

The Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) held day two of its regular meeting on February 5, 2026. The KBE met virtually via Microsoft Teams due to weather conditions. Members of the public were encouraged to view the meeting on the Kentucky Department of Education's (KDE) Media Portal. The board conducted the following business:

I. Call to Order

Chair Sharon Robinson welcomed all board members and guests to the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. E.T.

II. Roll Call

Chair Robinson asked for a roll call of members. The following members were present: Holly Bloodworth, Harold McKinney, Juston Pate, Julie Pile, Randy Poe, Sharon Robinson, Lee Todd, Steve Trimble, Lu Young, Harper Blake, Alfonso De Torres Núñez, Secretary Jamie Link, and President Aaron Thompson. KDE Director of Education Policy GlyptusAnn Grider Jones, Ph.D., stated a quorum was present.

III. Reports

A. Report from the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB)- Vice Chair C.J. Fryer

Vice Chair C.J. Fryer presented a report on the EPSB. Fryer discussed the launch of the Ask Diego AI agent on the [GoTeachKY.com](https://www.goteachky.com) website, educator preparation spotlights in EPSB meetings, ongoing work on certification band changes, and upcoming events, including the upcoming KBE/EPSB Research Practice Collaborative meetings and the March 5 Educators Rising State conference.

B. Report from the President of the Council on Postsecondary Education- President Aaron Thompson, Ph.D.

President Aaron Thompson, Ph.D., presented a report on the Council on Postsecondary Education. Thompson highlighted increased enrollment in higher education across Kentucky (3.3% over previous year), higher graduation rates, and significant reductions in student debt. Other board members discussed the importance of data-driven advocacy and continued collaboration between P-12 and postsecondary education.

C. Report from the Secretary of Education and Labor Cabinet- Secretary Jamie Link

Secretary Jamie Link presented a report on the Education and Labor Cabinet. Link discussed legislative session priorities, the governor's pre-K for all initiative, the cabinet's unemployment insurance system upgrade, and language accessibility. Link responded to board members' questions about community engagement and language accessibility for Education and Labor Cabinet initiatives.

D. Report from the Commissioner of Education- Commissioner Robbie Fletcher

Commissioner of Education Dr. Robbie Fletcher discussed the progress of House Bill (HB) 257, which is influenced by the work of the Kentucky United We Learn Council. Dr. Fletcher said 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. Dr. Fletcher also discussed his recent visits to the Kentucky School for the Blind and Kentucky School for the Deaf. Additionally, he shared updates from Kentucky's Area Technology Centers (ATCs).

IV. Review Items

A. The State of Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Kentucky

KDE Associate Commissioner Beth Hargis, Ed.D., KDE Policy Advisor Lauren Graves, Ph.D., and KDE Division Directors Beth Engle and Tom Thompson presented the update. Board members heard information regarding the current State of Career and Technical Education (CTE) in Kentucky. This included a review of CTE program areas and pathways and CTE data and data trends for secondary students from 2022 through 2025. Other updates included Career and Technical Education Student Organization (CTSO) membership numbers and state conference dates, an overview of Fiscal Year 2026 CTE supplemental funding, the future of CTE. Thomspson discussed emerging technology integration, and Hargis outlined the middle school career exploration grant. Board members discussed the importance of advocating for increased CTE funding, addressing facility limitations, and expanding high-demand CTE programs such as aviation maintenance.

B. Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA) Annual Update

**1. Annual Report on Management and Operations- KHSAA
Commissioner Julian Tackett, KHSAA General Counsel Chad**

Collins, and KDE Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel Todd Allen

KHSAA Commissioner Julian Tackett, KHSAA General Counsel Chad Collins, and KDE Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel Todd Allen presented the report. Tackett described the KHSAA's structure as a membership-driven organization, recent operational changes, and the annual meeting process where member schools vote on bylaw amendments. The board discussed updates to the transfer rule, including a new percentage-based waiver for minimal participation and ongoing challenges related to education choice, competitive balance, and legislative pressures.

2. Annual Report on Title IX Reviews and Deficiencies

KHSAA Commissioner Julian Tackett, KHSAA General Counsel Chad Collins, KHSAA Associate Commissioner Darren Bilberry, and KDE Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel Todd Allen presented the report. The presenters discussed the annual Title IX audit process, noting site visits, data system updates, and ongoing monitoring of schools with outstanding compliance issues.

V. Action/Discussion Item

A. Amendment to 702 KAR 7:065, Designation of agent to manage middle and high school interscholastic athletics

KHSAA Commissioner Julian Tackett, KHSAA General Counsel Chad Collins, and KDE Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel Todd Allen presented the proposed amendments. Following a discussion with the full board, Chair Robinson called for a motion to approve the amendments to 702 KAR 7:065, Designation of agent to manage middle and high school interscholastic athletics. The motion was made by Randy Poe and seconded by Steve Trimble. The motion passed with a roll call vote, 9-0 (Bloodworth- yes, McKinney- yes, Pate- yes, Pile- yes, Poe- yes, Robinson- yes, Todd- yes, Trimble- yes, Young- yes)..

VI. Review Items (con'd)

A. 2024-2025 Student Group Performance

KDE Associate Commissioner Dr. Jennifer Stafford, Chief Performance Officer Karen Dodd, Strategic Data Analyst Leslie McKinney, and Chief Academic Officer Micki Ray Marinelli led the presentation. Stafford said this item was prepared in response to continued discussion of KDE's assessment and accountability overview to the KBE in December 2025. In

the December meeting, board members had requested additional detail on student group performance, including a closer look at achievement gaps, the factors contributing to those gaps, and the support in place to help improve performance, Stafford said. For the February meeting, the KBE received detailed data results from multiple sources, including the 2024-2025 Kentucky Summative Assessment, the 2025 ACT administration, the 2024 National Assessment of Education Progress in Reading and Mathematics, and the 2024-2025 Kindergarten Readiness report. KDE staff highlighted persistent achievement gaps by income, race, language, and disability, and outlined evidence-based strategies and potential board actions to address disparities as part of the February meeting discussion. Dodd and McKinney presented national research regarding achievement gaps and shared state-level data showing the effects of poverty on student outcomes. Lu Young said the data presented provided a blueprint for where the board should focus, advocate for more funding, and where there are opportunities to innovate: “We have to begin with honesty. Poverty matters. It affects access to healthcare, housing, stability, trauma, nutrition, technology and time; all of those things shape the lived experiences of kids and their families in our schools,” Young said. “But by acknowledging that reality, it’s not the same as lowering expectations. Poverty does shape the starting line, but it doesn’t have to define the finish line for us.”

B. Presentation of the 2025 Kevin C. Brown Strategic Priority Award

Commissioner Fletcher and Chair Robinson facilitated the award presentation. The priority area for the Kevin C. Brown award changes from year to year based on the desire of the board. The 2025 award seeks to recognize the development and/or successful implementation of a localized accountability system. The winner of the award was announced to be Bullitt County Public Schools (BCPS). Commissioner Fletcher offered his congratulations to Bullitt County Schools Superintendent Jesse Bacon and thanked the district for their commitment to the students of Kentucky. Bacon shared his thanks to the board for the recognition and briefly discussed the work of the district related to localized accountability.

VII. Adjournment

Chair Robinson thanked everyone for their time and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Steve Trimble and seconded by Lu Young. The motion passed with a voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 12:43 P.M. E.T.

