—programs that did not offer dual credit previously. Career and Postsecondary Readiness: We saw a 20% increase in seniors earning industry certifications, growing from 95 students last year to 111 this year. Overall Postsecondary Readiness rate jumped from 70.51% to an outstanding 94.83%! Expanding Work-Based Learning: 17 students participated in co-op experiences this year, and they actively worked over the summer to expand their industry partnerships and increase that number for this upcoming school year.

Floyd County ATC

Floyd County ATC, serving students from Betsy Lane, Floyd Central, Prestonsburg High, Renaissance Learning Center and the David School, established a partnership with the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP) to offer over 20 paid student apprenticeships during the spring semester of 2025. These placements extended through June 30, providing students with valuable, hands-on experience in various industries. Many participants will have the opportunity to continue employment with their host companies beyond the program's end date. Throughout the semester, students worked more than 20 hours per week at sites such as Infinity Construction/Welding, Mann Toyota, Bluegrass Medical and Gearheart Communications. Two students have received full-time job offers from Gearheart Communications effective July 1.

Garrard County ATC

The Garrard County ATC, serving students from Garrard County Schools, Lincoln County Schools, Danville Independent, Boyle County Schools and KSD, carpentry class applied their skills in a meaningful way by engaging in a community service project that supported local early childhood programs. As part of the initiative, ATC carpentry students designed and constructed miniature picnic tables, which were donated to community Head Start and preschool programs.

Warren County ATC

Warren County ATC – serving Warren East, Warren Central, South Warren, Bowling Green and Greenwood High School, held its annual signing day on May 15. Twelve students were offered internships or full-time employment with several local businesses. Scotty's Contracting offered employment to five Warren County ATC students. Those students are Liam Doolin, Ashton McMillin, Steven Rodriguez, Sam Strain, Drake Weaver and Colton Taylor.

Webster County ATC

Webster County ATC, serving students from Webster County schools, partnered with Webster County High School Apex 2.0 to provide summer mini camps for students. The summer camp theme was college and career readiness. Students participated in activities related to each program pathway. The students learned about creating structures to withstand stresses, constructed a PVC pipe sprinkler, created their personal brands and learned basic first aid and medical musts.