



INVITING APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS FOR

# Commissioner of Education

for the Commonwealth of Kentucky

Executive Search Facilitated by:

**Greenwood/Asher**  
AND ASSOCIATES

42 Business Centre Drive, Suite 206, Miramar Beach, Florida 32550

**Betty Asher:** [bettyasher@greenwoodsearch.com](mailto:bettyasher@greenwoodsearch.com)

**Susanne Griffin:** [susannegriffin@greenwoodsearch.com](mailto:susannegriffin@greenwoodsearch.com)

**Ann Bailey:** [annbailey@greenwoodsearch.com](mailto:annbailey@greenwoodsearch.com)

**Office Number:** 850.650.2277

## Kentucky Commissioner of Education

The Kentucky Board of Education has an exciting and challenging leadership opportunity to make a difference for more than 648,000 public school students in our state. The board is seeking an individual who shares its commitment to putting the interests of students first and ensuring each child is prepared for the opportunities of the 21st-century economy.

The **Commissioner of Education** is the chief state school officer and oversees the daily operations of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and acts as superintendent of the Kentucky School for the Blind, the Kentucky School for the Deaf and 53 area technology centers. The commissioner also serves as the executive secretary to the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB), recommending and carrying out regulations related to standards and requirements for obtaining and maintaining a teaching certificate, and preparation of teachers and other professional school personnel in Kentucky.

The next Commissioner of Education will sustain and build on Kentucky's commitment to excellence in education, partnering with educators to deliver on this promise by applying innovative approaches to close the achievement gap and ensure success for all.

As the chief executive officer for both the Board of Education and the Department of Education, the Commissioner recommends and implements Board of Education policies and directs the Department of Education in the management of the state's 172 public school districts. The board's vision is informed by a changing economy that requires elementary and secondary schools to prepare students for a more complex and competitive workplace.

Together, the 11-member board, the Commissioner and the department are responsible for setting state standards for student, program and operational performance while respecting the local autonomy of each school district.

Kentucky has led the way in educational reform starting with the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA). KERA made many fundamental changes in collective thinking about what public education should provide as well as how it should be implemented, from establishing a funding mechanism that provides equity across the state to requiring rigorous standards to ensuring local control and input from parents through the school-based decision making (SBDM) process.

Because of its efforts, Kentucky has been a strong voice on public education through the years. The state maintains close ties with a number of national organizations. In addition, former Commissioners Gene Wilhoit, Terry Holliday and Stephen Pruitt had a history of leadership in education on the national level. Maintaining Kentucky's presence and influence will be a priority for the new Commissioner of Education.

In addition to providing guidance and resources to the state's public schools, other opportunities and challenges the next Commissioner will be facing are a statewide accountability system that needs finalizing; the effects on learning posed by the COVID-19 pandemic; overseeing the state's career and technical education system; overcoming a lack of academic progress since 2016; operational deficiencies in funding and staffing; and major pending legislative and state policy issues.

## About Kentucky's Board and Department of Education

The Kentucky Board of Education develops and adopts the regulations that govern Kentucky's public schools and provides guidance and resources as they implement the state's education requirements.

It oversees the Kentucky Department of Education, whose mission is to provide leadership and support to ensure each student is empowered and equipped for a successful future by engaging districts and schools, industry and business, and students, families and communities.

The department also serves as the state's liaison for federal education requirements and funding opportunities.

Its staff includes more than 1,000 employees that serve the state's public elementary, middle and high schools; approximately 300 Frankfort-based staff, 600 who administer the state's career and technical education system, 180 who serve at the Kentucky schools for the Deaf and Blind, and 150 contractors.

The Kentucky Department of Education's mission is to provide leadership and support that ensures each student is empowered and equipped for a successful future.



### The department's major activities are:

- Administering the statewide assessment and accountability system and supporting low-performing schools through a continuous improvement process;
- Providing technical assistance to schools and districts in the areas of finance, management and instruction;
- Providing support and information to the Kentucky Board of Education on state education regulations;
- Monitoring school and district compliance with state and federal laws;
- Overseeing the state's education technology system;
- Overseeing the state's special education system and compliance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and
- Overseeing educator certification, preparation, recruitment and development.



