

Commissioner's Report – February 2026

Kentucky Board of Education

For the last few years, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has been working with the [Kentucky United We Learn Council](#) and a variety of stakeholders – ranging from families, students, teachers, community members, business leaders, legislators and education groups – to [reimagine assessment and accountability in Kentucky](#).

Thousands of people from across the state have let us know what they wanted to see in their students' classrooms, whether it was by completing a survey, attending a town hall or by serving on the Kentucky United We Learn Council.

As the legislative session got underway last month, Rep. J.T. Payne of Henderson County filed [House Bill \(HB\) 257](#), which is influenced by the work of the Kentucky United We Learn Council.

The bill includes locally developed indicators of quality (formerly known as local accountability) and state accountability that meet federal requirements. Local indicators of quality would include flexible options for districts to set their own indicators in collaboration with their communities.



KDE Commissioner Robbie Fletcher talks with students during a school visit.

I am thankful to the thousands of Kentuckians who have contributed to this piece of legislation. Residents from across the state let us know what they wanted to see in their students' classrooms, whether it was by completing a survey, attending a town hall or by participating on the Kentucky United We Learn Council. These efforts have contributed to legislation that encourages collaboration among our districts and communities to ensure meaningful learning experiences for all students.

This is an exciting opportunity for Kentucky to lead the way in personalizing education and making sure all students have a meaningful and joyful learning experience.

Along those lines, KDE has released a series of videos highlighting revolutionary work by KDE, the Kentucky United We Learn Council and districts across the Commonwealth to explore new ways of incorporating vibrant learning experiences into the classroom while emphasizing collaboration with the community and innovation on how we approach assessments.

The videos, which will be released over KDE's social media channels, go over the work in more detail and also feature testimonials from people involved in the work, including the Shelby County school district, which has developed its own portrait of a graduate.

Regardless of what happens by the end of the legislative session, this work is something every district and every community can build upon.

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Division of State Schools Update

KY SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND (KSB)

Campus Happenings

1. **"You are the Music in Me" – KSB Fall Concert Shines.** KSB's Ritchie Building was filled with energy, talent and pride during the Nov. 21 concert, inspired by the theme "You Are the Music in Me" from "High School Musical." Students participated in an audition process at the beginning of the school year and then selected songs they wished to perform, giving them ownership of the program and shaping the overall direction of the concert. Their dedication and enthusiasm were evident throughout their on-stage performances. The 9th- and 10th-grade musicians presented an impressive program of solos, duets and trios that showcased their growing skills, musicality and confidence. Special recognition was given to the three students who transitioned to new instruments this year. Each rose to the challenge with remarkable adaptability and commitment, achieving notable success in their new roles. Appreciation was extended to Mrs. Campbell, Mr. White and Mr. Honey for their leadership, preparation and dedication in supporting students throughout the process. This event served as a wonderful celebration of creativity, collaboration and the joy of music.
2. **High School Wildcats attend the Kentucky Blind Youth Entrepreneurship.** Back in November, a small group of high school students had the exciting opportunity to attend the Kentucky Blind Youth Entrepreneurship Summit. Students connected with organizations that offer valuable services, met peers with visual impairments from across the state, and experienced an empowering atmosphere centered on independence and leadership. But the highlight of the day was meeting Kyle Coon, a blind Paralympian and truly inspiring role model. Students listened to his powerful story, asked questions, and even received signed copies of his book!
3. **Big Wildcat Cheer for KSB Goalball Teams!** On Nov. 7-8, the KSB Goalball teams traveled to St. Louis, MO, to compete in the 2025 NCASB Goalball Conference Championships. The boys' team took home second place overall without having any subs. The girls' team earned an impressive fourth-place finish, bringing home their first trophy since 2019. KSB is proud of its student athletes for their hard work, teamwork, and sportsmanship throughout the season.
4. **Commissioner Fletcher Visits KSB.** On Dec. 18, Kentucky Commissioner of Education Robbie Fletcher visited the Kentucky School for the Blind to engage with students and staff and learn more about the campus's programs and initiatives. Commissioner Fletcher was joined by Associate Commissioner Gretta Hylton and Director of State Schools Shannon Sparkman. During the visit, the leadership team toured classrooms, participated in a bowling activity with students, and observed a winter

concert rehearsal. The visit provided an opportunity to strengthen connections, highlight student engagement and showcase the vibrant learning environment at KSB.

