



School bus drivers honored at General Assembly



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Twitter chat

Parents: Want to chat with educators? A parent/teacher Twitter chat takes place at 9 p.m. every Wednesday. To participate or just follow the conversation, use the hashtag #PTchat.

State of K-12 public education in Kentucky is strong, Pruitt says

In his first state of K-12 public education in Kentucky address, Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt said that while the state of education is strong in Kentucky, there is room for improvement.

As part of the address, Pruitt released *The State of K-12 Education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky*, a report that highlights statewide educational successes and challenges. With the report as a starting point, Pruitt called on Kentuckians to work together to improve education for all children.

“I believe the public has the right to know the facts on K-12 public education in Kentucky,” said Pruitt, during a news conference at the Kentucky Department of Education.

“While much of this information is available on the Kentucky Department of Education website and through the online Kentucky School Report Card, at least once a year it is important to reflect on the data as a whole so that we can be proud of our progress and identify the changes that may be necessary to move our children ahead.”

Pruitt, who became the state’s sixth education commissioner about three months ago, said he has been impressed with the professionalism of Kentucky’s educators as well as their passion and commitment to children. In his first months, he has taken stock of K-12 education, its strengths and areas for improvement.

“Our work needs to be driven by three things: equity, achievement and integrity,” he said.

“My goal is to build on our accomplishments of the past 25 years to provide each and every child with a world-class education that will lead them to success in their postsecondary endeavors, in the job market and life.”

The 50-page report provides an overview of strategic areas of education, including teaching and learning, student performance, accountability and school improvement, and district support that includes school funding. The report also highlights a list of key facts about Kentucky education, including:

- Kentucky’s 4-year cohort high school graduation rate is among the highest in the nation and is first among states that require four years of English and Algebra II for graduation. Additionally, Kentucky graduates a higher percentage of its low-income students, on time, than any state in the nation.
- Kentucky students outperform the nation as a whole at most levels in reading, math and science on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), often referred to as the nation’s report card, and have realized greater gains in reading and math in the past decade than students in almost all other states.
- Significantly more Kentucky public high school students are graduating from high school prepared to take entry-level, credit-bearing, college classes without remediation or additional coursework.
- Kentucky ranks 7th in the nation in the percentage of its teachers who hold National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification.

The report also includes data from the 2016 *Quality Counts State-of-the-States Report Card* produced by Education Week, a national publication that focuses on P-12 education.

Kentucky moved up two places in the Quality Counts report this year.

The full press release about the news conference is available [here](#).

The State of K-12 Education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky report is available [here](#).



Scholarships available from Kentucky Society for Technology in Education



The Kentucky Society for Technology in Education (KySTE) will honor seniors in the Student Technology and Leadership Program who have demonstrated outstanding achievement and leadership in technology. KySTE is funding four \$1,000 scholarships. Each year, KySTE tries to find support from companies to add to the scholarship money, however a total of four scholarships will always be guaranteed.

The scholarships include:

- Mary Grace Jaeger Scholarship
- Elaine Harrison Lane Scholarship
- KySTE STLP Scholarship
- KySTE STLP Scholarship

Students must be nominated by a KySTE member. The nomination deadline is March 18. The required nomination form and documentation must be submitted by email to [Mary Ann Rankin](#) by the deadline.

Each nomination will be evaluated by a review committee selected from within the KySTE membership. Winners will be announced at the STLP State Championship and Annual Awards at the Lexington Convention Center & Rupp Arena. More information about KySTE is available [here](#).

Residents of coal-producing counties can apply for college scholarship

Residents of 35 coal-producing counties in Kentucky can now apply for the 2016-17 Kentucky Coal County College Completion Scholarship. The scholarship helps residents of the state's coal-producing counties complete a bachelor's degree.

A student must:

- Be a U.S. citizen and a permanent resident of a Kentucky coal-producing county.
- Have earned at least 60 credit hours toward a bachelor's degree.
- Be enrolled at least half-time in a bachelor's degree program.
- Be in good academic standing.
- Have no past-due financial obligations to the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA).

The counties are Bell, Boyd, Breathitt, Clay, Daviess, Elliott, Floyd, Hancock, Harlan, Henderson, Hopkins, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Laurel, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Magoffin, Martin, McLean, Menifee, Morgan, Muhlenberg, Ohio, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Union, Webster, Whitley and Wolfe.

The award amounts are:

- Up to \$7,027 per year at a nonprofit, independent college in a coal-producing county.
- Up to \$2,377 per year at a public university extension campus in a coal-producing county.
- Up to \$3,514 per year at a public or nonprofit, independent college whose main campus is in Kentucky, but is not in a coal-producing county.

The scholarship may be used at college not in a coal-producing county only if the student is pursuing an approved bachelor's degree program in a major not offered at any college in a coal-producing county.

