

CPE President's Report to KBE Board
August 6, 2025

James B. Conant Award: I was honored to receive the James Bryant Conant Award from Education Commission of the States (ECS) at the 2025 National Forum on Education Policy convening on July 10. The award is one of three ECS gives each year to celebrate outstanding commitment to public education.

Persistence and Retention: According to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), Kentucky's one-year gains in undergraduate persistence and retention were the highest in the nation from 2023 to 2024, increasing 9.8 and 7.9 percentage points, respectively. Thanks to these increases, Kentucky now surpasses the national average in both persistence and retention, marking a significant rebound from the pandemic period, when the state lagged on both measures. Kentucky's current persistence rate is 85.3%, and its retention rate is 74%, compared to national averages of 77.6% and 69.5%, respectively.

Healthcare Workforce Investment Fund Grants: CPE awarded around \$4.3 million to 28 postsecondary healthcare programs across Kentucky. The awards will provide training scholarships to over 200 Kentucky resident students studying fields with workforce shortages. Monies were made possible through the [Kentucky Healthcare Workforce Investment Fund \(HWIF\)](#), a public-private partnership enacted during the 2023 legislative session. Donations from healthcare providers are matched dollar for dollar by the HWIF. The HWIF aims to cultivate a robust healthcare workforce in Kentucky, targeting critical needs among Kentucky's healthcare professional education and training programs.

Prison Education Grant: Kentucky was one of five states selected by the [State Higher Education Executive Officers Association](#) (SHEEO) to participate in a one-year learning community to expand postsecondary opportunities for individuals impacted by the criminal justice system (people who are or have been incarcerated, on probation or on parole). The other states are Arizona, Louisiana, Minnesota and Virginia. The [Vera Institute for Justice](#) is a partner in this work, and [Ascendium Education Group](#) provided financial support. Kentucky's state team will include representatives from the Council on Postsecondary Education, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and the Kentucky Department of Corrections. These organizations will work to remove barriers to

postsecondary education for individuals with criminal records and help them make meaningful contributions to Kentucky's workforce.

Career Services Convening: On July 24 at the KCTCS system office, CPE hosted its second annual convening for career development professionals in higher education, workforce development and industry. The event provided timely insights, practical strategies and collaborative opportunities to strengthen Kentucky's career readiness efforts.

Dual Credit Advisory Council: The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) has appointed six new members to Kentucky's Dual Credit Advisory Council, a body charged with overseeing policies and initiatives to expand and improve dual credit opportunities for high school students across the state. They are:

- Angie White, Counselor, Barren County Schools
- Jama Griffie, Director of Dual Credit, Hazard Community and Technical College
- James Catchen, Director of Dual Credit and Transfer Pathways, Thomas More University
- Joel Pace, Director of the Eagle Scholars Program, Morehead State University
- Kara Schotter, Associate Vice-President of Academic Affairs, Jefferson Community and Technical College
- Sandra Hancock, Student Transitions Coordinator, Christian County School

Futuriti.org: CPE staff made a presentation to the Interim Joint Committee on Education on July 14 about the Futuriti website. Along with an overview of the site, staff highlighted the Future Finder feature, designed to help advisors and counselors assist students in selecting dual credit courses, college majors and CTE opportunities.

CPE Board Meeting: The next CPE board meeting will be held on September 12 at Somerset Community College (time and exact location TBA).