

ParentInfo

News for a child's most important educator

September 15, 2015



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KDE seeks high school students for advisory council



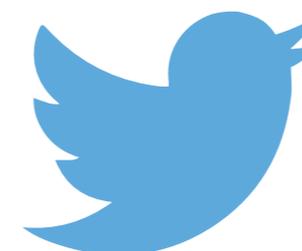
KHEAA, state and school leaders to 'Close the Deal'



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.

Pruitt likely to be named next commissioner

The Kentucky Board of Education has announced that it expects Stephen Pruitt to be the next Kentucky commissioner of education, pending the outcome of a background check, a vote by the board and successful contract negotiations.

“Dr. Pruitt is very excited for the opportunity and has indicated to the board that, if offered the job, he would accept,” said Roger Marcum, board chair. “He brings a wealth of educational experience from the classroom, the state and the national levels. He is personable and a good communicator. The board feels very fortunate to have someone of his caliber and we are confident that Dr. Pruitt will continue to strengthen the tradition of excellence in Kentucky public education.”

Pruitt is the senior vice president at Achieve, Inc., an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit education reform organization, where he has served since 2010. His prior experience includes chief of staff, associate state superintendent, director of academic standards, and science and mathematics program manager with the Georgia Department of Education; and high school chemistry teacher in Fayetteville and Tyrone, Ga.

He earned a bachelor’s degree from North Georgia College and State University; a master’s from the University of West Georgia and a doctorate from Auburn University.

“Kentucky has a great history of reform, of doing great things for Kentucky’s kids,” Pruitt said. “I think I bring a unique perspective to the position – having been a classroom teacher, which is where my heart will always be – to working at the state and national levels. I look forward to working with teachers, principals, superintendents, the Kentucky Department of Education staff, legislators and all of the education partners around the state to make the students of Kentucky prepared for their next step in life.”

Pruitt was one of two remaining candidates in the running for the commissioner position. The other candidate, Christopher Koch, the interim president of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation and former Illinois commissioner of education, withdrew from consideration.

Associate Commissioner and General Counsel Kevin C. Brown is serving as interim commissioner until the new commissioner is hired and can begin his duties.



Photo provided

Never too early to think about financial aid for college



Assistance Authority (KHEAA) to help your child receive more money to pay for a college education.

- Complete a Free Application for Federal

If you’re helping your child plan for college, consider these tips from the Kentucky Higher Education

Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after Jan. 1 to apply for state and federal student aid. File online at www.fafsa.gov for the fastest response.

- Visit www.kheaa.com and click on Paying for College.
- Make sure your child talks to a school counselor, who can help find financial aid.
- Look for local scholarships in the newspaper. Community organizations and businesses may provide scholarships to local students.
- Make sure your child talks with a financial aid officer at the school he or she plans to

attend to learn about any aid the school has available.

- Reduce student loan costs. Students should take out loans only after receiving all the free aid — grants, scholarships and work-study — for which they qualify. Federal loans are generally better deals than private loans, but compare interest rates and repayment terms carefully.
- Apply, apply, apply. The more financial aid for which students apply, the better their chances of getting enough aid to pay for college.

KDE seeks high school students for advisory council

Kentucky public school students in grades 10 through 12 are invited to apply to serve on the Kentucky Department of Education's Next-Generation Student Council.

The council gives feedback to department officials and the commissioner of education about how decisions made at the state level affect students. It also allows students to have a voice on the critical issues impacting Kentucky's schools and gives them a chance to gain leadership skills.

The council, which includes six returning members, will meet with education commissioner and KDE staff both virtually and in person four times during the year. The council seeks students with refreshing ideas and thoughtful insight into how schools and student achievement can be improved.

Students who represent the diverse academic, geographic, demographic and school-size variables particular to Kentucky are encouraged to apply.

The [application](#) and a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) are available on the KDE [website](#).

Interested students should complete and return the application to KDE via postal mail. Applications must be received by or postmarked no later than 4:30 p.m. ET, Sept. 30.

A KDE committee will review and score all applications based on the answers provided.

Appointments will be determined by how well the applicants communicated their ideas and goals.

The five students selected will serve on the council during the 2015-16 school year and will have the option to serve consecutive one-year terms upon meeting eligibility requirements.



Oldham County elementary school wins national PTA award



Crestwood Elementary in Oldham County has been named a National PTA School of Excellence for 2015-17. The school is one of 124 schools and PTAs in the country and the only one in Kentucky to receive the award.

The award honors accomplishments in

building strong, effective family-school partnerships, which are proven to make a difference for students and schools.

