

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the 2026 Interim

June 2, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The first meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Education was held on June 2, 2026, at 11:00 AM ET/10:00 AM CT in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Representative James Tipton, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Stephen West, Co-Chair; Representatives Scott Lewis, Co-Chair; James Tipton, Co-Chair; Senators David P. Givens, Jimmy Higdon, Stephen Meredith, Gerald A. Neal, Steve Rawlings, Aaron Reed, Lindsey Tichenor, Gex Williams, Mike Wilson, and Max Wise; and Representatives Tina Bojanowski, Steve Bratcher, George Brown Jr., Emily Callaway, Adrielle Camuel, Mike Clines, Jennifer Decker, Ken Fleming, Vanessa Grossl, David Hale, Kevin Jackson, Candy Massaroni, Bobby McCool, J.T. Payne, Jason Petrie, Steve Riley, Sarah Stalker, Timmy Truett, and Lisa Willner.

Guests: Autumn Rivera, Senior Policy Specialist, Education, National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL); Michael Yoder, Commissioner, Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet; Alisher Burikhanov, Executive Director, Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB); Dr. Ryan Quarles, President, Kentucky Community & Technical College System (KCTCS); Dr. Alicia Crouch, Associate Vice President for Research and Policy Analysis, KCTCS; Jessie Schook, Vice President for Workforce and Economic Development, KCTCS; Dr. Leslie Sizemore, Vice President Workforce and Economic Initiatives, Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE); Dr. Laura Stephenson, Dean, Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment (CAFE), University of Kentucky (UK); Vice President, Land Grant Engagement, UK; Dr. Jennifer Hunter, Associate Dean for Extension, Martin-Gatton CAFE, UK; Dr. Marcus Bernard, Dean, College of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources, Kentucky State University (KSU); Dr. Tyrell Kahan, Associate Extension Administrator, KSU; Micki Ray Marinelli, Chief Academic Officer, Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL), Kentucky Department of Education (KDE); Sarah Medley, Policy Advisor, KDE; Chrystal Rowland, Director of the Division of Program Standards, OTL, KDE; Christie Biggerstaff, Director of Early Literacy, OTL, KDE; Todd Allen, General Counsel, Deputy Commissioner, KDE; Andrea Bartholomew, Director, Early Learning Unit, KDE; and Melody Cooper, Policy Advisor, KDE.

LRC Staff: Yvette Perry, Lauren Busch, Joshua Collins, Emily Wiley, Peter Wright, and Jay Harris.

Workforce Pell Grant Update

Autumn Rivera, Senior Policy Specialist, Education, NCSL; Michael Yoder, Commissioner, Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet; Alisher Burikhanov, Executive Director, KWIB; Dr. Ryan Quarles, President, KCTCS; Alicia Crouch, Associate Vice President for Research and Policy Analysis, KCTCS; Jessie Schook, Vice President for Workforce and Economic Development, KCTCS; and Dr. Leslie Sizemore, Vice President Workforce and Economic Initiatives, CPE, testified regarding the implementation of the Workforce Pell Grant Program.

Responding to Chair Tipton, Ms. Rivera stated that the US Department of Education has finalized the rulemaking process for Workforce Pell Grant eligibility and lifetime Pell Grant eligibility. She further noted some federal concerns regarding a potential funding shortfall for the Pell Grant program.

In response to Representative Bratcher, Ms. Rivera stated that a funding shortfall would not affect how students qualify for Pell Grants.

Responding to Chair Tipton, Mr. Burikhanov stated Kentucky is in a good position to collect eligibility data thanks to the Kentucky Center for Statistics.

Responding to Chair Tipton, Dr. Quarles stated 40,000 students are utilizing Workforce Pell Grant funds and that number will increase. Ms. Crouch responded that KCTCS anticipates more opportunities for students thanks to the Workforce Pell Grant Program.

Responding to Senator Williams, Ms. Crouch stated the eligibility requirements for a Workforce Pell Grant, including the requirement to possess a high school diploma. Individuals who already have a bachelor degree may be eligible to use the new grant program to obtain a short-term certificate.

Responding to Representative Stalker, Ms. Crouch stated that applicants with a GED are eligible for a Workforce Pell Grant.

Dr. Quarles mentioned KCTCS has facilitated roughly 50% of all GEDs in Kentucky and can transition those students into short-term, high-demand, and high-wage credential programs.

Extension Office Update

Dr. Laura Stephenson, Dean, Martin-Gatton CAFE, UK; Vice President, Land Grant Engagement, UK; Dr. Jennifer Hunter, Associate Dean for Extension, Martin-Gatton CAFE,

UK; Dr. Marcus Bernard, Dean, College of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources, KSU; and Dr. Tyrell Kahan, Associate Extension Administrator, KSU, testified regarding cooperative extension programs at UK and KSU.

Responding to Chair Tipton, Dr. Stephenson stated the UK cooperative extension has 4 county boards receiving support from their fiscal court through appropriations and 116 county boards which have a tax base.

Responding to Chair Tipton, Dr. Bernard stated KSU's cooperative extension program has a presence in 70 counties. He further noted that the changes required by 2026 RS SB 185 will have a positive impact on the cooperative extension program, by reinforcing the work KSU has been doing.