New Staff

1. Amelia Davis – Administrative Specialist
2. Amanda Selm – Paraprofessional
3. Emry Hill – Paraprofessional

Upcoming Events

1. Feb. 19, 2026: Braille Challenge
2. March 6-8, 2026: NCASB Bowling Championships

Pictures:



KSB high school students pose with Kyle Coon, a blind Paralympian at the Kentucky Blind Entrepreneurship Summit.



KSB's athletic field is ready for use in early spring. The site has been regraded and covered in sod with new long jump, triple jump and shot-put areas.



KDE Commissioner Robbie Fletcher and a group of KSB students pose for a photo.



KSB students on stage at the start of the fall concert "You are the Music in Me."



A KSB elementary student, with the help of staff member Larry Rhodes, works on his bowling skills.

Division of State Schools Update

KENTUCKY SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF (KSD)

Campus Happenings

1. **Middle School Storyboard Exposition.** The middle school hosted a Storyboard Exposition that highlighted student research, creativity and presentation skills. Each student selected a topic of interest, developed a storyboard and presented their work to staff, families and peers. The exposition featured a wide range of subjects and demonstrated strong student engagement, confidence and pride. Guests rotated through stations as students delivered short presentations, responded to questions and shared what they learned. This event provided an opportunity for students to enhance their public speaking, organizational and critical thinking skills. Ms. VanBebber shared her pride in the students' dedication and creativity, noting the high quality of work produced throughout the project.
2. **Red Ribbon Week Activities.** Red Ribbon Week was observed with student activities, including face painting and an informational presentation on safe driving. The presentation was led by a KSD school resource officer in collaboration with local law enforcement officers. Students received instruction on making safe choices, understanding the dangers of impaired or distracted driving and recognizing the role of law enforcement in maintaining community safety.
3. **CTE College and Career Exploration at BCTC.** Career and Technical Education (CTE) students visited Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC) to explore Robotics and Advanced Manufacturing programs. Students toured instructional labs, observed demonstrations and learned about current technologies used in modern manufacturing careers. The visit emphasized the alignment between KSD's CTE coursework and postsecondary pathways, illustrating how hands-on learning experiences connect directly to high-demand careers and technical education opportunities. This experience increased student interest in robotics, engineering, and advanced manufacturing while reinforcing the relevance of current coursework.
4. **Actors Theatre of Louisville – Educational Theatre Experience.** Middle and high school students attended a performance of "FDR's Very Happy Hour" at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Students engaged with a production that emphasized accessibility, representation and inclusion through open captioning, ASL interpretation, audio description and wheelchair-accessible staging. The experience was particularly meaningful as students observed Deaf representation on stage and witnessed ASL integrated into a professional theatrical performance. Following the performance,

students participated in an informal meet-and-greet with the actors. This experience reinforced themes of communication, community and accessibility through the arts.

5. **Gallaudet and Clerc Banquet.** The annual Gallaudet and Clerc Banquet featured guest speaker Bregitt Endicott, who delivered a presentation focused on cultural identity, heritage and access to communication. The program emphasized the importance of honoring history and sharing personal stories to inspire future generations. KSD students contributed to the event through multimedia presentations highlighting Deaf history, while FFA students supported event décor with floral arrangements and wreaths. The banquet concluded with a museum tour and a reception hosted by KSD students.

Campus Updates

1. Completed Projects

- Painted front office (Argo Hall)
- Installed dust collector (Argo Hall)
- Constructed new ramp and installed railings (Argo Hall)
- Completed roof paint touch-ups (Argo Hall)
- Poured concrete floor for greenhouse (Argo Hall)
- Installed televisions and glass in secretary's office (Argo Hall)
- Installed greenhouse fencing (Argo Hall)
- Added technology drops in offices and lobby (Argo Hall)
- Repaired gym leak (Thomas Hall)
- Resurfaced and painted gym floor (Thomas Hall)
- Updated HVAC controls (Thomas Hall)
- Installed new tile in lobby, locker rooms, and hallways (Thomas Hall)
- Painted classroom and installed new carpet (Thomas Hall)
- Added playground mulch (Thomas Hall)
- Installed new furniture and blinds (Grow Hall)
- Painted middle school open area and hallways (Kerr Hall)
- Waxed art room and science classroom floors (Kerr Hall)
- Installed new library shelving and window coverings (Kerr Hall)
- Replaced fuse box (Marshall Hall)
- Waxed dorm room floors (Marshall Hall)
- Upgraded flooring, lighting, and paint in dormitory areas (Brady Hall)
- Completed bee removal (Jacob Hall)

2. Projects in Progress

- Greenhouse fencing installation
- Additional technology drops in offices and lobby (Argo Hall)