## Goals include:

- **Career Readiness Pathways:** KDE collaborates with businesses throughout the state to determine workforce demands and the required skills to meet industry needs.
- **Professional Learning and Support:** KDE provides support and guidance to teachers for using formative assessments, data and resources to adjust classroom instruction to meet the learning goals of each student.
- **Integrated Methods for Learning:** KDE aligns academic standards that describe what students should learn with assessments that measure what students learned, while supporting the curriculum decisions and teaching practices developed and implemented at the local level.
- **Learning Systems:** KDE recognizes the need to support students who excel as well as students who need academic or behavioral interventions with rigorous and creative systems.
- **Human Resources Management:** KDE's five-year-old equity plan includes strategies for local school districts to ensure poor, minority, limited English proficient and special needs students are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified or out-of-field teachers.
- **Persistence to Graduation:** KDE created the "Persistence to Graduation Tool," an early warning indicator system that identifies students who may be off-track for promotion or not on-time for graduation. Teachers review student-level data for those students that may need additional intervention and support.
- **Early Learning:** KDE partners with early childhood and Head Start to provide early childhood educators with professional learning and resources to encourage early learning.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Schools and districts annually establish continuous improvement plans. Improvement efforts focus on student needs through a collaborative process involving stakeholders to establish and address priority needs, district funding and closing achievement gaps between identified subgroups. KDE reviews these plans and helps districts make connections between academic resources and available funding to address targeted needs.

To review the board's strategic plan, visit the [Kentucky Department of Education's](https://www.kde.ky.gov/) website.



# Kentucky's Ambitious Goals for Student Performance

Kentucky has long been focused on reform and progress in education and has set ambitious goals for high student performance, high-quality teaching and administration, and a strong, supportive environment for each school and every student.

The state's accountability system is grounded in outreach and engagement with thousands of Kentuckians, including educators at all levels, education partners, businesses, policymakers, families and communities. The shared vision of P-12 public education seeks to equip every student to pursue a successful future.

A multidimensional  
system based on values  
of equity, achievement,  
and integrity

- All children must be at the heart of the system.
- A well-rounded education is important and necessary.
- All subjects, both tested and non-tested, need to be valued.
- An emphasis on teaching is needed.
- Collaboration instead of competition among schools and districts needs to be the focus.

While the ideals remain constant, accountability in Kentucky's educational system is of high interest to the state's legislature, and the system continues to evolve, as reflected by new directions in revised Kentucky statutes and the Kentucky Board of Education's regulatory process.

Aligned to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the [Kentucky Academic Standards](#) contain the minimum required standards all Kentucky students should have the opportunity to learn before graduating from high school. The standards do not address how learning experiences should be designed

Kentucky's public school teachers have an average of 11 years and 9.2 months of teaching experience, and the state ranks fourth in the nation in the number of new nationally certified teachers.

More statistics on the state's public education system can be found on [KDE's Kentucky Education Facts](#) web page.

## Postsecondary Education in Kentucky

Kentucky has eight state universities, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and more than a dozen independent colleges and universities.

The new commissioner will work closely with higher education-related organizations to improve student outcomes of P-12 education and workforce development-related efforts. Ultimately, the commissioner will ensure these partnerships enable all students to graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills needed to achieve post-secondary or career success and become engaged citizens..

Kentucky has 42,024 teachers with an average of 11 years and 9.2 months of teaching experience, and ranks 5th in the nation in the number of new, nationally certified teachers.

## Teacher Certification

The total number of National Board Certificates issued by the Education Professional Standards Board:	<b>4,036</b>
---	--------------