Responding to Representative Callaway, Dr. Bernard stated the success stories from the cooperative extension come from urban grower certificate program follow-ups.

Representative Camuel gave her thanks for the initiatives, including Tates Creek Middle School's greenhouse and plant sales.

Responding to Senator Meredith, Dr. Stephenson stated the UK cooperative extension program receives roughly \$10 million from the federal government, \$40 million from state research and mandated programs, and 45% of the program's budget is utilized at the county level. Federal funding used to be at a 1-to-1 match but is now less than 10%.

Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies

Micki Ray Marinelli, Chief Academic Officer, OTL, KDE; Sarah Medley, Policy Advisor, KDE; and Chrystal Rowland, Director of the Division of Program Standards, OTL, KDE, discussed the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Social Studies.

Responding to Chair Tipton, Ms. Marinelli stated KDE defines the standards and learning goals for each child by grade level. There is local flexibility regarding curriculum.

Responding to Senator Rawlings, Ms. Marinelli discussed Kentucky history included in the KAS for social studies.

Responding to Senator Rawlings, Ms. Medley laid out the process on how the KAS are adopted. Ms. Marinelli discussed professional learning supports available to assist teachers with current events and their connections to history.

Responding to Representative Grossl, Ms. Marinelli discussed grade-level specific civics standards, along with the changes to course credit requirements to improve student engagement.

Responding to Chair Tipton, Ms. Marinelli stated that the report reflecting the number of districts utilizing the civics test required by KRS 158.141(1) versus the half credit will be available this fall.

Responding to Senator Williams, Ms. Marinelli informed the committee of the next meeting of the standards assessment process review committee and advised members on how legislators may give feedback for the administrative regulations.

Senator Williams commented on Kentucky's global impact during the 1800s and 1900s.

Responding to Representative Truett, Ms. Marinelli stated that, within the reading and writing document, there are cells that show before-and-after statistics but could investigate a technical adjustment to show each strand of progression. Within professional learning, KDE's consultants will ensure that there are Professional Learning Community (PLC) activities and discussion protocols, to help teachers and leaders understand that progression.

Responding to Senator Tichenor, Ms. Marinelli discussed where professional learning supports and curriculum-based professional learning are within KAS.

Responding to Representative Petrie, Ms. Marinelli discussed ways to provide feedback on KAS during open public comment periods and invited member input at any time during the administrative regulation process.

Responding to Chair Tipton, Ms. Medley testified that the math, library media, and Computer Science standards are in the review process.

Early Literacy Outcomes

Ms. Marinelli, Ms. Rowland, and Christie Biggerstaff, Director of Early Literacy, OOTL, KDE, testified on how the General Assembly's investment in literacy and the Read to Succeed fund is leading to increased literacy outcomes for Kentucky students.

Responding to Representative Jackson, Ms. Marinelli discussed her concerns with the shift of learning and results services (LARS) items last legislative session. Ms. Marinelli discussed 2026 RS HB 253's impact on creating flexible funding for professional learning opportunities.

Responding to Representative Bratcher, Ms. Marinelli stated out of 35 states that were put into recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, Kentucky ranks 5th. Ms. Biggerstaff stated it will take a while to get student level data, but KDE is receiving information on the effectiveness of solutions from superintendents and principals.

Consideration of Referred Administrative Regulations

Todd Allen, General Counsel, Deputy Commissioner, KDE; Andrea Bartholomew, Director, Early Learning Unit, KDE; Melody Cooper, Policy Advisor, KDE, were present to answer any questions pertaining to the administrative regulations.

Responding to Representative Bojanowski, Ms. Cooper stated that 704 KAR 003:410 includes a part that requires programs to have a policy in place to address the individual needs of students.

Responding to questions from Representative Clines, Ms. Bartholomew testified that the language used in 704 KAR 003:410 aligns with preschool statutes. The screening piece of the statute is to help determine whether a student would qualify as a student with a disability. Additionally, adequate time for teachers is decided by the local district. The statute allows curriculum to integrate social and emotional learning.

Responding to Representative Camuel, Ms. Cooper stated KRS 157.3175 allows the board of education to promulgate the regulations for preschool programs.

Responding to Representative Camuel, Ms. Cooper stated the wording changed from Kentucky Certificate of Immunization to a Certificate of Immunization to align with what is required for K-12.

Representative Jackson mentioned the Kentucky 4th grader NAPE scores.

781 KAR 001:040 *Emergency* - Provision of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

781 KAR 001:030 *Emergency* - Order of selection.

781 KAR 001:020 *Emergency* - General provisions for operation of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

781 KAR 001:010 *Emergency* - Office of Vocational Rehabilitation appeal procedures.

781 KAR 001:001 *Emergency* - Definitions.

704 KAR 003:410 *Proposed* - Preschool education program for four (4) year old children.

Actions: Motion was made and seconded to defer 704 KAR 003:410. The motion passed by voice vote. KDE agreed.

704 KAR 003:370 *Proposed* - Kentucky Framework for Personnel Evaluation.

702 KAR 003:130 *Proposed* - Internal accounting.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned.