



**KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (KDE)
Local School Board Members Advisory Council**

I. Agenda Item: Roll Call and Approval of Minutes

Presenter: Jodi Doman, Program Consultant, Division of Innovation
Kentucky Department of Education

ATTENDANCE:

PRESENT: David Webster, Simpson County; Venita Murphy, Webster County; Julia Fischer, Bellevue Independent; Brenda Rose, Whitley County; Brandon Rutherford, Madison County; Joanna Freels, Shelby County; Linda Duncan, Jefferson County; Joanna Hinton, LaRue County; Ruschelle Hamilton, Breathitt County.

ABSENT: Felix Akojie; Paducah Independent

II. Agenda Item: Welcome and Introductions

Presenter: David Webster, Chair

Summary of Discussion: Webster welcomed members and asked for approval of previous minutes. All members approved, none opposed.

III. Agenda Item: Site-Based Council Policies and Procedures

Presenter: Mia Morales, Office of Continuous Improvement and Support
Division of School and Program Improvement
Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Morales introduced herself as the School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) consultant at KDE. They explained that their purpose was to review the SBDM model and discuss how local boards of education work with SBDM councils to support student achievement. They provided background on SBDM, noting that these councils were introduced in the 1990s alongside the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) to promote shared leadership among administrators, teachers and parents. The primary focus of SBDMs is ensuring that every decision prioritizes student achievement. Morales outlined the statutory

framework, including the composition of SBDM membership as specified in KRS 163.345. They clarified that while boards can add administrators, teachers and parents without board approval, adding classified staff, voting staff or student members—and altering the membership balance—requires a formal application to KDE and subsequent Kentucky Board of Education approval.

Key membership statistics were shared: over 7,300 council members in total (approximately 3,700 teachers, 2,400 parents, 1,100 administrators and 28 additional members). Training requirements were detailed: new SBDM members must complete six hours of training (via the KDE-endorsed SBDM 101 course), whereas experienced members are required to complete three hours annually. Additional training options—such as Rise to Proficiency, Roles and Responsibilities, Decision with Data, and the Council’s Role with Continuous Improvement—are available free of charge on the SBDM website.

Morales reviewed the policies mandated by the SBDM statute and emphasized that local school boards must adopt policies covering school budgets, student progress assessments, school improvement plans and professional development. Additional board-required policies include those on community participation, interagency collaboration and record keeping.

The discussion also covered the overlapping responsibilities between school boards and SBDM councils. For example, while boards set district-wide discipline codes, SBDM councils implement school-level discipline practices. During Q&A, Webster asked for clarification on staffing allocations and discipline roles. Morales confirmed that staffing decisions (such as determining the number of teachers per grade or subject) are made by the entire SBDM council and that any discrepancies between school-level and district discipline policies should be resolved through open communication and, when necessary, referral to the local board attorney.

Concerns regarding training for new board members were also raised. Morales noted that while they are familiar with SBDM training, additional onboarding resources for school board members may need to be developed to provide immediate guidance upon appointment.

VI. Agenda Item: Kentucky United We Learn Update and Assessment and Accountability Framework 2.0

Presenter: Sarah Snipes, Division of Innovation Director, Office of Continuous Improvement and Support, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Snipes provided an update on Kentucky United We Learn, focusing on reimagining the assessment and accountability system that impacts every school and district across Kentucky. Emphasis was placed on the town halls conducted with the commissioner and Jennifer Stafford from the Office of Assessment and Accountability. Snipes identified and

discussed the Kentucky United We Learn Council’s “moonshot” goal as a diverse group of 60 Kentuckians (including parents, community members, students, educators and legislators) set the goal to develop a meaningful and useful accountability system for all learners. The intentional use of the word “prosperous” underscores a focus on economic growth, workforce preparedness, and post-secondary readiness. Snipes discussed the origins of the Kentucky United We Learn initiative. Four prototype models have been developed, informed by town halls, surveys, council meetings, and district feedback. Snipes said that following the townhall discussions, Framework 3.0 would be in development and pending endorsement by the Kentucky United We Learn Council and the Kentucky Board of Education. Snipes identified future steps and legislative considerations.

