



Charter for the Kentucky United We Learn Council
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This document outlines the mission, composition, and basic operating rules for the *Kentucky United We Learn Council* (the council), which is part of an ecosystem of teams working to support the *Kentucky Department of Education* (KDE) and the *Kentucky Board of Education* (KBE). The work of the council is informed by the *United We Learn* (UWL) report that was the culmination of work by the *Kentucky Coalition for Advancing Education*.

Name: Kentucky United We Learn Council

Vision: To build a prosperous Kentucky, we will launch an accountability system that is meaningful and useful to all our learners.

Mission: The primary mission of the council is to make recommendations to the KDE and KBE on strategic matters related to educational transformation in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The council focuses on educational transformation in the areas of student learning experiences, assessment and accountability, and educational policy. A crucial part of this mission is to engage stakeholders across all levels of the education system to facilitate educational transformation through inclusive co-design processes.

Structure: The council is an advisory body composed of the union of the members from its three constituent committees, which are:

- Vibrant Learning Experiences (VLE)
- Accelerating Innovation (AI)
- Building a Bold New Future with Communities (BNF)

Each of these committees has its own charter located in their Google committee drive that describes all relevant details similar to this charter. In addition, the council has several positions, which are described in the next section.

Committees may choose to break up work into workgroups. Workgroups are open to all council members. Workgroups are intended to focus on a very specific work product for a short amount of time. The workgroup has the option of bringing in additional people for the purpose of producing the best possible product with the best subject matter experts possible.

Positions: Facilitation Team

- The facilitation team is comprised of several positions: (1) council chair and vice chair (aka chair elect), (2) team/committee chairs and vice chairs (aka chairs-elect), (3) KDE council lead, project manager, policy liaison, team/committee leads and (4) partners.

- The main joint responsibilities of the facilitation team are described in the following subsections. These responsibilities should be reviewed on at least an annual basis by the facilitation team with formative input from all members to ensure that they continue to fulfill the needs of the council.
- Plan convenings and provide external expertise to the council.
- Share information from individual committees, bring problems of practice to the facilitation team and help resolve issues.

Facilitation Team Responsibilities

General Considerations

- The main responsibilities for members of the team fall into the categories of (1) meeting attendance and facilitation, (2) information dissemination, and (3) strategic liaisoning.
- The following subsections describe the responsibilities of the team overall without a finer breakdown of responsibilities by specific position. Most logistical, process-supporting tasks are handled by the council's project manager.

Meeting Facilitation

- Lead the development of the agenda for the council convenings and advise on related planning decisions.
- Attend, and proactively contribute to, in-person meetings of the council, currently scheduled to take place twice a year around April/May and October/November.
- Attend, and proactively contribute to, recurring internal planning meetings that are conducted virtually.
- Members of the facilitation team are welcomed and encouraged to attend all meetings associated with the council.

Information Dissemination

- Create and disseminate official updates about the council's work to different stakeholder groups via email, social media, newsletters, town halls or other forms of engagement. This kind of outreach must be coordinated with KDE to avoid conflicting messages or unnecessary redundancies.
- Review key messaging about the council created by KDE that is presented to the public via mechanisms such as the KDE website, emails or strategic guidance documents. Feedback on the messaging is advisory in nature with KDE retaining final say in how these are shaped.

Strategic Liaisoning

- Review formal proposals from the committees that are brought forward to the council for voting in order to decide whether these are ready for voting. Coordinate any ensuing voting processes and share the outcomes of the voting process with the full council and KDE leadership.
- Shape strategic priorities of the committees in collaboration with committee leadership during scheduled meetings as well as outside of these meetings.

Council Chair and Vice Chair Responsibilities

- To keep the workload manageable and to offer other members the opportunity to shape the work more directly, the chair and vice chair of the council are advised to not hold leadership positions on any of the three committees.
- The chair and vice chair are strongly encouraged to float among committee meetings to develop a greater sense of themes and needs emerging across the various committees.
- The chair of the council will only vote in the event of a tie or if their vote is needed to have a quorum of members present.