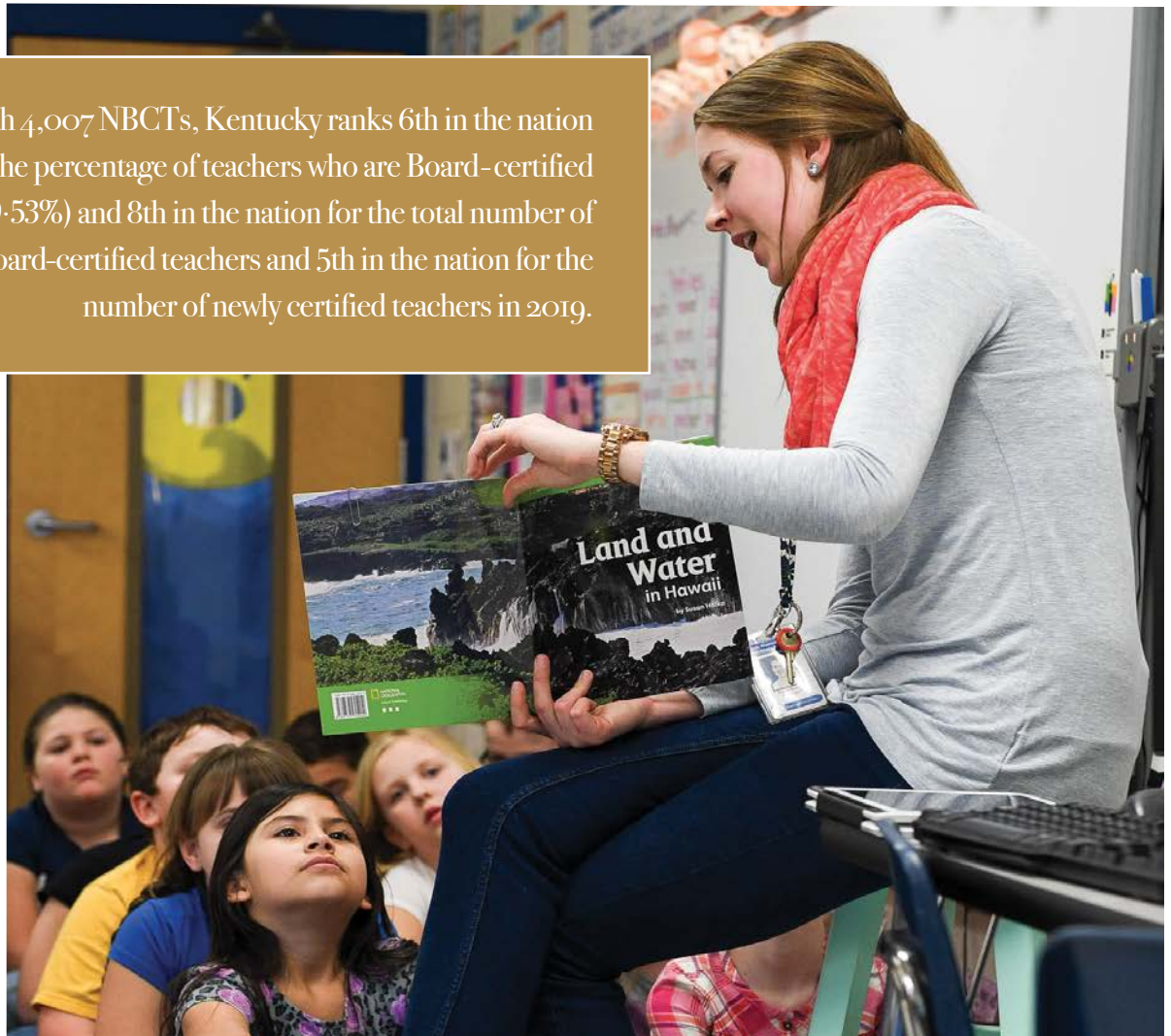
Total number of National Board Certificate holders with active NB01 Certification:	<b>2,853</b>
--	--------------

Percentage of teachers employed during the 2019-2020 school year with an active National Board Certification:	<b>4.94%</b>
---	--------------

Percentage of all certified staff with an active National Board Certification:	<b>4.78%</b>
--	--------------

*Notes: Teacher Certification Database - Employed Teachers 2019-2020 MUNIS: 42,42.  
Total Certified Staff 2019-2020 MUNIS: 51,499*

With 4,007 NBCTs, Kentucky ranks 6th in the nation for the percentage of teachers who are Board-certified (9.53%) and 8th in the nation for the total number of Board-certified teachers and 5th in the nation for the number of newly certified teachers in 2019.



## Teacher Experience

Average years of teaching experience during the 2019-2020 school year as reported by the school district (Munis) **11.8**

Average years of employment for teachers employed during the 2019-2020 school year **10.8**

*Notes: Data from Munis with a search criteria of 2001-2020. This count does not accurately represent those employed out of state or out of the country or those employed prior to 2001.*

Average years of employment for all certified staff during the 2019-2020 school year: **11.75**

*Notes: Search criteria of 2001-2020. This count does not accurately represent those employed out of state or out of the country or those employed prior to 2001.*

## Teacher Ethnicity

Percentage of Teachers employed during the 2019-2020 school year broken out by their gender: Female: **77.49%**  
Male: **22.5%**

*Notes: Teacher Certification Database - (Gender - self reported by applicant) 2019-2020 MUNIS*

Percentage of Teachers employed during the 2019-2020 school year broken out by their Ethnicity. White: **93.63%**  
Minority: **5.29%**  
Unknown: **1.07 %**

*Notes: Teacher Certification Database - (Ethnicity- self reported by applicant) 2019-2020 MUNIS*

## Student Ethnicity

Kentucky has 648,369 public school students, with ethnicities of:

White: <b>76.8%</b>	Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <b>0.1%</b>
African American: <b>10.5%</b>	Native American <b>0.1%</b>
Hispanic: <b>6.8 %</b>	Two or more races <b>3.9%</b>
Asian <b>1.8%</b>	

More statistics on the state's public education system can be found on [KDE's Kentucky Education Facts](#) web page.





## About Kentucky and Frankfort, the State Capital

As author Jesse Stuart wrote, Kentucky is in “the very heart of America.” Neither Southern nor Northern, its largest city of [Louisville](#) is within a day’s drive of half the population of the United States. A mix of urban cities and rural beauty, Kentucky is a great place to raise a family.

Known for its horses and bourbon, Kentucky also has nationally recognized culinary and sports scenes, a thriving arts culture and abundant natural resources and park systems, making the state a great place to live and work. The state has seen extended economic growth in recent years and is home to several major industries – including UPS’ international air hub – because of the state’s logistical advantages. Its tourism industry is strong, including a sharp rise in agritourism.