The final town hall is scheduled at Kentucky Educational Developmental Cooperative in Ashland on Thursday, Feb. 27 from 5 to 7 p.m., where the commissioner and Stafford will present the framework for public feedback. The goal is to make a formal recommendation to the General Assembly in 2026. Snipes then focused on the context of vibrant learning and instructional models. Vibrant learning, closely aligned with Deeper Learning (implemented in regional co-ops over the past two years), is a key component of the United We Learn vision. An example contrasted traditional science education—reading about pollinators in a textbook and answering multiple-choice questions—with a vibrant learning model that promotes hands-on, inquiry-based learning connected to real-world applications.

The Kentucky United We Learn Council formulated a definition for vibrant learning based on visits to schools in Eminence, Fayette and Floyd County, emphasizing “Learning that matters to the student” and has key characteristics of relevance, authentic and personalized experiences. Snipes discussed Kentucky’s Portrait of a Learner (PoL), which was adopted by the Kentucky Board of Education in 2022, as a model for graduate competencies, expanding the focus beyond traditional academics to include durable skills essential for life success. Currently, over 140 districts have created local versions tailored to community values through collaborative efforts among school boards, parents, educators and students. Local accountability systems and community engagement were discussed with an emphasis on the “Moon Shot Goal” to launch an accountability system that is both meaningful and useful for all learners. Local accountability fosters trust between schools and communities, with districts customizing models to include factors beyond test scores—such as extracurricular access, industry certifications and operational transparency. Snipes said that 18 districts serve as Local Laboratories of Learning (L3s). She focused on Greenup County’s local accountability dashboard, highlighting Superintendent Traysea Moresea’s district that introduced a public dashboard that reports quarterly on special education services, career certifications, graduation and attendance rates, and student satisfaction surveys.

– Similar dashboards have been implemented in Shelby County Schools, Logan County Schools and Fleming County Schools.

Webster inquired about guidance and professional development (PD) for teachers implementing vibrant learning practices. Snipes confirmed that four regional innovation specialists have been deployed to support professional learning for teachers, school administrators, district leadership and others upon district request.

Customized support for districts is available, with contacts for regional innovation specialists provided upon request. Snipes addressed the long-term viability of the Vibrant Learning initiative and the associated specialist positions and noted that while these positions are currently grant-funded under a federal competitive grant (with a two-year limit), KDE is advocating for sustained funding to support educators over the long term. Regardless of funding challenges, KDE's Division of Innovation remains committed to providing expertise and support for project-based and vibrant learning.

Updates based on statewide conversations and stakeholder feedback include reading and math assessments, which remain federally required for identifying Comprehensive School Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement school (TSI), and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement ATSI schools, with a focus on individual student growth rather than performance-based rankings. The Transition Readiness and Graduation Rate, English Language Progress, and Climate and Safety Surveys are maintained as core measures. Science assessment is federally mandated and reported, with optional inclusion in local accountability systems. Districts may customize their accountability models by incorporating elements such as social studies and writing assessments, vibrant learning experiences (e.g., student-led conferences, capstone projects), and interim assessments (state-created or district-funded, aligning with spring Kentucky Assessment Summary). The implementation plan calls for a phased rollout: a pilot phase (pre-2026), expansion through regional communities of practice and a legislative approval goal set for 2026.

Snipes emphasized the need for personalized assessments that accurately reflect a student's academic performance rather than relying solely on report card grades. She noted that, if approved, the department would engage in a Request for Proposal process for vendor partnerships to ensure that interim assessments provide grade-level equivalency data, thereby increasing transparency and communication regarding student progress. Concerns were raised about discrepancies where students receive A's and B's on report cards while performing several grade levels below expectations. Duncan expressed strong support for shifting the focus toward individual student growth over comparative performance rankings. The session concluded with Snipes noting that the updated framework is under development in collaboration with legislators. Additional resources, including a project website link and recordings of past town halls, will be provided. Webster thanked the speaker and transitioned the meeting to legislative updates.