Council Vice Chair Elections

- Vice chair of the council will automatically succeed to the chair. This will help the council maintain institutional knowledge and continuity. This makes the vice chair also chair elect.
- Nominations for the vice chair of the council can be through self-nominations or by nominating another council member. In either case, the members who are considered for the position should thoroughly read the charter to get a full understanding of the roles and responsibilities of these positions.
- Nominations for vice chair are formally accepted between March 1 and March 15 of each calendar year. Nominations need to be sent to the council's project manager via email or other digital means as indicated by the council's project manager.
- The council will need to be convened or call a special meeting to vote. The following rules govern the voting process:
 - Voting can be done virtually or during in-person council convenings,

- If voting is done virtually, a suitable platform that is accessible to all members should be used,
 - If only one council member is on the ballot, the voting can still proceed,
 - At least 51% of active council members, excluding the nominee(s) and current chair, need to participate in the voting process. The current chair will vote in the case of a tie,
 - Votes are “yes”, “no” and “abstain”, and
 - For a nominee to be elected, they must receive the plurality of yes votes.
- The specific type of information that is requested for nominations can be adjusted by the KDE lead and the council’s project manager each year based on emergent needs of the council but should generally include:
 - Biographical information that speaks to relevant experiences and expertise, including links to relevant social media accounts (e.g., LinkedIn, organizational website),
 - Motivation for taking on the position, including a general vision of how the nominee expects to shape the work moving forward, and
 - A headshot.

Additional Considerations

- It is up to the chair and vice chair to create workflows and best practices for themselves in a manner that suits their individual styles, experience, expertise, and availability.

Membership: Composition

- The council is composed of members with diverse experiences and perspectives across the Commonwealth, including, but not limited to, those of parents/guardians/caretakers, students, teachers, district leaders, business leaders, organizational leaders, education advocacy groups, policy-makers and so on.
- The council is designed to accommodate 50-70 members from across the Commonwealth, excluding external consultants and facilitators that support the work. This number represents a reasonable compromise between allowing for broad representation and providing a financially and logistically



viable model for KDE to provide financial support around the council convenings.

Selection Process

- Current members are listed in a Council Members document on the council's member drive that is accessible to all members. The member list is also available on the Kentucky United We Learn Council website.
- When membership falls below the preferred threshold or representation is needed from a particular stakeholder group, an open application process may begin. The facilitation team and current members may also nominate someone to be on the council. In this case, an application will be sent to the nominee by the commissioner or KDE lead. Appointments may also be made by the commissioner, KDE leadership or the council facilitation team.

Responsibilities

- The KBE and KDE appreciate the time that members are willing to dedicate to the council. To move the work of the council forward in a consistent and sustainable manner, members should adhere to the guidelines, best practices and responsibilities outlined in their respective committee charters. Generally speaking, members are expected to:
 - Actively engage in the full committee meetings organized by the committee in which they are a member,
 - Make every effort to review materials and view recordings of meetings they are unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts that cannot be moved,
 - Complete tasks that are assigned to them in-between committee meetings in a thoughtful and timely manner,
 - Proactively connect with the leadership or other members in their committee or the council more broadly to provide input on all relevant topics.
- All members should engage with one another in a respectful manner in line with the mindsets and best practices of inclusive co-creation as described in the 'Principles of Collaboration' section.

Proposal and Recommendation Processes: The council may make formal proposals or recommendations to the KBE. This section lays out the essential parameters of this process.

General Process

- A high-level graphic of the council's decision-making process is shown in Figure A1 in the Appendix. Similarly, a scenario for a proposal that starts from a committee is described in the appendix to illustrate how this plays out in practice.
- Generally speaking, proposals are developed and socialized within one or multiple committees, then they are brought in front of the full council for voting, they go to the KDE for further review and input, and then are presented to the KBE jointly by KDE and the council members.

