



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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COMMISSIONER HOSTS TALKS WITH EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Beginning this week, Commissioner of Education Wayne Lewis will begin hosting meetings across the state to listen to feedback and recommendations on ways the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and educator preparation programs can work together to strengthen educator preparation.

“I want to have the opportunity to meet personally with leaders and faculty from each of the state’s educator preparation programs to begin building relationships and have discussion on how we can strengthen preparation statewide,” Lewis said. “Having spent a good portion of my career in educator preparation, I am particularly excited about this new work at KDE.”

Lewis, a former special education teacher in Louisiana and North Carolina, is currently on leave as Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Kentucky. Prior to his move to Kentucky in 2009, has also taught preservice teachers at North Carolina State University.

The educator preparation program (EPP) discussions come a few months after an executive order abolished the state agency known as the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) and transferred its administrative operations to KDE and the newly created Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness (ELE) led by Associate Commissioner Rob Akers. Under the executive order, the authority of the EPSB executive director is transferred to the commissioner of education. The authority of the Education Professional Standards Board to promulgate regulations for educator certification and preparation remains unchanged in the executive order.

The ELE office is involved with educator certification as well as setting standards for and approving and evaluating college, university and school district programs for the preparation of teachers and other professional school personnel.

Akers also will participate in the EPP meetings, which will take place regionally over the next few weeks.

“I am really looking forward to meeting with our EPPs to learn how we can partner and support each other as we work to produce teachers capable of meeting the needs of all of our diverse learners,” Akers said. “My hope is we can develop a deeper partnership based on doing what’s best for improving student and teacher performance.”

KDE has a history of working collaboratively with the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education and the former EPSB agency to improve education, including looking at ways to strengthen the state’s educator preparation programs.

These programs are key to ensuring Kentucky’s teachers and teachers and school leaders have the skills and knowledge

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they need to ensure student learning and lead improvement, Lewis said.

“No school factor is more important for student learning than the effectiveness of the classroom teacher. Teacher effectiveness is more important than class size, software, or anything else in the school building you can think of,” he said. “The work of our EPPs in preparing teachers and leaders is critically important to our students’ learning and the success of Kentucky’s public education system.”

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