To apply, students must submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Kentucky Coal County College Completion Scholarship application at www.kheaa.com by May 1. To access the online application, students must sign in from the home page. Scholarships are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis according to the date the FAFSA was submitted.

To learn how to plan and prepare for higher education, go to www.gotocollege.ky.gov. For more information about Kentucky scholarships and grants, visit www.kheaa.com.



School bus drivers honored at General Assembly

The Kentucky Senate applauded school bus drivers with the adoption of a resolution on Jan. 12 declaring its appreciation to drivers across the state.

Sen. John Schickel (R-Union) introduced [the resolution](#), and Kentucky Education Commissioner Stephen Pruitt, Boone County School District Superintendent Randy Poe and transportation officials from Boone County schools joined him on the Senate floor for its reading.

Schickel, who also is a substitute bus driver in the Boone County district, told his fellow senators that school buses remain the safest way to transport students and drivers deserve recognition for their performance in an important and sometimes difficult job.

“We’ve honored a lot of folks in our state, but I don’t ever remember us honoring school bus drivers,” he said. “This resolution is to thank them, and I would encourage you to go back to your district and thank your school bus drivers as well.”

The resolution was adopted unanimously.



Sen. John Schickel (R-Union) stands with Kentucky Education Commissioner Stephen Pruitt and representatives from the Boone County School District in the Senate chamber at the State Capitol prior to the reading of a resolution honoring Kentucky’s school bus drivers. From left to right are Pruitt; Beverly Daniels, a bus driver for the Boone County schools; Schickel; Heather Roth, Boone County director of transportation; Helen Cottongim, Boone County transportation training coordinator; and Randy Poe, Boone County superintendent.

Kentucky students can win \$1,000 toward college, \$500 for their school

More Kentucky students will have a chance this year to win money toward college and \$500 for their school in the “Dream Out Loud Challenge.” Students are invited to submit an original drawing, poem, essay or video answering the question: “How will I change the world after I go to college?”

The annual challenge, sponsored by the Kentucky Education Savings Plan Trust (KESPT), is intended to encourage Kentucky families to start saving and planning for higher education with their children.. Entries must be postmarked by March 18 and received by March 25.

The contest has two categories: drawing or video and essay or poem. One winner will be chosen from each category in grades Pre-K and K, grades 1 and 2, grades 3 and 4 and grades 5 and 6. The winning students will receive a \$1,000 KESPT college savings account and their schools will win \$500.



“We have seen an incredible response from schools and children statewide each year that we have sponsored the Dream Out Loud Challenge,” said David Lawhorn, KESPT administrator. “The challenge encourages children to dream about their future and to talk about college and their future at a young age, which benefits the entire state.”

KESPT is Kentucky’s official college savings plan. It is administered by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority and managed by TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing. The plan helps parents, grandparents and others invest in a child’s future college education. No public funding is used for KESPT marketing, promotions or contest awards. Funding is provided by TIAA-CREF.

Visit www.kysaves.com/DreamOutLoud to learn more about the challenge, including official rules and entry requirements.

Students can win money, cruise in the Clean Tech Competition



The Clean Tech Competition is a worldwide research and design challenge for high school students ages 15-18. The program encourages scientific understanding of real-world issues and the integration of environmentally responsible energy sources.

Each year, the Clean Tech Competition addresses an issue that is grounded in core technological competency areas and focuses on the next great engineering challenges. The competition is designed to foster a deeper understanding of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) related concepts, recognize outstanding talent and prepare the next generation of globally competitive innovators.

The 2016 challenge, “**Making an Impact,**” asks students to develop a clean technology solution to the problems associated with plastics or the need for clean, cheap energy.

Teams consist of one to three students assisted by a team leader (i.e., parent, teacher or mentor) to develop a written proposal. [Paper submissions](#) are due March 18. Ten finalist teams will be selected, given a \$200 stipend and matched with a mentor to help them prepare a [prototype and presentation](#) for the finalist event. Finalists compete for the \$10,000 [prize](#) and continued mentorship. The event will happen while on a cruise from Miami to Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic.

For more information, go to www.cleantechcompetition.org.

Nominate your child’s innovative teacher

Nominations are open for The Henry Ford’s Innovation Nation Teacher Innovator Awards, which recognize teachers who demonstrate an original and creative approach to teaching, exhibit resourcefulness, engage students and are making a positive impact on not only their classroom, but also their community, colleagues, administrators, school and/or district.

Twenty teachers will receive prizes, with the top 10 first-prize winners receiving a week-long “innovation immersion experience” at The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Mich. Winners will be announced in May.

The nomination deadline is Feb. 5. Click [here](#) for more information or a nomination form.



Photo courtesy of the Henry Ford Museum