Nature of Proposals

- All proposals made to the KBE are for consideration only. While KBE should consider these proposals seriously, KBE is not legally required to act in accordance with the recommendations in the proposals.
- Proposals can cover a variety of scopes with a variety of potential consequences for different stakeholders within the Kentucky public school education system. Proposals may include, but are not limited to:
 - Recommendations for direct district funding or KDE staff support for district innovation initiatives,
 - Recommendations for strategic priorities with accompanying rationales, critical and/or empirical analyses, and expected consequences for the system and different stakeholder groups,
 - Recommendations for redesign efforts for state assessment and accountability systems with accompanying rationales, critical and/or empirical analyses, and expected consequences for the system and different stakeholder groups,
 - Recommendations for state policy changes that may include revisions to existing policies or the creation of new policies,
 - Recommendations for enhancing the collaboration between KDE staff and district leadership,
 - Recommendations for commissioning research from the professional literature and the professional fields related to the work that is beyond the scope of the standing committees,

- Position statements that express the collective stance of the council on proposed actions or other important issues that affect the Kentucky education system.

Member Review and Voting

- Council members need to be given at least three business days to review any formal proposal to the board in order to provide feedback. Conflicting feedback should be clearly captured and included in the formal proposal via an appendix or similar means.
- Council members need to have the opportunity to vote on any formal proposal that is being put forth by the council. The rules for this voting process are as follows:
 - Voting can be done virtually or during in-person council convenings,
 - If voting is done virtually, a suitable platform that is accessible to all members should be used,
 - At least 51% of active council members need to participate in the voting process for the resulting votes to count,
 - In the case that fewer members are in attendance, the voting process has to be repeated at a later time,
 - For each proposal that is being voted on, possible votes are “yes,” “no” and “abstain,” and
 - Either (1) at least 70% of the votes have to be “yes” or (2) at least 60% have to be “yes” while up to 10% can be “abstain.”
- The final wording for proposals and the timing for presenting it to the KBE resides with KDE.
- For simpler issues that require the expression of a preference, simpler approaches to gathering input can be used. These may include show-of-hands / fist-to-five expressions of preferences in virtual or in-person meetings or alternative approaches.
- For simpler expressions of preference, the exact rules for a quorum and majority support are up to the facilitation team on a case-by-case basis and should be informed by the general principles for votes outlined in this section.

Collaborative Culture: The following principles are designed to guide the mindset and consequent action of every council member:

- We assume good intentions of others,
- We strive to be inclusive of diverse perspectives and experiences of other members as well as colleagues in the KBE, KDE and partner organizations who support the work,
- We share our perspectives with supporting rationales, including the articulation of important underlying values and principles, to be as transparent as possible,
- We ask clarifying questions to make sure that we understand each other and provide explanations so that they can be understood by members of varying backgrounds as appropriate to the given context,
- We make sure to use technologies that are inclusive of everyone's critical needs and overall preferences, to the degree possible, to help encourage members to productively contribute,
- We strive to remain on-task to keep conversations focused and on track,
- We call out actions or statements of others that, we believe, violate our agreed-upon norms and make accompanying recommendations for realignment to ensure that there is no incremental culture drift, and
- We respect each other's lived experiences, education and knowledge brought to discussions and interactions.

The principles above have implications for how work gets accomplished that include, but are not limited to, the following.

When working offline on shared documents and communicating using digital technology such as email or Slack:

- We use comments to agree or disagree, share concerns, express ideas, or fulfill other communicative goals, creating these comments using the principles outlined above,
- We will not delete others' work if we disagree with it unless certain master edits are specifically required in a given stage of work,
- We give adequate time for all members to review and comment on the product in advance of a given deadline without presuming that a timeframe is adequate and try to accommodate members unless it threatens the timeline of the overall decision-making process that the review process is embedded, and

- We use a digital workspace that has been identified as preferable by most members and try to do our best to help those who find the workspace not optimal to engage productively in the process.

When working together in meetings, either virtually or face-to-face:

- We start and end meetings on time to be respectful of members' time,
- We create an agenda in advance with clear roles/responsibilities, goals and outcomes, whenever possible,
- We structure group processes with sufficient variability (e.g., different meeting times, group compositions, task types) so that all members can participate at different times and for different purposes that suit their experiences and expertise,
- We facilitate and mutually monitor conversations in meetings to ensure that all members have a chance to be heard and that time limits/constraints for contributions are respected,
- We use meeting technology that is preferred by the majority of members and support members who had other preferences in productively engaging in meetings,
- We generally encourage members to turn on their cameras during virtual meetings to encourage members to engage productively in meetings and to allow other members to read nonverbal cues, we generally use the raising-hand icon (or a similar, agreed-upon icon) in virtual meetings to indicate our interest in contributing to a conversation, and
- We record our meetings and share openly with all members and the public.

These principles, and ones like them, have been articulated in several published frameworks. The prominent framework used for the council includes the “Habits of Inclusive Design” framework, which includes habits of (a) inclusion, (b) empathy, (c) co-creation, and (d) reciprocity (see Figure A2 in Appendix).

Other frameworks such as the “Mutual Learning” framework for effective teams or the “Core Principles Supporting Change” framework offer similar, complementary guidance. These can be consulted as additional reference points for refining best practices as needed.

When changes are made to the scope of work:

Recommendations for a change in strategic work that impacts others in the council need to be forwarded to the facilitation team prior to any action.

Charter Amendments: While this charter captures fundamental organizing principles of the council, it is a living document that is subject to amendments as the context, nature or goals of the work change. The following principles are aligned to this:

- This charter should be reviewed at regular intervals - ideally at least once annually - by the facilitation team to determine if amendments are required,
- Amendments can also be suggested for consideration by council members throughout the year. The mechanism for providing feedback should be designed to make it easy for members to provide this feedback. For example, a digital “comment box” (e.g., an email address or a very brief survey form) can be used, and
- Any “major” amendment that is considered for inclusion in the charter by the facilitation team requires a formal vote by council members that follows the procedures outlined above. There is no singular definition of what constitutes a “major” amendment and the judgment of whether a vote is required rests with the facilitation team.

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Appendix - Illustrative Scenario for Decision-making Process

Recommendation for Policy Change

The council wants to recommend to the KBE to amend a key policy that is part of the formal state accountability system. The following is a possible process for this case:

Phase 1 - Committee Work

- Given that this is a policy proposal, the primary work to prepare the proposal is assigned to the chair and vice chair of the BNF committee. The work to prepare the policy follows the principles and best practices outlined in the charter for the BNF committee. The following bullets assume certain rules and best practices from such a charter.
- The chair and vice chair of the BNF committee alert members that there is an opportunity to influence policy at the state level and lay out the fundamental issues, timeline and constraints. This would be done during a monthly full committee meeting. A summary email is sent to all members to give those who were not present a chance to contribute.
- The chair and vice chair of the BNF committee inform the council leadership team as well as the chair and vice chairs of the other committees that this work process has begun to give them sufficient advance notice to consider the implications for their streams of work. This can be done via email or in a council facilitators meeting, for instance.
- The chair and vice chair of the BNF committee solicit feedback from committee members during their monthly meetings and/or via offline communication. This might involve a simple email thread or, perhaps more comprehensively, a brief survey administered via Google Forms. Members are given at least three business days to provide this feedback in accordance with the BNF charter.
- Simultaneously, the KDE policy liaison within the BNF committee engages with the KDE's policy advisors to co-create any recommended changes to current policy.
- Depending on the nature and stakes of the proposal, the chair and vice chair of the BNF committee may also solicit informal feedback from the leadership of the other two committees on any draft language that has been created. If a survey is used with internal members, the same survey could also be sent to these leaders, for example.
- The chair and vice chair of the BNF committee take their members' input and revise the proposal. This assumes that there is sufficient clarity and directional agreement on the proposal at this point. Should this not be the case, the chair and vice chair of the BNF committee solicit further input on the issues that require clarification or resolution from their members before a revised proposal can be drafted.
- Assuming that a proposal that is likely to have sufficient support can be created at this point, BNF committee members vote on the proposal in accordance with the voting rules described above. Should there be majority support for advancing the proposal, the proposal is now shared with the rest of the council.

