

Commissioner's Report – October 2025

Kentucky Board of Education



Left - Photo by Myles Young, KDE Division of Communications. Lt. Governor Jacqueline Coleman, Education Commissioner Robbie Fletcher and Agriculture Commissioner Jonathan Shell joined Simpsonville Elementary School students during a recent “All In for Ag” event.



Right – Photo submitted. Commissioner Robbie Fletcher met with students learning real-world skills and preparing for career-readiness at the Grant County High School Career and Technical Center.

Around the Commonwealth: Visits to Kentucky Schools

I recently shared with Kentucky’s newest superintendents that the best way to inform their decision-making is to spend time in classrooms and with their students. I took advantage of that advice, traveling on many Kentucky roads over the past several weeks as I welcomed educators and students back to the classroom. During my school visits, I shared my journey as an educator—reflecting on the challenges, growth and deep joy that comes with shaping young minds. I also heard from district leaders and educators about vibrant learning, innovation, and collaboration occurring across the Commonwealth, as well as questions they have related to the future of assessment and accountability in Kentucky.



Submitted Photo. Commissioner Robbie Fletcher delivers remarks at Rowan County Schools' opening day.

My recent engagement opportunities with school districts (through Sept. 18) include:

- Aug. 4 – Rowan County Opening Day for All Staff
- Aug. 11 – Elizabethtown Independent Opening Day
- Aug. 12 – Corbin Independent Impact Conference

- Aug. 18 – Agriculture School Salsa Challenge at the Kentucky State Fair
- Aug. 20 – Grant County Schools Visit
- Sept. 5 – Williamsburg Independent School District Visit
- Sept. 15 – Shelby County Schools “All In for Ag” Event at Simpsonville Elementary
- Sept. 16 – Hopkins County School Schools “All In for Ag” Events (multiple)
- Sept. 18 – Green County Schools Visit

College Admissions Exam

Beginning in the 2025–2026 school year, the SAT will serve as Kentucky’s official state-administered college admissions exam, following a competitive bid process that awarded the contract to the College Board. The first cohort affected will be the Class of 2027. The SAT is an online adaptive assessment lasting 2 hours and 14 minutes, evaluating students in Reading & Writing and Math, and also providing an Analysis in Science score to meet Kentucky’s statutory requirements. Schools will have flexibility to administer the exam within a six-week window from March 2 to April 10, 2026. The contract sets the cost at \$30 per student for four years, with the option to extend up to nine years—potentially saving the Commonwealth up to \$350,000 annually. A range of resources and training opportunities are available to support educators, families, and students throughout the transition.

Advocacy for the Future of Assessment and Accountability in Kentucky

Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) staff and I continue to champion the model framework for the [Future of Assessment and Accountability](#) approved by the Kentucky Board of Education earlier this year. This includes discussions with district leaders and educators about how to champion the framework, as well as ongoing conversations with legislators for consideration of changes in the upcoming regular legislative session.

KDE staff provide resources to support districts in developing local accountability systems that elevate vibrant learning experiences and help create stronger partnerships with families and communities. On Sept. 3, the KDE Division of Innovation announced the release of the [Local Accountability Design Guide and Toolkit](#). This resource provides a step-by-step approach, real-world examples from across the Commonwealth, and practical tools to help schools and communities design accountability systems that reflect local priorities and create vibrant learning experiences for every student. KDE staff have discussed this resource with superintendents and educational cooperatives.



Commissioner's Report Kentucky Board of Education

Division of State Schools Update

KENTUCKY SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND (KSB)

Campus Happenings

1. On Aug. 22 University of Kentucky's Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) program with Dr. Lee had a day of learning on KSB's campus. The new cohort met in person. They spent the weekend learning how to best meet the needs of visually impaired students.
2. On Wednesday, Sept. 24, 2025, the 48th annual Bill Roby Games will be held at the Norton Healthcare Sports and Learning Center. Students from Jefferson County Public Schools, VIPs, Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Tennessee School for the Blind, and the Ohio State School for the Blind will be joining us for a fun day of track and field games.

