

Andy Beshear
Governor



Jamie Link
Secretary, Education and
Workforce Development Cabinet

Jason E. Glass, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education and Chief Learner

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
300 Sower Boulevard · Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
Phone: (502) 564-3141 · www.education.ky.gov

May 9, 2022

Jeremy Ledford, Superintendent
Knox County Public Schools
200 Daniel Boone Dr.
Barbourville, KY 40906

Dear Superintendent Ledford:

As you know, one goal of Kentucky Statewide Consolidated Monitoring (KSCM) is to help create opportunities for the programs in our schools and districts to look at new ways to collaborate and collectively meet our ultimate goal: increasing student achievement while closing gaps and positioning our students to be college- and career-ready. The team members from your visit have engaged in this collaborative process in order to produce the attached Consolidated Monitoring Report.

During the 2021-22 school year, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) conducted monitoring in the Knox County School District. During this process, KDE program staff, utilizing program-specific monitoring tools, conducted on-site visits for the following programs:

- Title I, Part A
- Title I, Part D
- Title II, Part A
- Title IV, Part A
- Title V, Part B
- Preschool
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Alternative Education Programs
- Gifted and Talented
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Each program involved in the KSCM has an impact on our goal. For example, Title II, Part A focuses on improving teacher and principal quality to ensure that all students have equal access to highly qualified and effective teachers and leaders. Title I programs provide not only funding, but also guidance on working with disadvantaged students.

This report is the result of what can be best described as a “snapshot” of the district taken during our visit. It begins with identifying “effective practices.” These are individual program practices that the team felt were effective, and in some cases innovative. We strongly suggest that the practices identified be submitted to the [KDE Best Practices website](#).

Each district program has already been provided an individual report as required by federal or state law. All findings will need to be addressed by district program areas as specified in the individual reports.

In the meantime, if you have questions regarding specific program monitoring requirements, please contact the individual program contacts listed in this report. If you have questions concerning the consolidated monitoring process, please contact [Erin Sudduth](#) by email or by phone at (502) 564-3791, Ext. 4021. Information regarding education programs within the state of Kentucky may also be found at the [KDE website](#).

Thank you for your work in improving Kentucky’s education programs to better serve our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelly Foster". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K".

Kelly Foster, Ed.D.
Associate Commissioner
Office of Continuous Improvement and Support
Kentucky Department of Education

KF/TR/ES/vb

Attachment: Consolidated Monitoring Report for Knox County Public Schools

2021-2022 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

District:	Knox County
Date(s) of Visit:	Feb. 8-10, 2022
Team Leads:	
<i>Title I, Part A – Erin Sudduth</i>	<i>Alternative Education Programs – April Stanley</i>
<i>Title I, Part D – Monica Higgins</i>	<i>Career and Technical Education – Karla Tipton</i>
<i>Title II, Part A – Kathy Collins</i>	<i>Gifted and Talented – Kathie Anderson</i>
<i>Title IV, Part A – Lalah Brewer</i>	<i>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – Jessica Jones</i>
<i>Title V, Part B – Erin Sudduth</i>	<i>Preschool – Brittany Sams</i>

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 1

Programs Addressed	Title I, Part A		Alternative Education Programs	
	Title I, Part D	X	Career and Technical Education	X
	Title II, Part A	X	Gifted and Talented	
	Title IV, Part A	X	IDEA	
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	X

Community

Several programs were identified as having strong relationships with community partners. Union College provides the Title I, Part D program with volunteers to work with the youth as mentors. Mentoring services are also provided through New Hope Ministries. Career days are held twice a year to educate students on possible career fields of interest. The entrepreneurship activities provided at Appalachian Children’s Home allow students the opportunity to learn various life skills.

Parents and community members are included as stakeholders in the development of the Title II, Part A program as well as how program funds are used.

The district utilized Title IV, Part A funds to hire school resource officers (SROs) and social workers to provide students and staff with support to meet needs related to mental wellbeing, school safety and community supports.

The KDE monitoring team for Career and Technical Education (CTE) noted Knox Central High School obtained community input regarding course offerings around community needs.

The preschool program partners with the Early Childhood Community Council through community collaborative meets as well as community bookshelves, books and educational

2021-2022 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

materials for local daycares and kindergarten readiness placemats at local restaurants. The preschool program also participates in Read Across America, character breakfast, storybook walks and activities through Save the Children.