- Pool refill (Thomas Hall)
- Installation of walk-in cooler and freezer (Grow Hall)
- Roofing project (Grow Hall)
- Bathroom updates (Grow Hall)
- Pressure washing (Kerr Hall)
- Window replacement (Jacob Hall)

3. Upcoming Projects

- Badge entry installation at campus gate (Argo Hall)
- Bathroom upgrades (Argo Hall)
- Epoxy application and painting of pool office (Thomas Hall)
- Bathroom and shower upgrades (Thomas Hall)
- New locker room seating (Thomas Hall)
- Installation of new playground equipment (Thomas Hall)
- Lighting upgrades (Grow Hall)
- Kitchen equipment upgrades (Grow Hall)
- HVAC replacement (Kerr Hall)
- Window replacement and lighting upgrades (Kerr Hall)
- New library flooring (Kerr Hall)
- Floor waxing in multipurpose room and hallway (Marshall Hall)
- Installation of new glass doors (Brady Hall)
- HVAC upgrades (Brady Hall)
- Bathroom upgrades and removal of raised beds (Brady Hall)
- HVAC replacement, lighting upgrades and painting (Jacob Hall)

New Staff

1. Brianna Cobb – Houseparent

Upcoming Events

1. Jan. 23-24, 2026: KSD Basketball Homecoming Weekend
 2. Jan. 28-31, 2026: Mason-Dixon Boys and Girls Basketball Tournament
 3. April 21, 2026: Robotics Competition
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Pictures:



Two girls standing next to a storyboard during the Storyboard Exposition.



A KSD SRO pushing a child on a machine scooter during an informative presentation on the importance of safe driving.



A student gets assistance while working in robotics, engineering and manufacturing during a visit to Bluegrass Community & Technical College (BCTC) to explore their Robotics and Advanced Manufacturing programs.



A person on stage with a crowd of people when the Actors Theatre of Louisville hosted the middle and high school Colonels for a showing of "FDR's Very Happy Hour."



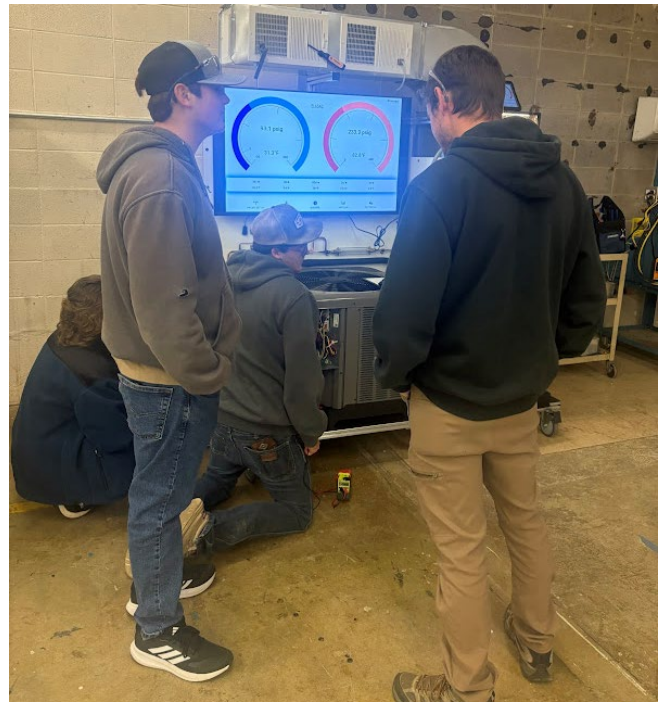
A group of people standing in front of a group of portraits during the Gallaudet & Clerc Banquet.

Kentucky Tech System of Area Technology Centers (ATCs) Updates

Harrison County Area Technology Center:

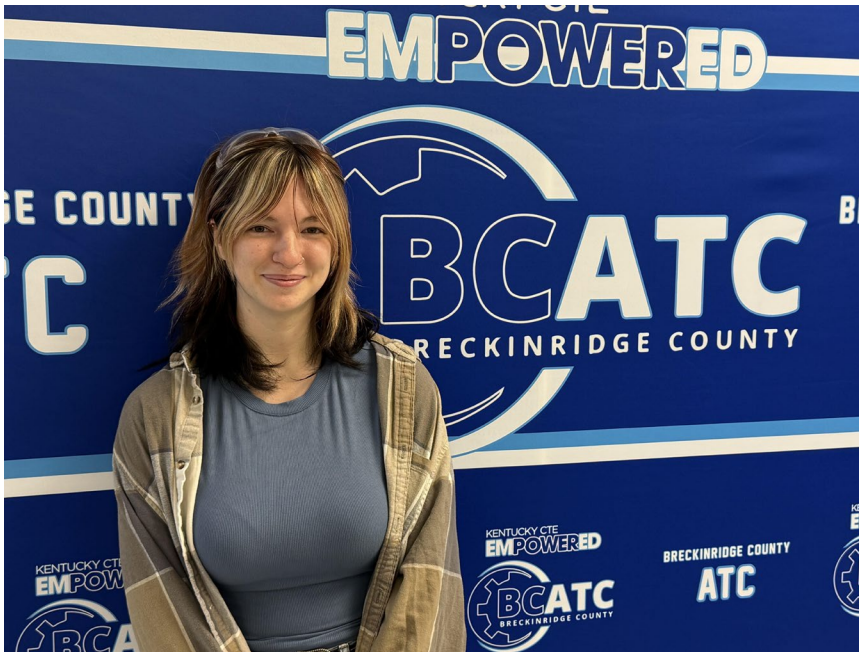
The Harrison County Area Technology Center's HVAC program has taken a major step forward by installing a state-of-the-art training lab. This advanced trainer allows students to work hands-on with HVAC systems that mirror those found in homes across their local communities. By simulating real-world scenarios, students gain critical problem-solving experience and master technical skills on equipment that meets current industry standards, preparing them to enter the workforce with confidence and competence.

The Harrison County ATC serves students from Harrison County, Bourbon County, Nicholas County and Paris Independent.



Students from Harrison County Area Technology Center, which serves students from Harrison County, Bourbon County, Nicholas County and Paris Independent, working on HVAC systems.

Breckinridge County Area Technology Center



Kylie Carey from Breckinridge County ATC has been selected for the rigorous two-year Nucor Technical Academy.

Breckinridge County ATC is proud to announce that Kylie Carey has been selected for the rigorous two-year Nucor Technical Academy.

Kylie will begin with six months of on-site training at Nucor's mill in Brandenburg, combining online coursework with hands-on experience in a world-class steel manufacturing environment. She will then transition to Nucor's Tuscaloosa, AL mill for the next 18 months, alternating two days per week in formal instruction with two-and-a-half days of paid, real-world work.

Kylie's training in both the Industrial Maintenance and Welding programs has prepared her to build advanced technical skills, earn industry-recognized credentials and step into a high-demand career.

Breckinridge County ATC serves students from Breckinridge County, Cloverport and Hancock County.

Monroe County Area Technology Center



Monroe County ATC carpentry students show off their 2025 holiday projects.

Monroe County ATC carpentry students embraced the 2025 holiday season by creating festive projects that showcased advanced craftsmanship. Through these builds, they mastered precise measurement and layout techniques, accurate length and angle cuts, and the proper use of hand and power tools. Students practiced fastening methods including nailing, screwing and countersinking, with attention to structural integrity and finish quality. Students applied problem-solving skills to repurpose scrap lumber efficiently, reinforcing concepts of material optimization and sustainable practices.

These projects not only demonstrate technical proficiency but also bring joy and seasonal spirit to the local community, strengthening the connection between the ATC and families they serve.

Monroe County Area Technology Center serves students from Monroe and Metcalf counties.

Clay County Area Technology Center

Clay County ATC Health partnered with Big Creek Elementary to teach the importance of hygiene.



Clay ATC Health Science students partnered with Big Creek Elementary to teach the importance of personal hygiene. Through interactive, hands-on activities, elementary students learned essential habits such as proper tooth brushing, handwashing and hair care. This initiative not only promoted healthy practices among young learners but also provided future healthcare professionals with a valuable opportunity to develop leadership and mentoring skills in a real-world setting.

By fostering early health education and connecting schools, the project strengthens community wellness and builds a pipeline of skilled healthcare professionals for the region.

Clay County Area Technology Center serves students from Clay County.

Greenup County Area Technology Center

The Greenup County ATC received a grant for \$10,000 from AHA to provide students with essential resources, including PPE, tool kits, scrubs and professional attire for career and technology student organization or CTSO events.

On Nov. 18, 2025, Americans Helping Americans (AHA) representatives visited the campus to meet staff and students and tour the facility. This partnership is a tremendous asset, enhancing student readiness, supporting program excellence and strengthening opportunities for the local community.

The Greenup County Area Technology Center serves students from Greenup County High School.



The Greenup County ATC sends out a huge thanks to Americans Helping Americans (AHA).