Campus Updates

1. Big changes are happening to KSB as Operation Facelift continues during the 2025-2026 school year! Operation Facelift is a comprehensive renovation and improvement plan that will bring major updates to KSB's campus, including refreshed dorms and classrooms, brighter LED lighting, new heating and cooling systems, and improved plumbing and electrical systems. Outside, we'll see landscaping, walkway repairs and expanded parking.

The major initiatives include:

- Operation Jupiter: Transition to geothermal HVAC system for efficiency and cost savings.
 - Operation Apollo: Conversion to LED lighting upgrades across campus for safety and energy savings.
 - Operation Thor: Modernization of the electrical system.
 - Operation Neptune: Water system and plumbing improvements.
 - Operation Loki: General maintenance and ongoing miscellaneous repairs.
2. We are also looking forward to the bowling alley repair, a new greenhouse and expanded parking lots funded through the KSB Charitable Foundation.

New Staff

1. Amy Pierce is our new high school science teacher. She's coming to KSB after more than 20 years in Oldham County. Most recently, she was a school counselor, and before that she was an elementary special education teacher. She has three children, a daughter who just graduated from college as a nurse; a son who is majoring in biology and wants to be a physical therapist; and a younger son who is 11 and just started middle school. For fun, they like to be outside as often as possible, they like fishing, hiking, sometimes camping when the weather is good and they love to be on the lake. They love music and going to concerts.
2. Our new MSD middle school teacher is not new to us but new to her position. Meet Jessica Camic who is a proud mom of two amazing girls and one very spoiled dog named Rocky. She has spent 19 years working in special education, and for the past three years, she's been fortunate to be part of the KSB family. She strives to create a supportive and inclusive classroom where every student feels valued, encouraged, and capable.
3. Jennifer Hutcherson is our new School Psychologist at KSB! She is from Campbellsville, KY and went to Western Kentucky University for undergrad, and then Middle Tennessee State University for graduate school. This will be her 16th year as a School Psychologist. She says her favorite part of being a School Psychologist is working independently with the students and attempting to figure out how they learn and the causes of educational difficulties.

Upcoming Events

1. High School English classes will welcome Lance Newman with SpreadLove Enterprise for a poetry workshop Sept. 2 through Oct. 14. A big thanks to KSB Charitable Foundation for generously providing funds for this program!
2. We have an exciting lineup of events planned for this fall! Be on the lookout for more details and official dates soon:
 - a. Fall Festival – A fun filled celebration for our school community.
 - b. White Cane Day Wednesday Oct. 15 – Honoring the importance of independence and awareness.
 - c. Middle & High School Concert – Featuring our middle school and 9th-10th grade students, scheduled for mid-to-late November.
 - d. Winter Concert – Showcasing elementary and 11th-12th grade students at the end of the semester in December.

3. Varsity Track will compete in the Eberhardt Track Invitational at Missouri School for the Blind on Sept. 11-12.
4. Varsity Track will compete at the NCASB Track and Field Conference Championships at Tennessee School for the Blind, Sept. 26-27.
5. KSB Charitable Foundation and KSB Athletics will be hosting the Wildcat Goalball Invitational on Oct. 17-18. There will be Goalball 101, food truck, and more! Let's pack the gym and cheer on our Wildcats!

Pictures:



University of Kentucky TVI graduate students along with Dr. Lee listen to KSB students give their perspective about being visually impaired.



Three KSB middle school students plotting points in their math class.



Two KSB middle school students plotting points in their math class.



Two KSB high school students and Mrs. Pierce performing an experiment outside in the courtyard.



Three KSB high school students wearing lab coats and goggles observing the science experiment outside in courtyard.



KSB high school students wearing lab coats and goggles observing the science experiment outside in courtyard with Mrs. Parker and Mrs. Pierce the science teachers.



KSB middle school students made bird houses and then hung them around campus.

