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KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION TAKES NEXT STEP IN APPOINTING CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICER

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – The Kentucky Board of Education voted unanimously Tuesday to take the next step in making Wayne D. Lewis, Ph.D., the next commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Education. Lewis has served as interim commissioner since April 2018. Following the vote, the board authorized Heiner to negotiate Lewis' contract. The board could vote on the terms of the contract, including salary, pending the negotiations, at its meeting Wednesday.

"I can think of no better person than Wayne Lewis to affect the type of change that is needed in public education in Kentucky right now," said Kentucky Board of Education Chairman Hal Heiner. "His vision for Kentucky's students will help accomplish what educators and politicians have struggled to accomplish for many years – to close achievement gaps for students of all races, socioeconomic backgrounds and learning abilities."

Lewis is a native of New Orleans, where he completed undergraduate studies at Loyola University New Orleans. He earned a master's degree in Urban Studies with a concentration in Public Administration at The University of Akron; completed a post-baccalaureate teacher preparation program in special education at The University of New Orleans; and earned a Ph.D. in Educational Research and Policy Analysis with a cognate in Public Administration at North Carolina State University. While completing his graduate and doctoral studies, Dr. Lewis worked as a special education teacher in public schools in North Carolina and Louisiana, and taught at the postsecondary level in teacher preparation at North Carolina State University.

Since 2009, Lewis has been a faculty member in the Department of Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Kentucky, earning tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor in 2015. He most recently served as the executive director of educational policy and programs with the Kentucky Cabinet for Education and Workforce Development.

"My background with K-12 education, postsecondary education, workforce development and policy creation aligns nicely with the board's current priority of blurring the lines between high school, college and workforce development," said Lewis. "I'm grateful for the opportunity to impact the lives of Kentucky's most precious resource – our children, and I'm confident that we will make positive change to education outcomes in the years to come."

The vote came following Lewis' six-month evaluation headed by the board's Operational Management Committee. The committee also approved the professional qualifications for Kentucky's chief state school officer. Joe Papalia, the chair of the committee, provided the full board with a packet containing a KDE staff survey, Lewis' self-evaluation and resume, the committees'

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comments on the evaluation, and an overview of the appointment and hiring methods of other chief state school officers in the U.S.

“Dr. Lewis has accomplished several huge feats in a matter of six months that were not tackled by previous commissioners during years of service,” said Papalia. “In addition to handling difficult situations such as the Jefferson County Public Schools settlement with grace, he has placed an emphasis on career and technical education that will positively transform our workforce and our commonwealth for decades to come.”

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