

ParentInfo

News for a child's most important educator

March 13, 2015



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What book should every Kentuckian read?



Students can track hiker's progress along Boone Trace

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All photos by Amy Wallot unless otherwise noted

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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.

Commissioner Terry Holliday: Feedback, engagement critical to schools, students continued progress

No matter how busy my schedule gets as Kentucky's education commissioner, I am always interested in receiving feedback. That's one of the many reasons I meet regularly with staff, connect through social media and visit schools around the state. The comments, questions and ideas I receive from all of these and many other activities are invaluable, and I believe help Kentucky continue making gains toward its goal of every child graduating from high school college and career ready.

Public engagement is critical for our education initiatives and efforts to succeed. That's why I want to encourage you to take advantage of two specific opportunities in March and April aimed at engaging parents in efforts to improve student success.

Take the Challenge

The first opportunity for feedback is the Kentucky Core Academic Standards Challenge, a process to inform the regular review of the English/language arts and mathematics standards implemented in 2011.

Announced last August, the Challenge runs through April 30 and is aimed at getting teachers, professors, parents, students, business leaders and community members – all Kentuckians – to read Kentucky's English/language arts and mathematics standards and provide feedback on whether they support each standard as written or would like to see specific changes.

To make the process as easy as possible, we've created a special interactive website, <http://kentucky.statestandards.org>, where you can read the standards and submit your feedback. You may comment on one or more of the grade-level standards.

Whether you support the standards or have specific concerns, we want to hear from you. However, I want to be very clear, the Challenge is designed to focus on the content of the standards and adjustments that may need to be made to them. We are looking for specific, actionable feedback to the standards.

Once the challenge ends, the feedback we receive will be posted online and a team of Kentucky educators, from all levels specializing in specific content areas, will review the suggestions and make recommendations on any changes to the Kentucky Board of Education for its consideration, most likely in the fall of 2015.

This is a wonderful opportunity for parents to share their specific experiences with the standards and offer feedback and suggestions. This is exactly the kind of input we need in Kentucky to hone, improve and enhance our standards going forward. Who better than to give us insight than the people who see the standards in use day in and day out while helping their children with their homework. I encourage everyone to visit the website and take the Challenge.

Share your knowledge with students

I also remind everyone of a great initiative we have in Kentucky called [Operation Preparation](#).

Operation Preparation is a statewide program, started by the Kentucky Department of Education and the Department for Workforce Development that takes place every March.

This initiative helps 8th – and 10th-grade students realize their potential, maximize their academic preparation and stay on track for success during and after high school through one-on-one conversations with community volunteers. The volunteers engage students in meaningful conversations about their college- and career-plans, and offer insight about required education and training. They also discuss whether the student is on target to meet his or her goals and recommend courses that may better prepare students for the future.

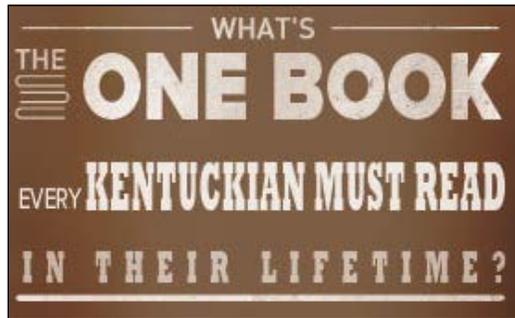
No matter what students decide to do after high school, it's critical we engage students now in talking about their futures. It can make all the difference. Please consider volunteering for this worthwhile program by contacting your local school district for information about Operation Preparation activities they have planned.

I hope all parents take part in these opportunities to engage in our schools and make a difference for Kentucky students. It is only together that we will be able to improve our schools and ensure our students are prepared to succeed and strengthen this state. We can't do it alone.



Terry Holliday

What book should every Kentuckian read?



Two dozen eastern Kentucky schools will get free books thanks to a Teach for America campaign to increase literacy. The organization wants to know what one book every Kentuckian should read in their lifetime. Anyone can vote at www.yourschoolsyourcall.org through March 16. All voters will be registered to win a Kindle. Voters are encouraged to share their vote on social media using the hashtag, #1bookky.

Sets of the top book will be donated to 24 middle and high schools in eastern Kentucky. The schools are partners with Teach For America-Appalachia, a non-profit that recruits and trains teachers to work in schools throughout eastern

Kentucky. Since 2011, the organizations has placed 65 teachers and impacted over 10,000 students, partnering with communities to ensure that all children receive a great education.