Phase 2 - Kentucky United We Learn Council Work

- All members of the council are given an opportunity to provide input into the proposal. This would most likely be done via a survey that is made available according to the rules laid out in this charter.
- The council facilitators team works with the BNF chair and vice chair to revise the proposal, as needed, based on the council members' feedback.
- Once the proposal is revised, members are given the opportunity to vote on whether the proposal should be officially supported by the council. The voting process follows the rules outlined in this charter. The proposal is uploaded into a dedicated folder that is accessible to all council members.
- If the proposal is approved, the council chair and vice chair request that the KDE policy liaison take the proposal to the KDE leadership team for consideration.
- If the proposal is not approved, the council facilitators team discusses the reasons provided and possible next steps with the BNF chair, vice chair and KDE policy liaison. That team will communicate the next steps to the full facilitators team. The nature of these steps would depend strongly on the nature of the proposal and the feedback received.

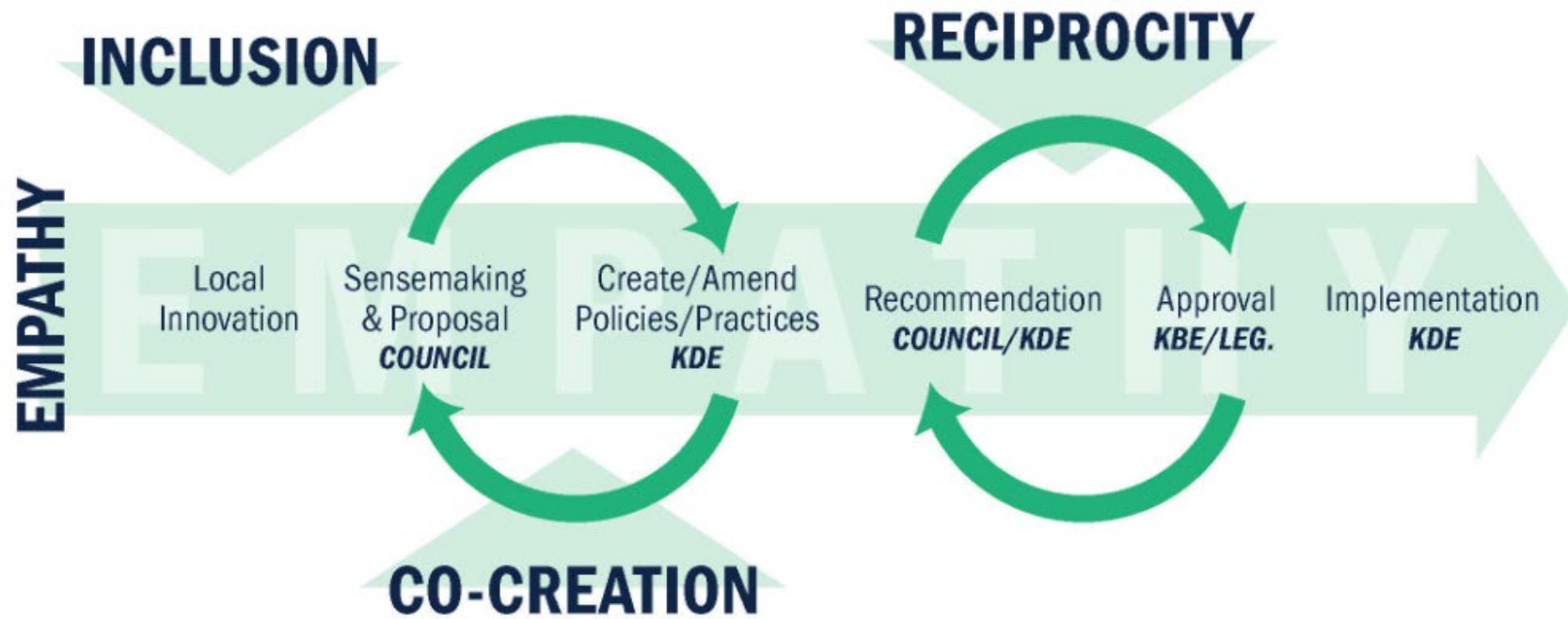


Figure A1 High-level Description of the Council Decision-making Process in Alignment with the Habits of Co-Creation.