“More than 40 years of research shows that when families and schools work together, student achievement increases, schools improve and communities grow stronger,” said Laura Bay, president of National PTA. “National PTA Schools of Excellence are true examples of what can be accomplished when schools and families collaborate. We are pleased to recognize these schools and PTAs for their leadership and commitment to partnering to support student success and continuous improvement.”

The designation is given when families feel the school has achieved a high level of engagement or when the PTA and school have made

substantive, positive improvement in families’ perceptions since the beginning of the year.

Family surveys and interviews with school leaders nationally demonstrate improved family-school partnerships after completion of the National PTA School of Excellence program. The survey showed that:

- Almost 95 percent of families feel they are treated fairly regardless of their age, race or cultural background.
- Almost 80 percent of families feel they understand the academic standards their child is expected to meet and how their school’s curriculum is linked to those standards.
- More than 80 percent of families feel empowered to advocate for the success of their own and other children.
- For more information about how your PTA can become a National School of Excellence, click [here](#).



Photos provided by Oldham County

KDE seeking individuals to serve on teacher tribunals



The Kentucky Department of Education is seeking educators and non-educators interested in serving on teacher tribunals. Individuals who are currently in the pool for assignment to a teacher tribunal or who

already have served on a tribunal will need to reapply and undergo the training to continue to serve.

Under state law, teachers have the right to appeal the decision and have the case heard by a tribunal before they can be fired or suspended by a local school district.

Each tribunal consists of a retired or current public school teacher, a retired or current

public school certified administrator and a layperson – none of whom can live in the school district from which the appeal was made. The hearing is overseen by a hearing officer from the Office of the Attorney General.

The tribunal hears witnesses, asks questions during the hearing and decides whether the disciplinary action against the teacher should be affirmed, reduced or reversed.

When contacted to hear a teacher tribunal case, individuals may decline if the hearing dates or location is not convenient, or if the individual is knowledgeable of the circumstances or the parties involved. Tribunal members are provided \$100 per day plus travel expenses.

To be eligible individuals must undergo

training from 1-4:30 p.m. E.T. Oct. 13 in Frankfort. A video of the training will be presented with a moderator in eastern Kentucky and in western Kentucky later this fall for those who cannot attend the Frankfort session.

If you are interested in attending the training for possible service on a tribunal under Kentucky statute KRS 161.790, please complete the form available [here](#) and mail it or email it to one of the addresses below by Oct. 1.

Kentucky Department of Education
Office of Guiding Support Services
1st floor, Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero Street
Frankfort, KY 40601
Tina.drury@education.ky.gov

KHEAA, state and school leaders to ‘Close the Deal’

A program to help high school seniors pursue education after they graduate will be held at four Kentucky schools next month.

The Close the Deal program will be at Grant County, Lincoln County, Paducah Tilghman and Wayne County high schools.

“Close the Deal represents an opportunity for young people to invest in themselves and to also see that there is a community surrounding them that is also willing to invest in their success,” said Colmon Elridge at the kickoff event in August. “That investment is critical for their success, but it is also critical for our Commonwealth’s success, and it is an exciting journey for us all to take together.”

Elridge, a native of Cynthiana, is the director of the National Center for Interstate Compacts for The Council of State Governments. He was previously an executive assistant and senior adviser to Gov. Steve Beshear.

Former Lt. Gov. Jerry Abramson created Close the Deal when he was mayor of Louisville because he realized that many high school graduates had no idea what to do next. Abramson expanded the program statewide when he became lieutenant governor.

“We are honored to continue the Close the Deal program, connecting students to financial aid information and resources that will allow them to pursue education and training after high school,” said Carl Rollins, KHEAA’s executive director. “KHEAA has been helping Kentucky families make informed decisions about

their higher education options for decades, and Close the Deal enhances our mission to expand educational opportunities to all Kentuckians.”

At each Close the Deal event, KHEAA representatives show seniors how to apply for financial aid and local business leaders discuss the skills the students will need for their careers. Students also meet with representatives from Kentucky colleges and universities to learn about admissions and about each school.

For more information about Close the Deal, visit www.kheaa.com/website/closethedeal/home.



The events will take place at:

- Grant County High School, Oct. 7
- Lincoln County High School, Oct. 9
- Paducah Tilghman High School, Oct. 27
- Wayne County High School, Oct. 28.

Open Source High opens first video contest of year



Open Source High has launched its first student video contests of the new school year. Cash prizes will be awarded for the top videos in science, history and mathematics.

Videos are limited to two minutes and may be on any topic within the three subject areas. Public voting from Sept. 21-15 will determine the winners.

The deadline is Sept. 20; other contests will be held throughout the school year. Click [here](#) for more information.