



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION DISCUSSES BUDGET SITUATION

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – At its meeting in Frankfort today, the Kentucky Board of Education discussed impending budget cuts and how to best handle them.

Office of Administration and Support Associate Commissioner Robin Kinney told the board that at the governor's direction, the state budget office has instructed the department to cut nearly \$18 million dollars between now and June 30.

"As we consider the different budget categories, we look at three main areas: personnel, monies paid by the department on behalf of districts and payments to outside partners. The problem is that many of these funds already have been paid out," Kinney said, "so the options on what and where to cut are limited."

Board members voiced grave concern about the 4.5 percent reduction as well as the proposed 9 percent cuts in each year of the upcoming biennium as outlined in the governor's proposed budget. The governor has said that the cuts are to shore up shortfalls in state pension funds, including the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System.

While the governor vowed not to cut basic SEEK funding, department staff indicated that more than 90 percent of the education budget is comprised of pass-through funds to districts for programs outside the SEEK formula. Less than 1 percent of the budget supports Frankfort-based operations.

Board members said they would like to see the preservation of funds to districts made a priority, and Commissioner Stephen Pruitt agreed, citing that has been the approach in prior years.

"The reality is though, if the reductions do come to pass, there will be cuts to districts in funds they are counting on," Pruitt said.

In other business, the board learned that the Kentucky Department of Education is moving full speed ahead on its plan to work with schools and districts to close the achievement gap through proven research-based strategies to reduce the number of novice learners in the state.

"Unlike the past, we have a model for continuous improvement and a systemic, intentional process in place," Office of Next-Generation Learners Associate Commissioner Amanda Ellis told the board. "Schools are embracing this work and are hungry for the tools we are providing," she said.

(more)

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In 2014-15, nearly 81,000 students performed at the novice level in reading and more than 62,000 did in math.

“Rather than targeting one particular group of students, our focus is on strengthening instruction for all students and improving achievement for all students,” Ellis said.

She indicated the achievement gap has persisted for a long time and will not disappear overnight, but that the department clearly understands the sense of urgency.

“While we are using proven research-based strategies, the needs of each school are different. There is no silver bullet,” she said.

Also at today’s meeting, the board:

- heard an update on education legislation before the General Assembly
- approved new district facility plans for Bath County, Bellevue Independent, Boone County, Mayfield Independent and Warren County
- approved a district facility plan amendment for Morgan County
- approved the 2015-16 local district tax rate levied for Lewis County
- heard a status report on Danville Independent School District’s probation status as a District of Innovation
- heard the first reading of 780 KAR 4:031, Repeal of 780 KAR 4:030, Standards for Secondary Programs and 780 KAR 7:071, Repeal of 780 KAR 7:070, Equipment Insurance
- heard the first reading of 780 KAR 7:060, Equipment Inventory
- heard the first reading of 704 KAR 3:471, Repeal of 704 KAR 3:470, Ranking of Certified School Personnel
- reviewed 702 KAR 7:065, Designation of Agent to Manage Middle and High School Interscholastic Athletics and Revisions in Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA) Bylaws
- heard a status update on state assistance in Fleming and Robertson Counties and Caverna Independent as well as an update on state management in Breathitt and Menifee Counties
- approved a provision in the commissioner’s contract to extend living expenses of \$1,500 for three months or pending the sale of the commissioner’s home in Maryland

Also, the board presented the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award for outstanding leadership, commitment and service in promoting equity and opportunity to learn at high levels for all Kentucky students to co-winners, Playhouse in the Park/Murray Calloway County Community Theater and the Partnership Institute for Math and Science Education Reform (PIMSER) at the University of Kentucky.

Additionally, the board recognized the 2014-15 Districts of Distinction:

- Calloway County
- Floyd County
- Fort Thomas Independent
- Hickman County
- Russell Independent

And finally, the board recognized former KBE member Jonathan Parrent for his service.

The agenda for the meeting and supporting materials are available on the [board’s online portal](#).

The next regular board meeting is scheduled April 13 in Frankfort.

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