



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MEETING ADVISORY

Number 18-173

Nov. 6, 2018

MEDIA CONTACT: Jessica Fletcher

Office: (502) 564-2000 | **Cell:** (502) 229-1915 | **E-mail:** Jessica.Fletcher@education.ky.gov

COMMISSIONER LEWIS ANNOUNCES STRUCTURAL REORGANIZATION OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

(FRANKFORT, KY) – In a message to Kentucky Department of Education staff Tuesday afternoon, Commissioner Wayne Lewis announced a structural reorganization which is retroactively effective as of Thursday, November 1.

“This reorganization will help align the department to its vision, which is to ensure that each and every student is empowered and equipped to pursue a successful future,” said Lewis. “We have been intentional in crafting more logical organizational reporting structures and an executive leadership team with extensive expertise and experience within and outside of public schools. KDE’s next chapter will be characterized by strong leadership for raising student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and organizational and instructional innovation in districts and schools.”

ELLIS PROMOTED TO CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

Dr. Amanda Ellis, who has served as the associate commissioner of the Office of Teaching and Learning for the past four years, has been named deputy commissioner and chief academic officer and will serve in the Office of the Commissioner. Her duties will include overseeing the Office of Career & Technical Education and Student Transition; the Office of Special Education and Early Learning; the Office of Assessment and Accountability; and the Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness. The Office of Teaching and Learning has been dissolved under the reorganization, and its functions have been spread throughout the department.

“Amanda has been an asset to the students of the Commonwealth from the time she was a middle school science teacher,” said Lewis. “Her commitment to students and improving student learning across Kentucky is unquestionable. I am delighted that she will be taking on a broader leadership role in the department and providing guidance and oversight for our work in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student readiness.”

Prior to her position as associate commissioner, Ellis served as the director for the Division of Next Generation Professionals and led the work of the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES)

initiative. She also served as the principal at Emma B. Ward Elementary in Anderson County, an elementary school curriculum coach, and a middle school science teacher. She earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education with an endorsement in Middle School Science and Technology from Indiana University and her Master's Degree in Elementary Education from Georgetown College. Amanda earned her Doctorate of Education in Education Leadership from the University of Kentucky.

HYLTON NAMED ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION & EARLY LEARNING

As a part of the reorganization, the Office of Special Education and Early Learning will be created within KDE. The office will be led by Gretta Hylton, formerly the director of the Division of Learning Services, who has been promoted to associate commissioner.

“Elevating and highlighting the importance of special education and early learning is the most important feature of this reorganization. Gretta has spent her career ensuring that exceptional learners are served appropriately and working to improve their learning outcomes,” said Lewis. “For more than 20 years she has served in many roles at the pre-school, elementary, middle and high school levels. She is well-prepared to provide leadership for the department and the state in this new role.”

Hylton began her service at KDE in 2010 as an Exceptional Children Consultant. During her time at the agency, she has worked in a variety of roles including: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) formal complaint investigator, executive staff advisor where she worked specifically around issues related to physical restraint and seclusion, policy advisor in the Office of Teaching and Learning, and most recently as director of the Division of Learning Services. In her new role as associate commissioner, Hylton will continue as Kentucky's state director of special education. She holds bachelor's degrees in both elementary and special education, a master's degree and Rank I in school counseling, and a level II director of special education certification from Morehead State University.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM STRUCTURE

Commissioner Lewis began forming the KDE executive leadership team after being named interim commissioner by the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) in April. Team members include:

- Commissioner Dr. Wayne Lewis
- Deputy Commissioner and Chief Academic Officer Amanda Ellis
- General Counsel Deanna Durrett
- Chief Communications Officer Jessica Fletcher
- Chief Performance Officer Karen Dodd

- Director of Government Relations Brad Montell
- KBE Executive Director Mardi Montgomery
- Associate Commissioner, Office of Finance & Operations, Robin Kinney
- Associate Commissioner, Office of Education Technology, David Couch
- Associate Commissioner, Office of Continuous Support and Improvement, Dr. Kelly Foster
- Associate Commissioner, Office of Career & Technical Education and Student Transition, David Horseman
- Associate Commissioner, Office of Special Education and Early Learning, Gretta Hylton
- Associate Commissioner, Office of Assessment and Accountability, Rhonda Simms
- Associate Commissioner, Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness, Rob Akers

“KDE is blessed to have strong leaders throughout the agency. I am particularly proud of the all-star cast we have assembled at the executive leadership level. It is a mixture of leaders who have served at the agency for years and leaders new to KDE. Altogether, this executive leadership team has the expertise and experience to lead the work of improving student learning, raising student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and ensuring the safety, health, and well-being of children across our state,” said Lewis.

###

[Visit our website at http://www.education.ky.gov](http://www.education.ky.gov)

[Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/kydeptofed](http://www.twitter.com/kydeptofed) and [Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kydeptofed](http://www.facebook.com/kydeptofed)