

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the 2025 Interim

October 14, 2025

Call to Order and Roll Call

The fifth meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Education was held on October 14, 2025, at 11:00 AM 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: Representative James Tipton, Co-Chair; Senator Stephen West, Co-Chair; Senators Danny Carroll, David P. Givens, Stephen Meredith, Steve Rawlings, Aaron Reed, Reginald L. Thomas, Gex Williams, Mike Wilson, and Max Wise; and Representatives Shane Baker, Kim Banta, Tina Bojanowski, Steve Bratcher, George Brown Jr., Emily Callaway, Josh Calloway, Adrielle Camuel, Mike Clines, Jennifer Decker, Steven Doan, Ken Fleming, Daniel Grossberg, Vanessa Grossl, David Hale, Candy Massaroni, Bobby McCool, J.T. Payne, Marianne Proctor, Steve Riley, Rachel Roarx, Sarah Stalker, Aaron Thompson, Timmy Truett, and Lisa Willner.

Guests: Austin Reid, Federal Affairs Advisor, National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL); Dr. Aaron Thompson, President, Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE); Dr. Amanda Ellis, Senior Vice President of Student Access and Success, CPE; Dr. Koffi Akakpo, President, Kentucky State University (KSU); Dr. Marcus Bernard, Dean of the College of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources, KSU; Dr. Maheteme Gebremedhin, Chair of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, KSU; Dr. Buddhi Gyawali, Professor of Geospatial Applications, Human Dimensions and Climate Studies, KSU; Dr. Andrew Ray, Chair of the School of Aquaculture and Aquatic Science, KSU; Dr. Stephen L. Pruitt, President, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC); and Todd Allen, General Counsel, Kentucky Department of Education (KDE).

LRC Staff: Joshua Collins, Emily Wiley, Peter Wright, and Jay Harris.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Co-Chair West, seconded by Representative Decker, to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2025, meeting. The minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

Federal Education Updates

Austin Reid, Federal Affairs Advisor, NCSL, provided a federal education update regarding

Committee meeting materials may be accessed online at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/CommitteeDocuments/28>

H.R. 1.

Responding to Representative Bojanowski, Mr. Reid stated there are effectively two staff members currently working within the Department of Education on Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding, and the staffing impact will be more on the implementation of the IDEA guidance and support.

Responding to Co-Chair West, Mr. Reid stated the error rate means the rate that Medicaid payments for people who were initially determined eligible were ultimately found to be ineligible.

Dual Credit Updates

Dr. Aaron Thompson, President, CPE, and Dr. Amanda Ellis, Senior Vice President of Student Access and Success, CPE, testified on Kentucky's national placement relating to dual credit along with how Kentucky is improving secondary education through dual credit.

Responding to Representative Payne, Dr. Thompson and Dr. Ellis stated they can provide data showing how dual credit courses in high school can help keep students in Kentucky when pursuing postsecondary programs.

Responding to Representative Grossl, Dr. Thompson discussed 2010 RS HB 250, which was created to ensure seamless transferability with credits.

Responding to Senator Thomas, Dr. Thompson defined the differences between retention rate and persistence rate.

Responding to Representative Willner, Dr. Thompson stated they are able to track students from all areas to close gaps and help students with either financial or physical difficulties.

Responding to Representative Callaway, Dr. Ellis provided the structure of scholarships. The dual credit scholarship requirement is to have at least an unweighted GPA of 2.5.

Responding to Senator Williams, Dr. Thompson said dual credit scholarships cover costs for junior and senior dual credit courses. Students can still take dual credit courses as a freshman and sophomore, but the courses are not covered by the scholarship.

Responding to Representative Camuel, Dr. Ellis shared how students use dual credit to get themselves into the work force or pursue degrees.

Responding to Senator Carroll, Dr. Thompson stated there is a more substantial need for wraparound services than there was five years ago. CPE will be tracking it this year due to

funding concerns.

Kentucky State University's Doctoral Program Request

Dr. Koffi Akakpo, President, KSU; Dr. Marcus Bernard, Dean of the College of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources, KSU; Dr. Maheteme Gebremedhin, Chair of the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources, KSU; Dr. Buddhi Gyawali, Professor of Geospatial Applications, Human Dimensions and Climate Studies, KSU; and Dr. Andrew Ray, Chair of the School of Aquaculture and Aquatic Science, KSU, presented a request for an agroecology and sustainability doctoral program and an aquaculture and aquatic science doctoral program at KSU.

Responding to Senator Williams, Dr. Akakpo said they have scholarship money available for the programs. If the state does not approve the programs, students will likely transfer to Georgia because they provide these programs.

Responding to Senator Wise, Dr. Akakpo stated these graduate programs are seeing growth. These doctoral programs will not cost the state money and there are two scholarships available for students. There were increased graduation rates when these programs were provided in Tennessee. Dr. Gebremedhin discussed the importance of ecology in providing stability in agriculture.

Responding to Co-Chair West, Dr. Akakpo said there were 40 graduates from the program last year. Dr. Gebremedhin stated they would start with a small cohort of students rather than overfilling the program.

Responding to Representative Roarx, Dr. Akakpo stated there will be more revenue generated through the scholarships. Dr. Ray stated fresh seafood is one angle but KSU also provides aquaculture and aquatic science programs that partner with public and private entities.

Postsecondary Accreditation

Dr. Stephen L. Pruitt, President, SACSCOC, testified on what SACSCOC provides for postsecondary education.

Responding to Representative Clines, Dr. Pruitt said the institution may recognize teachers seeking to teach dual credit courses for the years they have taught and submit it to SACSCOC for accreditation, instead of requiring additional coursework. There is a policy to allow for this, but it has not been embraced.

Responding to Representative Bratcher, Dr. Pruitt stated he had heard a lot about accreditation restrictions before taking the position and does not want SACSCOC to be

known for restrictions placed on institutions.

Responding to Senator Thomas, Dr. Pruitt said diversity, equity, and inclusion principles have not been in the accreditation standards for at least the past 20 years. For SACSCOC, the goal is for institutions to provide supports and opportunities to students to get degrees or certificates.

Responding to Senator Williams, Dr. Pruitt stated affordability will be a topic to consider in developing new standards. SACSCOC is limited by data systems that do not collect that data. He wants to eventually have a system in place to recognize institutions that remain affordable for everyone.

Consideration of Referred Administrative Regulations

Responding to Representative Massaroni, Todd Allen, General Counsel, KDE, said the reference to medical inspections in 704 KAR 8:050 is from the statute that provides KDE the authority to promulgate the administrative regulation. The body of the administrative regulation does address medical inspections.

704 KAR 008:080 *Proposed* - Required academic standards in career studies and financial literacy.

704 KAR 008:050 *Proposed* - Required Academic Standards for Physical Education.

704 KAR 008:030 *Proposed* - Required Academic Standards for Health Education.

704 KAR 004:010 *Proposed* - Physical education.

702 KAR 007:065 *Proposed* - Designation of agent to manage middle and high school interscholastic athletics.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 1:20 PM.