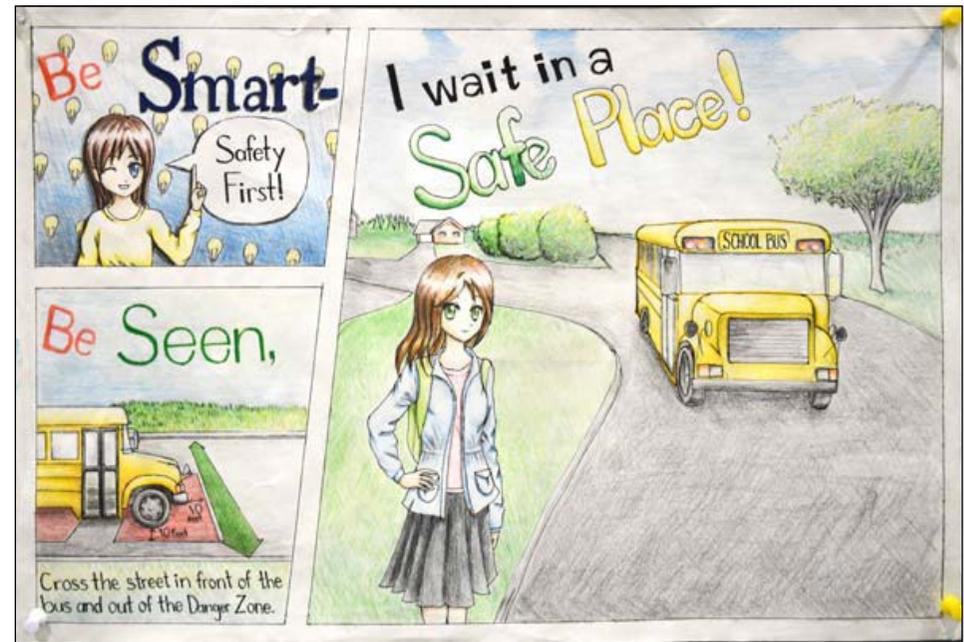
2015 State School Bus Safety Poster Contest

The Kentucky Department of Education's Pupil Transportation Program is sponsoring the 2015 State School Bus Safety Poster Contest for students in all grades.

All contest divisions are open to students in grades K-8, and students in grades K-12 may enter in special education and computer-aided drawing divisions. Local selection committees will select finalists in each category to be judged at the statewide level, and statewide winners will advance to the national contest held by the National Association for Pupil Transportation.

Posters should be submitted to the local selection committee in each school or district, and finalists must be submitted to the state judging committee by May 1. Posters must comply with the National School Bus Safety Poster Contest Rules, and posters will not be returned.

Click [here](#) for more information or [here](#) for the national contest rules.



The overall winner for the 2014 Bus Safety Poster Contest was drawn by Naomi Tu of Anoka, Minnesota. (Photo provided by the National Association for Pupil Transportation)



Students can track hiker's progress along Boone Trace



Curtis Penix (Photo provided by Curtis Penix)

Students are invited to follow the progress of a hiker who is walking the Boone Trace trail into Kentucky just as his ancestor did 236 years ago.

Curtis Penix's "Boone Trace Expedition" will take him along a 200-mile path from Kingsport, Tennessee, to Fort Boonesborough, following in the footsteps of his fifth great-grandfather, Joshua Penix, who was 19 years old when he joined other settlers to establish Boonesborough as a permanent town.

Curtis Penix's hike will begin March 10 and continue for 16 days, coming as close as possible to covering the actual route that Daniel Boone and his men created. Students can follow his journey via email, Facebook or Twitter. Click [here](#) for more information, or click [here](#) and [here](#) for additional websites to link up with Daniel Boone's trail with collaborating trail groups.

Free app teaches financial literacy to parents, students

Renegade Buggies, a new iOS/Android game from the National Center for Families Learning, is designed to engage families in developing basic budgeting and money management skills.

The mission of the game is simple: ride the back of your buggy (shopping cart) down the street and collect a specific amount of money and items—everything from shampoo to dog food to underwear—but be sure to dodge the cones, rolling tires and puddles or you're sure to crash. Once you collect your items, hit the checkout phase of the game and decide which of the three shampoos you gathered will save you the most money. The more money you save, the more power-ups and accessories you can buy for your buggy.

The game covers four concepts: unit prices, buying in bulk, coupons and promotions. The entertaining game engages parents and children in a joint-learning process, reinforces money-saving tips parents may or may not know while instilling the value of fiscal responsibility in children from a young age.

By capturing these situations in a game, **Renegade Buggies** provides parents with a tool that enables them to learn with their children about how to make smart choices with money.

"Like adding vegetables to macaroni and cheese, it's easy to do something fun and good for you at the same time," said Emily Kirkpatrick, vice president of Louisville-based NCFL. "Renegade Buggies embraces that logic and helps parents teach valuable lessons all under the guise of a fun game."

The app is made available by NCFL with funding from the [Dollar General Literacy Foundation](#)—longtime partners in giving families resources to learn together regardless of the parents' educational or economic background.



Provided by NCFL

College students should take FAFSA verification seriously



The federal government requires colleges to verify the

information submitted by many students on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

The FAFSA is the form used to apply for most federal and many state student aid programs. Students could begin filling out the form starting Jan. 1 and are encouraged to complete it as soon as possible because some student aid programs have limited money and provide funds on a first-come, first-served basis.

It asks detailed questions about

the income and resources of students and their parents if the students are considered dependent, meaning they are undergraduate students under 24 years old, not married, have no dependents of their own, are not veterans or were not orphans or wards of the court until age 19.

The college or, in some cases, an agency working with the college will contact students to let them know if their data is being verified.

Students and parents need to take that process seriously, according to the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA). Students chosen for verification cannot receive their financial aid until they have completed the

process.

If students have decided not to attend a college that asked them for verification, they should let the college know so it will stop requesting information.

KHEAA is the state agency that administers the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES), need-based grants and other programs to help students pay their higher education expenses.

To find links to other useful education websites, go to www.gotocollege.ky.gov. For more information about Kentucky scholarships and grants, visit www.kheaa.com; write KHEAA, P.O. Box 798, Frankfort, KY 40602; or call 800-928-8926, ext. 6-7372.