

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (KDE) STAFF NOTE

Topic: Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) Advisory Board Appointment

Date: February 2026

Action Requested: Review Action/Consent Action/Discussion

Held In: Full Board State Schools United We Learn

SYNOPSIS OF WHAT YOU WILL BE SHARING:

To act on the proposed candidate to maintain current membership on the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) Advisory Board.

COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATION:

The Commissioner recommends Rhonda Bodner be appointed to the KSD Advisory Board. Bodner meets the necessary criteria for appointment.

APPLICABLE STATUTE OR REGULATION:

[KRS 156.070](#); [KRS 167.015](#); [KRS 167.037](#)

BACKGROUND:

Existing Policy:

KRS 156.070 details the general powers and duties of the state board, including management of the two state schools: "The Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) shall have the management and control of the common schools and all programs operated in these schools, including interscholastic athletics, the Kentucky School for the Deaf, the Kentucky School for the Blind, and community education programs and services." KRS 167.015 also provides that: "The Kentucky School for the Blind at Louisville, Kentucky, and the Kentucky School for the Deaf at Danville, Kentucky, shall be managed and controlled by the Kentucky Board of Education."

KRS 167.037 states that a KSD Advisory Board shall be established. The advisory board is composed of nine members appointed by the KBE upon recommendation by the chief state school officer for terms of four years. The advisory board elects from its membership a chair and vice chair at the first regular meeting of the fiscal year. A member may serve no more than two consecutive years as chair. The purpose of the board is to act in an advisory capacity, assist school leadership and make recommendations to the chief state school officer relating to the effective operation of the school.

Summary of Issue:

The KDE Office of Special Education and Early Learning is seeking the appointment of Rhonda Bodner to the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) Advisory Board, representing the Kentucky Association of the Deaf (KAD).

Ms. Bodner is a 1978 graduate of the KSD, where she attended school and resided in campus dormitories from 1965 to 1978. Following her graduation, she continued her service to KSD as an administrative assistant, providing support across multiple departments and outreach services. In 2025, she retired after 46 years of dedicated service.

A lifelong advocate for the Deaf community, Ms. Bodner has held numerous leadership roles throughout Kentucky. She is an active member of the KAD and currently serves on its Board as

Secretary. She also serves as Vice President of the KSD Alumni Association and is a Board Member of the KSD Charitable Foundation. In addition, Ms. Bodner is the President of the Kentucky Home for Aged and Infirm Deaf, a private foundation that supports older adults who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing by providing resources and advocating for appropriate home accommodations. Since 2004, she has also generously dedicated her time to supporting the KSD Jacobs Hall Museum.

Ms. Bodner's appointment reflects a lifelong commitment to the Kentucky School for the Deaf and an enduring dedication to service and leadership within Kentucky's Deaf community.

Budget Impact:

Pursuant to KRS 167.035, members of the board serve without compensation, but are reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

Groups Consulted and a Brief Summary of Responses:

The Office of Special Education and Early Learning advertised the vacancy through multiple outlets.

CONTACT PERSON(S):

Dr. Greta Hylton, Associate Commissioner
Office of Special Education and Early Learning
Email: Greta.Hylton@education.ky.gov
(502) 564-4970

Shannon Sparkman, Director of State Schools
Office of Special Education and Early Learning
Email: Shannon.Sparkman@education.ky.gov
(502) 564-4970



Commissioner of Education

GOALS/PRIORITIES: Indicate all applicable options.

<input type="checkbox"/> Foster Educational Innovation Through Vibrant Learning Experiences
<input type="checkbox"/> Advance Educational Excellence Through Continuous Professional Improvement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultivate Collaborative Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/> Legislation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioner's Management