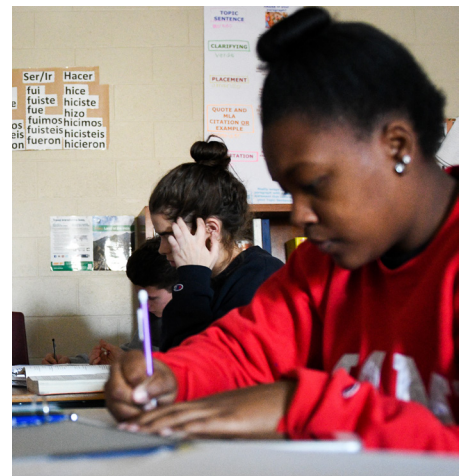




**Raise the bar.**  
**Close the gap.**

**2018-2019 Accomplishments of the  
Kentucky Department of Education**





## Vision

Ensure each and every student is empowered and equipped to pursue a successful future.

## Mission

To partner with districts, schools, families, students, business and industry, and communities to provide leadership and support to ensure success for each and every student.

## About

The Kentucky Department of Education is a service agency of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and part of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet. The department provides resources and guidance to Kentucky's public schools and districts as they implement the state's P-12 education requirements. The department also serves as the state liaison for federal education requirements and funding opportunities.

The department is led by an appointed Commissioner of Education. Offices are administered by associate commissioners, and divisions within those offices are administered by chief officers and division directors.

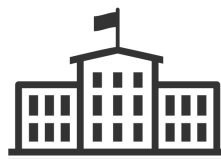
## Kentucky's Public School System



172 Districts



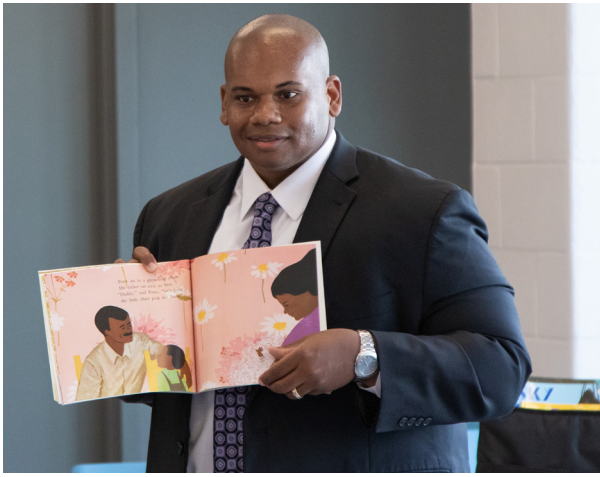
648,369 Students



1,466 Public Schools



42,024 Teachers



# A Year of Change

Merely saying “it’s been a busy year at the Kentucky Department of Education” would be an understatement. After the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) named Dr. Wayne D. Lewis, Jr, interim commissioner on April 17, 2018, the former middle school special education teacher turned education policy expert embarked upon a whirlwind year of action aimed at raising the bar for student learning and achievement and closing longstanding and even widening gaps between groups of Kentucky students.

## WORK WITH DISTRICTS FACING CHALLENGES

Work for Commissioner Lewis began immediately with a focus on the state’s largest district – Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS). The district had undergone a management review and a management audit in 2017 following an investigation into student safety and the improper use of restraint and seclusion for students with disabilities.

While the audit had been substantially completed by the fall of 2017, the previous commissioner had not yet released the findings of the audit or made a recommendation on next steps for the district as required by Kentucky law.

After reviewing the audit findings and personally visiting the district to interview district leaders and local school board members, Lewis recommended that JCPS become a state-managed district two weeks after becoming interim commissioner. This recommendation was based on more than 30 deficiencies identified in the audit, including but not limited to, significant deficiencies in the areas of early childhood education, seclusion and restraint of students, and special education.

After negotiation between the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and the JCPS board, parties settled upon an agreement that includes a collaboratively developed and KDE-approved corrective action plan addressing the areas of deficiency identified in the audit, and ongoing monitoring and support from KDE.

Additionally, the unprecedented agreement gives the commissioner the opportunity to provide feedback on any board policy or administrative procedure that could impact the corrective action plan in the areas of special education, restraint and seclusion of students, early childhood education, career and technical education and facilities. The agreement also grants the commissioner the opportunity to approve or disapprove board policy and administrative procedure in those areas.

Menifee County Public Schools, which had been under state management for a number of years, has progressed significantly. The commissioner recently hired a new superintendent for the district, Tim Spencer, who is the first superintendent since the district went into state management. Based on the findings of the district’s most recent audit, Lewis recommended and the board approved, moving the district from state management to state assistance – restoring the authority of the local board and the district superintendent.

Following recent district audits conducted by the Office of Continuous Support and Improvement, Commissioner Lewis also has recommended to the KBE that Breathitt County public schools move from state management to state assistance, and that West Point Independent become a state-managed district.

# STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTED

In 2018, the Kentucky Department of Education finalized its 5-year strategic plan, which identified the mission, vision and values of the agency. KDE's vision – that each and every student is empowered and equipped to pursue a successful future – sets the purpose for its work. In order to turn vision into action, KDE developed three strategic priorities: student success, strategic partnerships and operational excellence.

Following the completion of the strategic plan, Commissioner Lewis created the strategic management team, comprised of all seven associate commissioners, the deputy commissioner/chief academic officer, KDE's general counsel, the chief communications officer, the chief performance officer, the executive director of the KBE and the newly created director of government relations. The team is charged with providing leadership for implementing and monitoring the department's strategic plan, as well as providing leadership for implementation of the department's strategic plan within their offices and divisions.



To keep the entire KDE staff apprised of how the strategic plan is moving forward and of general updates on the agency, Commissioner Lewis also implemented monthly “All KDE Staff Meetings,” which were formerly held on a quarterly basis. He also holds monthly brown-bag lunches with any staff members who wish to attend to discuss topics such as career and technical education, teacher retention and recruitment, and early childhood education.

## REORGANIZATION AT KDE

In an effort to emphasize the impact that having high-quality teachers has on students, the Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness was created within KDE last fall.

Formerly the agency arm of the Education and Professional Standards Board (EPSB), the new KDE Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness is charged with providing greater coordination of the state's efforts pertaining to educator preparation, licensure and professional development. The office has created numerous streamlined and efficient systems since its creation, which helps ensure that all students in Kentucky's public schools will have access to well-prepared and effective educators.

The office covers pre-service teaching and teacher development. It also is spearheading efforts to stop Kentucky's teacher shortage under the Go Teach KY campaign.

One of the major projects the office has taken on in the past year has been working on an EPSB-approved waiver that

removes the requirement for teachers to move to Rank II – a move that will provide districts with greater flexibility and support in recruiting and retaining teachers.

Most Kentucky teachers earn Rank II by completing an EPSB-approved master's degree program. Before this action, Kentucky educators were required to obtain Rank II by the second renewal of their five-year professional certificate.

In late 2018, Commissioner Lewis also created the Office of Special Education and Early Learning, which emphasizes KDE's commitment to Kentucky's exceptional learners and early learners. Associate Commissioner Gretta Hylton heads these two important areas and gives her undivided attention to improving the learning experiences of exceptional learners and early learners and ensuring that KDE, education cooperatives and local school districts remain in compliance with federal and state special education laws.

# NEW GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS ADOPTED

Kentucky boasts one of the highest high school graduation rates in the country – awarding 93 percent of its 12th-grade students a high school diploma. However, the slightly more than half of recent high school graduates are attending college, and even fewer are completing. Employers consistently bemoan the lack of essential skills recent graduates possess when entering the workforce. Kentucky postsecondary institutions also are increasingly concerned about the lack of academic preparedness of their freshman students.

In early 2018, KDE began working to better align the minimum requirements for the Kentucky high school diploma with contemporary entry-level expectations for college and the workforce. To begin, KDE convened a group of 80 stakeholders from business and industry, postsecondary education, and elementary, middle and high school educators to identify the knowledge and skills a Kentucky high school student should have upon graduation.

After public comment and revisions, in December 2018, the KBE approved changes to the regulation on minimum



graduation requirements for Kentucky students entering high school in 2019 and 2020.

Prior to graduation, students now will be required to demonstrate basic competency in mathematics and reading, and also will take courses designed to align with the student's Individualized Learning Plan. The regulation became official on April 5, 2019, and requirements began being phased in with students entering their freshman year this fall.

## REVISING KENTUCKY'S ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Senate Bill 1 (2017) also called for KDE to implement a process for reviewing and revising all academic standards and aligned assessments beginning in the 2017-2018 school year. The current schedule calls for one or two content areas to be reviewed each year and every six years thereafter on a rotating basis.

Revised standards for health education, physical education, reading and writing, and mathematics have been adopted

into law. New computer science standards and social studies standards also were developed and endorsed by Kentucky teachers and later adopted into law.

Classroom implementation will begin with the 2019-2020 school year, and students will be assessed on the reading, writing and math standards in 2020 following the development of the assessments.

# ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM CHANGES

Senate Bill 1 (2017) and more recently SB 175 (2019) called for significant changes to Kentucky's school accountability system. This means the department will use new definitions this fall to schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI). Also, SB 175 allows college placement test results to be a measure of postsecondary or transition readiness at high school.

Throughout the 2019 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, Commissioner Lewis and KDE staff worked closely with legislators and superintendents to revise definition of CSI and broaden the definition of transition readiness in a way that is fair to students and schools, while still maintaining the integrity of the measure.

Elementary and middle school indicators are based on proficiency in math and reading, academic indicators are based on proficiency in science, social studies and writing; and growth indicators are based on progress toward proficiency in reading and math and English attainment for English learners. Proficiency in reading and math and academic indicators in science, social studies and writing, were also defined as indicators for high schools, but transition readiness and graduation rates also were taken into consideration.