V. Agenda Item: Legislative Update

Presenter: Brian Perry, Governmental Relations, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Perry provided an overview of the current legislative session, highlighting key bills filed in both chambers and ongoing policy discussions affecting education. Perry discussed a proposal to create a state repository of “green-rated” instructional materials to ensure districts utilize high-quality resources and promote public transparency.

Perry discussed the following education bills:

- Senate Bill (SB) 190: Mandates increased access to advanced educational opportunities for students (non-optional).
- House Bill (HB) 193 (Dual Credit Scholarship Bill): Aims to merge existing funding sources for dual credit scholarships, simplifying access for students and families.
- SB 204: Proposes relaxing rules on concealed weapons in schools.
- SB 208: Introduces a statewide cell phone ban during school hours.
- SB 240: Requires retention of kindergarten students not reading at grade level, with an exemption for students aged 7 plus by August.
- SB 241: Addresses districts exceeding Non-Traditional Instruction Day caps by allowing:
 - Calendar flexibility (shifting to 1,062 instructional hours instead of 170 days).
 - Up to five additional NTI days if needed.
 - Commissioner authority to grant five calamity days for unavoidable closures.

Ongoing discussions focus on NTI quality and accountability.

- SB 298: Reinstates the annual identification of Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools (previously conducted every three years) and mandates the use of state-approved high-quality instructional materials for CSI schools.
- HB 433: Requires districts to consult with the Center for School Safety before constructing or renovating buildings.
 - Highlights conflicts with past law (HB 698) that allowed districts to bypass KDE oversight.
- HB 434: Addresses teacher compensation for non-instructional planning time.
- HB 441: Reduces restrictions on re-employing retired teachers.
- HB 440: Expands part-time non-resident student enrollment and prohibits charging non-resident tuition.
- HB 494: Increases funding for English Language Learners (ELL).
- HB 528: A repeat bill from last year related to anti-3Q legislation.
- HB 598: Proposes an external investigation for critical incidents involving injury or death on school property or school trips.
- HB 653: Addresses restrictions on school performances or events deemed harmful to minors.
- HB 661: Allows passenger vehicles to transport students.
- HB 607: Introduces moral instruction in schools (awaiting clarification).

In response to inquiries, Perry confirmed that one diversity, equity, and inclusion-related bill has been introduced but has not yet gained significant traction. Similar to last year, DEI legislation may see different versions emerge with potential revisions. Perry encouraged attendees to reach out for bill tracking updates. He anticipated rapid legislative movement in the next two to three weeks, noting that several House bills (including HB 8) have dropped recently, sparking further discussion.

The session concluded by opening the floor for additional questions and follow-up inquiries.

VI. Agenda Item: Facilitated Open Discussion and Feedback

Presenter: David Webster, Local School Board Advisory Council Chair

Summary of Discussion: Webster invited attendees to provide feedback on the meeting or suggest topics for future discussions. Duncan proposed discussing how districts are handling cell phone policies, including success stories and challenges. She expressed interest in hearing different district approaches to managing cell phone use in schools. Perry noted that the proposed cell phone legislation does include an exception for instructional use.

Webster gave examples of different district policies, including:

- Some require students to store phones in lockers for the entire school day.
- Others collect phones in classrooms to prevent distractions.
- Suggested gathering more information from Sarah or Jodi on various district policies.

Duncan emphasized the importance of this discussion, stating that all districts are facing similar challenges and could benefit from sharing strategies.

Webster thanked attendees for their participation, acknowledging the session as highly informative. He expressed appreciation for the updates and insights shared during the meeting.

Snipes confirmed that she and Doman will continue working with Kentucky School Boards Association on membership follow-ups to ensure representation across judicial districts. Efforts will include partnerships for recruitment to strengthen district representation.

Webster asked if there were any further items for discussion. As there were no additional topics, Webster entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned, with Webster expressing thanks to all attendees for their participation.

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m. ET

Next Meeting: Kentucky School Board Association Annual Conference

Location: Marriott Griffin Gate, Lexington, KY

Date: July 10, 2025

Time: 5-7p.m. ET