

ParentInfo

News for a child's most important educator

February 29, 2016



Link:

- [If you are from Frankfort, bring evidence](#)



Commissioner's column:
Need inspiration? Visit a Kentucky public school



Scholarship available
from the Kentucky
Association of Pupil
Transportation



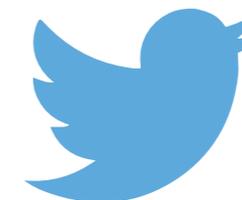
Digital photo
contest for middle
school students



All photos by KDE unless otherwise noted

Additional content:

- Help your high school student reach milestones
- School bus safety poster contest seeks entries
- Free booklet helps students, parents plan for college
- Students can design, build bridges in competition



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 Stephen Pruitt: Need inspiration? Visit a Kentucky public school

Every day is a busy day in our public schools and districts with the time spent focused on educating our children and inspiring them to do great things. Recently, I had the opportunity to visit several schools, and doing so inspired me too.

First, I spent a morning at the Kentucky School for the Deaf in Danville. It was a wonderful time – meeting the staff, interacting with students and seeing some pretty incredible instruction. While there is work to do to improve, it was a great reminder for me of the incredible power of education and the role I play in that for these students.

In addition to being commissioner of education, I also act as the superintendent for the Kentucky School for the Blind and the Kentucky School for the Deaf. There is much potential in each of these schools and we are working to move both schools to the next level by setting higher expectations for them. At the center of this work are the kids. It was great to see how excited the students at the Kentucky School for the Deaf are about their school.

Then I spent a day in Hickman County with Superintendent Casey Henderson. After talking with him and central office staff about their needs and my vision for the future, Principal Richard Todd took me on a tour of Hickman County Elementary School. This guy's personality and leadership style are infectious. It is clear that his kids and teachers love him. He could not go more than five steps without a student saying hello or giving him a big hug.

From the time you walk in to the school, you know kids are the focus. The halls are decorated with student work and the teachers' classrooms are reflections of their personalities. In Jenah Blalock's class, the

desks are arranged in a most original way that allows her and her special education teacher to easily move between students. The room was filled with productive noise – meaning the students were hard at work in groups, but were very focused on the task at hand. They kept working when we entered the room, which told me they are used to outsiders coming in to watch class.

In Emily Smith's 1st-grade class, all of the students had worked hard to achieve their goals in reading. They were excited and it was great to see how proud they were of themselves when I spoke with them about it. The students were inviting, engaging and confident. You could see a clear relationship of respect between the students and Ms. Smith. They were willing to work hard for her and did not want to disappoint.

My next visit was to the high school, where Kevin Estes is principal. What an incredible experience! Again, leadership is key. He and his staff have developed a culture of achievement in which students know they are cared for and held to a high standard. I spent an hour with about 25 juniors in Jeanna Kimbell's Non-Profit Leadership Studies dual credit class offered through Murray State University. They asked questions of me and I had a few of my own for them. We learned a lot from each other. Well, I learned a lot from them anyway.

Finally, I had the opportunity to participate in the Falcon Academy Celebration and Partner Recognition. Through this program, the high school partners with Murray State and



Western Kentucky Community and Technical College to provide students with dual credit opportunities. Students are graduating from high school with enough credit to be considered college sophomores and doing so with fantastic academic performance.

Weeks like this inspire, recharge and focus me, despite having to deal with things like potential budget cuts. In fact, several people have asked me, if I had known the budget situation prior to taking this position, would I have made the same choice? Absolutely! I am proud to be Kentucky's commissioner of education. Why? Because in Kentucky, we care about ensuring a better life for our students. If you ever doubt that or need some inspiration of your own about the future of our Commonwealth, all you need do is visit your local school and observe public education in action.

Scholarship available from the Kentucky Association of Pupil Transportation

A \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to four public students entering college from the Kentucky Association of Pupil Transportation.