Following the release of the results of the 2018 K-PREP tests, as required by federal and state law, KDE identified 51 schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement and 418 for Targeted Support and Improvement (as required by state



statute). Following the release of 2017-2018 assessment scores, based on feedback from district and school stakeholders, the commissioner convened a workgroup of district superintendents, district assessment coordinators, principals and teachers to make recommendations for revising the system's method for calculating student growth. The commissioner took the group's recommendation to the Kentucky Board of Education, which adopted the revised growth calculation as a revision to the school accountability system.

Schools that were identified as CSI have undergone diagnostic reviews and are now being assisted by the department on next steps toward improvement. There are no state dollars available to assist in funding the turnaround process, however, available federal dollars will be made accessible to CSI schools through a competitive grant process.

# STUDENTS HONORED

Three student-based organizations from across the Commonwealth were honored by Commissioner Lewis in April for their participation in the new Student Ambassador Initiative, which is designed to promote the importance of education. The groups honored represented a total of five public school districts, including Bowling Green Independent schools, Warren County public schools, Jefferson County public schools, Paducah Independent schools and Oldham County public schools.

The Boys to Men Leadership group is led by Bowling Green Independent's Employment Specialist Tyreon Clark, who works with male students from kindergarten through 6th grade who come from various backgrounds on leadership and workforce skills.

The Paducah's Pen Pal Project was established to engage young students as they transition from elementary to middle school, allowing students to hone creative and authentic writing skills and to foster inclusion, empathy and acceptance.

STEMY, Inc. – which stands for Science Technology Engineering and Math + Youth – is an entirely student-led



organization based out of Louisville that is comprised of students from Jefferson County public schools, Oldham County public schools and home-schooled students.

To participate in the KDE Student Ambassador Initiative, interested student groups submitted an "Intent to Participate" form, detailing an education-related community service project. Student groups then submitted a video highlight of their project, explaining its impact. Commissioner Lewis viewed all of the videos that were submitted and hand selected the student groups that were honored.

# TEACHER RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

Citing both a national and statewide teacher shortage, Commissioner Lewis announced a new campaign and website to recruit and inspire the next generation of educators.

During the Aug. 7 Kentucky Board of Education meeting, Lewis unveiled the Go Teach KY website and social media accounts. The Go Teach KY website shows the many pathways an individual can take to become a teacher, starting as early as high school with the Educators Rising program and Teaching and Learning career pathway. Undecided college students are also a focus of the recruitment campaign, as well as professionals who already have a bachelor's or master's

degree, and trade workers eager to pass their knowledge of the trades to younger generations.

The department also launched the Kentucky Academy for Equity in Teaching (KAET) renewable loan forgiveness program. KAET is designed to identify and prepare a pool of highly effective educators poised to transition into the teaching profession through financial support, training and mentorships by experienced and effective educators.

The program is funded by a \$1 million per year allocation in the 2018 Kentucky state budget for educator quality and diversity through the teacher recruitment and retention program.



# KDE EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Commissioner Wayne D. Lewis, Jr., Ph.D.

Deputy Commissioner and Chief Academic Officer Amanda Ellis

General Counsel Deanna Durrett

Chief Communications Officer Jessica Fletcher

Chief Performance Officer Karen Dodd

Director of Government Relations Kristel Smith

Kentucky Board of Education Executive Director Jennifer Fraker

Associate Commissioner, Office of Finance & Operations, Robin Kinney

Associate Commissioner, Office of Education Technology, David Couch

Associate Commissioner, Office of Continuous Support and Improvement, Dr. Kelly Foster

Associate Commissioner, Office of Career & Technical Education and Student Transition, David Horseman

Associate Commissioner, Office of Special Education and Early Learning, Gretta Hylton

Associate Commissioner, Office of Assessment and Accountability, Rhonda Simms

Associate Commissioner, Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness, Rob Akers

# KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Kentucky Board of Education has 12 members. The governor appoints 11 voting members, seven representing the Supreme Court districts and four representing the state at large. The additional members, the president of the Council on Postsecondary Education, and the secretary of the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, serve as non-voting members. The members serve four-year terms and may be reappointed. At the beginning of each fiscal year, the membership elects the board chair and vice chair.

## Board Members

Hal Heiner, Chair, Supreme Court District 4

Milton C. Seymore, Vice Chair, At Large Member

Ben L. Cundiff, Supreme Court District 1

Tracey Cusick, Supreme Court District 6

Richard F. Gimmel, At Large Member

Kathy Gornik, Supreme Court District 5

Gary W. Houchens, Supreme Court District 2

Alesa G. Johnson, Supreme Court District 3

Joe Papalia, At Large Member

Amanda Stamper, At Large Member

Laura Timberlake, Supreme Court District 7

Aaron Thompson, Council on Postsecondary Education President (Ex Officio)

Derrick Ramsey, Secretary, Education and Workforce Development Cabinet (Ex Officio)



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