Division of State Schools Update

KENTUCKY SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF (KSD)

Campus Happenings

1. KSD Student Life staff attended the National Student Life Deaf and Hard of Hearing Conference at the Florida School for the Deaf in St. Augustine. The theme was “Building Bridges: Connecting Communities, Inspiring Change.” They learned a great deal and connected with staff from other schools for the Deaf. The experience provided valuable ideas for improving their residential program.
2. The Future Deaf Scientists four-week program, hosted at the University of Kentucky Cancer & Research Center, provided an exceptional learning experience for participating students. Throughout the program, students observed surgical procedures, attended medical appointments, participated in art therapy sessions, engaged in laboratory work, and met with deaf professionals working in the medical field. This unique opportunity not only expanded their knowledge of medical science but also inspired them by showcasing successful deaf role models in healthcare.
3. The opening day on Aug. 10 was a great success! Students and their families came to meet the staff, enjoyed ice cream provided by FINN’s Ice Cream, and have fun with a bouncy house from Party on Air. The students are excited to be back at school, and we are ready for an amazing 2025-2026 school year.

Campus Updates

1. Thomas Gym- 100% complete and in use.
2. Argo- 85% Complete- Dust collection system requires final hookup; electrical and fire inspections pending. Estimated completion: September 2025
3. Jacob’s Hall- Not Started-Window replacement scheduled to begin late August 2025. Estimated completion: November 2025.
4. Brady Hall- 20% Complete- HVAC system currently in design phase. Construction projected to begin in winter 2025.
5. Middleton Hall- 70% Complete- Interior work is on schedule. Awaiting cost estimate and scope for brick exterior repairs. Estimated completion for interior: October 2025; exterior timeline pending.
6. Lee Hall- Planning Stage- Project remains in KDE six-year plan; start date contingent on funding availability.

New Staff

1. Dr. Faneshia Jones- Assistant Principal
2. Manny Navarrette- Elementary Teacher
3. Rebecca Hall- High School Teacher
4. Brianna Fields- School Audiologist
5. Jenny May- Instructional Assistant
6. Hannah Bennett-Student Life
7. Emily Brooks- Student Life
8. Leah Greer- Student Life
9. Mahayla Hendrix- Student Life
10. Isabella Herring- Student Life
11. Travis Dotson- School Resource Officer (SRO)
12. John Borne- SRO
13. Zach Lee, Maintenance
14. Kimberly Hamilton-Cafeteria
15. Summer Atteberry- Outreach
16. Emily Cornett- Outreach

Upcoming Events

1. Oct. 26-Monster Walk
2. Oct. 30-KSD Advisory Board Meeting 6-8 p.m. ET
3. December (TBD)-Gallaudet and Clerc Banquet
4. December (TBD)-Jacobs Hall Museum Christmas Tea and Tours
5. Jacobs Hall Candlelight Tour

Pictures:



Group of Teacher and students pose in a classroom.



Group of Student Life



Group of future Deaf scientists in the UK patient room

Kentucky Tech System of Area Technology Centers (ATCs) Updates

Barren County ATC:

The Diesel Technology Program at Barren County ATC has earned national recognition, ranking 16th out of 300 programs for the number of industry certifications achieved by students. Completers of this program gain a robust foundation in technical, academic and essential employability skills to equip them for long-term success in the workforce.



Clay County ATC:

Clay County ATC is excited to kick off the new school year in a brand-new, state-of-art facility, made possible by the Clay County Board of Education. The modern learning environment will enhance the current high-quality programs and will open additional doors of opportunity for students. Students are able to receive education and training in high-demand fields such as carpentry, computer science, construction, health science and welding.



Wayne County ATC:

Utilizing Virtual Reality and CareerView, Wayne County ATC is bringing vibrant, hands-on career exploration directly to elementary students, without ever leaving the school building. These immersive experiences introduce young learners to exciting, high-demand career paths, sparking curiosity and ambition at an early age. By connecting classroom learning to real-world opportunities, career exploration helps students understand the value of their education, dream big and begin building a foundation for lifelong learning success.