Applicants must be students who will attend a certified college, university or technical school. The award is made directly to the postsecondary school selected by the student and must be used in support of the student's 2016-17 school year tuition, books or fees.

Completed applications, along with required documentation and a typewritten essay, should be submitted to the local district's director of pupil transportation and be postmarked or hand delivered by May 1. Additional requirements and an application can be found at <http://www.thekapt.com/scholarships.html>.



Digital photo contest for middle school students



Beaumont Middle School (Fayette County) 6th-grader Griffin Shively, 11, won the 2015 Capture the Earth photography contest. Griffin photographed a tufted titmouse in his backyard.

The Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet has kicked off its 6th-annual Capture the Earth digital photography contest for all Kentucky students in grades 6-8.

Judges will look for originality and creativity, photo composition and a brief explanation of how well the photograph celebrates the beauty and diversity of Kentucky and encourages others to care about the state's environment through stewardship and conservation.

The deadline is 4:30 p.m. April 18. The winner will receive two nights' lodging at a Kentucky State Resort Park of the winner's choosing with his or her family.

Middle school students may e-mail one photograph as an attachment to kidsphotocontest@ky.gov.

Official rules are available here. For more information, call Ricki Gardenhire at (502) 564-5525, or via e-mail at Ricki.gardenhire@ky.gov.

Help your high school student reach milestones

Parents of high school students can use a new college readiness resource called [High School Milestones](#). The videos from GreatKids are part of a free online collection that shows teens demonstrating 13 important communication, academic and life skills that all high-schoolers need to master before college. The videos include practical tips that parents can use to help at home.

Some of the topic include:

- Help your teen be more independent.
- Sure, he can argue, but can your teen construct an argument?
- Math skills for the real world.
- 3 things all college-bound teens should do when they read.

There are also Milestone videos for kindergarten through middle school. See the videos at Greatschools.org/milestones.



School bus safety poster contest seeks entries



The 2016 State School Bus Safety Poster Contest is open for submissions based on the theme, “#STOP ON RED!” All elementary and middle school students are eligible as are special education high school students and students using computer assisted drawing.

Posters should be submitted to the local selection committee established in each school system or district. That committee will submit no more than one poster for each category to be judged at the state level. The finalist entries must be postmarked and submitted to the state committee by May 1. The state winners in each category will move on to the national contest

sponsored by the National Association for Pupil Transportation.

More information and the rules for submissions may be found [here](#). Posters will not be returned.



Free booklet helps students, parents plan for college



Kentuckians planning for higher education will find “The College Circuit,” a booklet published by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA), to be a useful resource.

It can be used by students ranging in age from middle school to adults. Parents and counselors also can use it to help their students plan and pay for college. The booklet includes information about careers, college preparation, state and federal financial aid, tips for parents, online resources and a template for setting up a personal college plan.

Students and families also will find detailed information about the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) program. The booklet shows the steps involved in applying for federal student aid and provides guidance on borrowing student loans.

To request copies, please email publications@kheaa.com or use the order form on www.kheaa.com.

KHEAA is the state agency that administers KEES, need-based grants and other programs to help students pay for college.

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; write KHEAA, P.O. Box 798, Frankfort, KY 40602; or call (800) 928-8926, ext. 6-7214.

Students can design, build bridges in competition

Middle school and high school students are invited to participate in the 20th annual Regional Bridge Building Competition on March 12 in Bowling Green. The event is hosted by the Western Kentucky University Ogden College of Science, Department of Engineering, SKyTeach Program and the Green River Regional Educational Cooperative.

Students design, construct and test simplified versions of real-world bridges within the contest specifications. First- and second-place students in the regional competition advance to the International Bridge Building Contest on May 7 in Chicago.

Click [here](#) to register or email [Brian Womack](mailto:Brian.Womack@wku.edu) or [Rico Tyler](mailto:Rico.Tyler@wku.edu) for more information.