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 2

Programs Addressed	Title I, Part A		Alternative Education Programs	
	Title I, Part D		Career and Technical Education	
	Title II, Part A	X	Gifted and Talented	
	Title IV, Part A		IDEA	X
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	X

Parent and Family Engagement

The district meets parent notification requirements under Title II, Part A by ensuring parents receive letters about their right to request information regarding the certification of their child’s teachers and notification when their child is being taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher not meeting state certification standards.

The KDE monitoring team for IDEA noted that parents are consistently invited to Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) meetings. Parents are also given the option to participate in the meetings via alternate means, thereby increasing their ability to be involved.

The district engages parents of preschool students through a variety of means and communication is documented on a parent contact log. Information is shared using letters, monthly newsletters and communication applications such as Remind and Class Dojo. Student progress is shared via parent conferences, a daily behavior calendar and student progress charts. Parents are invited to participate in field trips, volunteer in class, attend events and donate materials for upcoming units.

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 3

Programs Addressed	Title I, Part A	X	Alternative Education Programs	
	Title I, Part D		Career and Technical Education	
	Title II, Part A	X	Gifted and Talented	
	Title IV, Part A		IDEA	
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	

2021-2022 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Policies and Procedures

Consistently implemented policies and procedures can provide districts with an effective system of internal controls. The Title I, Part A program noted a number of detailed procedures and processes in place at the district level. Procedures surrounding allowability, purchasing and safeguarding assets provides the district with the opportunity to review proposed purchases and ensure they meet the requirements of being reasonable, allocable, necessary and documented. The time and effort procedures ensure the timely completion of required semi-annual certification and personnel activity reports.

The KDE monitoring team for Title II, Part A noted that the district has procedures to ensure it engages all stakeholders in the development of the program as well as determining how funds will be spent.

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 4

Programs Addressed	Title I, Part A	X	Alternative Education Programs	
	Title I, Part D		Career and Technical Education	
	Title II, Part A	X	Gifted and Talented	
	Title IV, Part A		IDEA	X
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	

Professional Development

The professional development provided to all teachers through the Title I, Part A program focuses on providing all students with the same high-quality teaching. Schools use Google surveys to request professional development. School professional development plans provide teachers with support in the implementation of strategies and activities gained during trainings. School staff regularly analyzes data to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development. The principal at Girdler Elementary is aware of the unique needs of teachers who began their careers during the 2020-21 school year, many of whom completed their student teaching and first year of teaching in a virtual setting.

Professional learning activities funded by Title II, Part A are based on a review of scientific research and meet the federal criteria for professional learning.

The district's Director of Special Education (DoSE) sends emails to staff working with the IDEA program to notify them of training opportunities throughout the year.

2021-2022 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 5

Programs Addressed	Title I, Part A	X	Alternative Education Programs	
	Title I, Part D		Career and Technical Education	
	Title II, Part A	X	Gifted and Talented	
	Title IV, Part A		IDEA	X
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	X
<p><u>Leadership</u></p> <p>District leadership regularly visits the schools to observe the implementation of the Title I, Part A program and provide support. Interviews with principals indicated they were appreciative of the visibility of district leadership in their buildings.</p> <p>All teachers and principals reported they felt their voices are heard within the district during Title II, Part A interviews. The professional learning that was conducted within the district was at the request of the teachers and principals that saw the need within the district.</p> <p>IDEA interviews indicated the DoSE is supportive of the staff and willing to assist when contacted.</p> <p>Preschool interviews indicated a positive attitude about school and district leadership.</p>				

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 6

Programs Addressed	Title I, Part A	X	Alternative Education Programs	
	Title I, Part D		Career and Technical Education	
	Title II, Part A	X	Gifted and Talented	
	Title IV, Part A	X	IDEA	
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	X
<p><u>Communication</u></p> <p>The Title I, Part A coordinator utilizes an online platform to regularly communicate required documentation needs to building principals. The platform has been designed to mirror the KDE monitoring checklists and principals receive regular reminders when documentation needs to be uploaded. The organization of the platform provides schools with a clear structure regarding the documentation to be maintained for program compliance.</p>				

2021-2022 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

There is a strong, positive communication system among mentors, principals and district office staff working with the Title II, Part A program. During interviews, everyone expressed that they felt they had a voice in district decision making. Individuals working with the Title II, Part A program are positive and excited for the future.

Title IV, Part A interviews with school staff indicated that district leadership was open to communication, easy to approach and willing to provide support as needed.

The preschool program noted the multiple methods of communicating with parents through emails and communication applications as well as a variety of progress monitoring tools.

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 7

Programs Addressed	Title I, Part A		Alternative Education Programs	
	Title I, Part D		Career and Technical Education	X
	Title II, Part A		Gifted and Talented	
	Title IV, Part A		IDEA	
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	X
<u>Climate and Culture</u>				
<p>The CTE program staff are hopeful that the new superintendent will help the district grow in its understanding of the importance of CTE for all students.</p> <p>The preschool classroom environment is clean, well-kept, safe and pleasant. Positive interactions between staff and children were observed during the visit. Interviews indicated teachers are supportive of one another.</p>				

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 8

Programs Addressed	Title I, Part A		Alternative Education Programs	
	Title I, Part D	X	Career and Technical Education	
	Title II, Part A		Gifted and Talented	
	Title IV, Part A		IDEA	
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	

2021-2022 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Equity Initiatives

Title I, Part D interviews with students indicated that staff are available to assist students. Direct instruction utilizing an engaging and age-appropriate literary text was observed. The transition coordinator works with other school districts to handle records requests, assessment data such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), district screenings and special education assessments. Multiple factors are monitored such as curriculum/grade tracking sheets, positive behavior interventions and GED attainment. Appalachian Children’s Home has a successful GED preparation program and a high passing rate. This program provides students the opportunities needed to make a successful transition from the facility to their next placement.

Opportunity for Improvement No. 1

Programs Addressed	Title I, Part A		Alternative Education Programs	
	Title I, Part D		Career and Technical Education	X
	Title II, Part A		Gifted and Talented	
	Title IV, Part A		IDEA	X
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	
<u>Student Services and Plans</u>				
<p>CTE interviews noted a mindset of either college <i>or</i> career for students at Lynn Camp High School. The district is not taking advantage of CTE dual credit opportunities for students.</p> <p>The IDEA program noted many noncompliance issues with student individualized education programs (IEPs). Significant paperwork revisions are needed to ensure students’ needs are met.</p>				
Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)				
<p>The career and technical education program is a critical component in meeting the needs of students in academic achievement, career exploration, career preparation and leadership development. The opportunities available for students help provide successful transitions to postsecondary education, work or the military. It is recommended that the district work with the high schools to review the dual credit opportunities available on KDE’s Dual Credit webpage.</p> <p>The specific areas of noncompliance on IEPs are addressed on the IDEA program monitoring report. The district should work with KDE consultants to address the identified issues.</p>				

2021-2022 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Opportunity for Improvement No. 2

Programs Addressed	Title I, Part A	X	Alternative Education Programs	
	Title I, Part D	X	Career and Technical Education	X
	Title II, Part A		Gifted and Talented	
	Title IV, Part A		IDEA	
	Title V, Part B	X	Preschool	
<p><u>Finance</u></p> <p>Teachers and staff partially funded by Title I, Part D have not completed the appropriate time and effort documentation required of individuals paid fully or partly with federal funds.</p> <p>Several programs noted that funds are not being spent in a timely fashion, including funds reserved for students experiencing homelessness under Title I, Part A as well as Title V, Part B and career and technical education.</p>				
Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)				
<p>The Title I, Part A program identified the time and effort reporting procedures as a strength for the district. The district should consider implementing the same or similar procedures in the Title I, Part D program.</p> <p>Title I, Part A, Title II, Part A, and Title IV, Part A all observed an excellent working relationship between the program coordinator and finance officer as well as effective procedures for purchasing to ensure allowability. It is recommended that the district create a new procedure for monitoring the timely expenditure of funds or incorporate such a component into an existing financial procedure for programs in which this was identified as an area for improvement.</p>				

2021-2022 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Final Overview

The Knox County school district is committed to involving stakeholders in program planning and implementation. The district and schools work to build positive relationships with the community, parents and families. Professional development is a priority in the district and schools work to provide teachers with professional development opportunities that support growth.

Although several members of district and school leadership have not been in their positions long, they are committed to learning about programmatic requirements and best practices. District leadership takes an active role in program implementation by regularly communicating with building leaders and visiting schools.

The focus on student success was evident during the monitoring visit. However, the district does need to strengthen the support provided to special education students and the CTE program. Taking advantage of CTE dual credit opportunities will provide students with additional opportunities upon graduation. By strengthening the IDEA documentation procedures, the district will ensure all needs of special education students are being met.

The district's ability to communicate and collaborate as a team will allow them to expand their existing strengths across additional programs as well as address opportunities for improvement. As discussed in the report, the financial policies currently in place can be expanded to include steps to ensure program funds are spent in a timely fashion.

The monitoring team was able to identify multiple strengths across participating programs. Knox County school district demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement and staff welcomed feedback during interviews. This dedication to growth helps ensure they continue to operate with student success in mind.