Frankfort recently has seen a downtown revitalization, and its historic business district is an active center of commerce.

The state capital of Frankfort lies just off Interstate 64 in the state’s “Golden Triangle” between its two largest cities, Louisville and Lexington, both within an hour’s drive.

Frankfort has a long history. It is one of several fords on the Kentucky River and was on one of the great buffalo trails that served settlers as early highways. Frankfort lies in the heart of Kentucky’s Bluegrass country, surrounded by rolling pastures where thoroughbred horses run and canopies of forest bring beauty in every season.

When Kentucky became a state in 1792, Frankfort outbid other towns for the privilege of becoming the capital. Its first statehouse was built by 1794. Historic architecture graces government buildings, from the current Capitol to the old state Capitol, the Governor’s Mansion, the region’s only Frank Lloyd Wright house and Liberty Hall, the home of John Brown, one of Kentucky’s founding fathers.

Kentucky is a manufacturing and industrial state and Frankfort represents that very essence. Jim Beam bottles 100 different brands of alcohol for global distribution; Montaplast of North America provides automotive components for Mercedes and Jaguar that are shipped all over the world, and Centria is a \$150 million commercial siding manufacturer.

Frankfort recently has seen a downtown revitalization, and its historic business district is an active center of commerce. The renovation of several historic buildings, including the Grand Theater, restaurants and specialty shops, and the recently constructed Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History and Paul Sawyier Public Library combine to make downtown Frankfort an attractive destination for those inside and outside Franklin County.



# Requirements and Skills

The next commissioner will have a contextual understanding of and a deep appreciation for Kentucky's educational history to help every child receive the best education possible.

## Experience

Kentucky's next Commissioner of Education will have:

- An education background with classroom experience;
- A deep understanding of learning theory, curriculum and instructional practice;
- Knowledge of today's best practices in schools;
- A strong financial background with the ability to manage hundreds of millions of dollars in state and federal funding, audit processes and budgets;
- Experience with policymaking and the executive and legislative branches of government, including working with members of Congress and the U.S. Department of Education; and
- Leadership experience in large, diverse organizations and experience working with a diverse staff.

## Skills

The successful candidate will have the ability to:

- Work with multiple partners and respect opinions, regardless of background, within and outside of education;
- Translate knowledge into action to benefit all students;
- Create a compelling and shared vision with diverse partners, communicate that vision and bring it to reality;
- Build an inspired and effective team, engage members and maximize strengths;
- Inspire partners and constituents around a vision, and lead boldly to bring that vision to reality;
- Build strong relationships with the private sector, community members and policymakers; and
- Effectively deploy technology as a communication and teaching tool.

## Supporting Dispositions

The successful candidate should have:

- A commitment to and passion for inspiring and equipping each student for a successful life, and improving learning opportunities for historically underserved children;
- The ability to empower teachers, leaders and staff who carry out the vision;
- The desire to work through partnerships and interpersonal relationships with diverse people in a multitude of circumstances;
- A focus on the development of the whole child, including skills and attributes necessary for success;
- A commitment to public education and the structure of public education in Kentucky;
- The disposition to share with and listen to education partners;
- A commitment to be visible and approachable, and lead with dignity; and
- The desire to work with the Kentucky Board of Education to build public understanding and support for the state's educational goals.



The Kentucky Board of Education is located in the 300 building on Sower Blvd., 5th Floor in Frankfort, Kentucky.

## Nomination & Application Process

### Salary

Salary will be competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

### Applicant Review

Confidential applications and nominations will be accepted until the position is filled.

### How to Apply

Greenwood / Asher & Associates, Inc. is assisting the Kentucky Board of Education in the search. Initial screening of applications will begin immediately and will continue until an appointment is made. For best consideration, please submit your materials by **May 31, 2020**. Individuals who wish to nominate a candidate should submit a letter of nomination including contact information for the nominee.

Application materials should include a letter addressing how the candidate's experiences match the position requirements, a curriculum vitae or resume and five references. Submission of materials as PDF attachments is strongly encouraged.

For more information regarding the Kentucky Board of Education please visit:  
<https://education.ky.gov>

**CONFIDENTIAL INQUIRIES, NOMINATIONS, AND APPLICATION MATERIALS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:**

**Greenwood/Asher**  
AND ASSOCIATES

**Betty Asher:** bettyasher@greenwoodsearch.com  
**Susanne Griffin:** susannegriffin@greenwoodsearch.com  
**Ann Bailey:** annbailey@greenwoodsearch.com  
**Office Number:** 850.650.2277

The Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Board of Education do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, age, gender identity, veteran's status, genetic information or disability in employment or the provision of services.