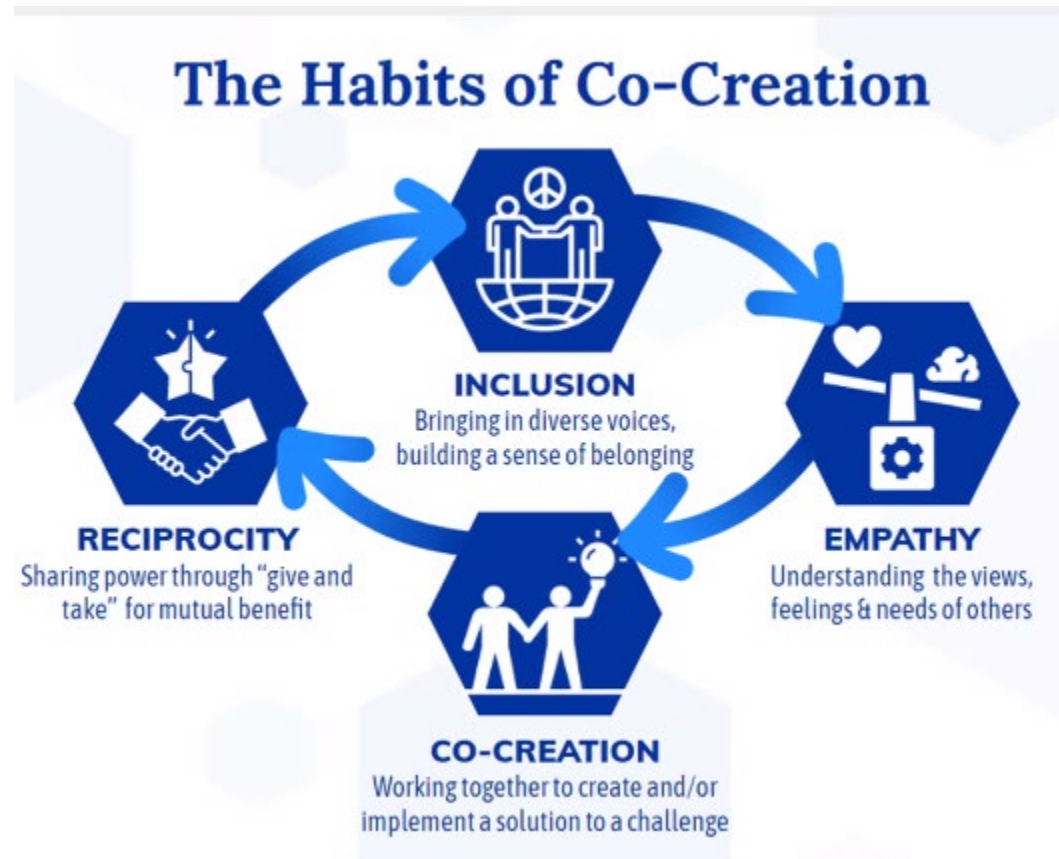


Figure A2 Habits of Co-Creation Used for All Aspects of the Council Work.

Table A1

Meaning of Abbreviations used in charter

Abbreviation	Meaning
AI	Accelerating Innovation
BNF	Bold New Future
KDE	Kentucky Department of Education
KBE	Kentucky Board of Education
VLE	Vibrant Learning Experiences

Note. In the world at large, ‘AI’ is often used to denote “artificial intelligence,” which is different from the use in this document.