

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the 2025 Interim

June 24, 2025

Call to Order and Roll Call

The first meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on State Government was held on June 24, 2025, at 11:00 AM in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Michael J. Nemes, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Michael J. Nemes, Co-Chair; Representative DJ Johnson, Co-Chair; Senators Julie Raque Adams, Cassie Chambers Armstrong, Greg Elkins, Keturah Herron, Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Christian McDaniel, Robby Mills, Steve Rawlings, and Lindsey Tichenor; and Representatives Shane Baker, Beverly Chester-Burton, Jennifer Decker, Anne Gay Donworth, Jim Gooch Jr., Peyton Griffiee, Erika Hancock, John Hodgson, Thomas Huff, Mary Beth Imes, Matthew Koch, Matthew Lehman, Chris Lewis, Matt Lockett, Savannah Maddox, Mary Lou Marzian, Marianne Proctor, T.J. Roberts, Aaron Thompson, Joshua Watkins, and Susan Witten.

Guests: Matt Berry, Ph.D., Executive Director, Kentucky Center for Statistics; Denise Lyons, Commissioner/State Librarian, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives; Jacob Fouts, Assistant Director, Division of Fiscal Management, Education and Labor Cabinet; Cali Mills Arnold, Executive Director of Legislative Services, Education and Labor Cabinet; Jean Ruark, Director, Paul Sawyier Public Library; Dave Schroeder, Director, Kenton County Public Library; Jamie Collins, Director, Marion County Public Library; and Jena Scott, Legislative Agent for the Kentucky Library Association and the Kentucky Public Library Association.

LRC Staff: Daniel Carter, Jesse Farler, Christina Gordley, and Peggy Sciantarelli.

Kentucky Center for Statistics - Overview

Matt Berry, Ph.D., Executive Director, provided an overview of the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS). Cali Arnold, Executive Director of Legislative Services, Education and Labor Cabinet, accompanied him. KYSTATS was established in 2013 in KRS Chapter 151B to evaluate education and workforce efforts through data collection to assist policymakers, practitioners, and the general public. The agency is also charged with collecting data in the Kentucky Longitudinal Data System (KLDS) for improvement in the Commonwealth's education system and training programs. KLDS includes data from 26 agencies and 48 data sources. The overview included information on the KYSTATS governing board, FYs 2022-2025 funding, and the procedure for requesting data.

Senator Nemes thanked Dr. Berry for his report. He then spoke about a past instance when his request for information from KYSTATS was denied. Senator Nemes stated his belief that the agency has become more independent and is sometimes reluctant to release data obtained from other entities. He complimented the work and accomplishments of KYSTATS in establishing a system that is a model for other states. He suggested that the agency needs to work in close collaboration with the legislature. Dr. Berry responded that his goal is to be as accessible as possible.

In response to Senator Raque Adams, Dr. Berry said he would not be able to provide the current "real time" number of members in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), since KYSTATS primarily receives annual submissions. They do not receive ongoing submissions of Medicaid data. A one-time project two years ago integrated limited Medicaid data, but KYSTATS does not receive all data of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

In response to Representative Johnson, Dr. Berry stated KYSTATS is exploring the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) but has not integrated AI into its processes. The primary concern is security and privacy. He is not aware of any longitudinal data system that has deployed AI at a significant level.

In response to Senator Mays Bledsoe, Dr. Berry said his agency has 49 total personnel, with 17 assigned to his office. Senator Mays Bledsoe stated she shares Dr. Berry's concerns about privacy and security but is optimistic about the outcomes and opportunities offered by AI. She encouraged him to continue exploring its potential and offered LRC's AI Task Force, which she co-chairs, as a willing partner.

In response to Representative Lehman, Dr. Berry said KYSTATS has a central repository, with a server that links data. It is housed under the umbrella of the Commonwealth of Technology (COT). He explained the process for obtaining various types of data from state agencies.

In response to Representative Watkins, Dr. Berry said "technical debt" is a challenge, but KYSTATS is fortunate to have the expertise of individuals who have the time and knowledge to work with agencies that own the data to ensure that data standards align. He believes the best way the General Assembly can support alignment across agencies is to continue asking questions of KYSTATS and advising the agency when it may be falling short of fulfilling its mission. For clarification, Senator Nemes added that the legislature needs to make sure entities providing the data understand they do not own the information; it is owned by the taxpayer.

In response to Representative Maddox, Dr. Berry explained there are many reasons for the collection of specific data by the Department of Corrections.

In response to Representative Roberts, Dr. Berry stated data security is a primary concern. KYSTATS partners with COT and abides by its standards and policies, and goes beyond that regarding storage and destruction of data. For the last couple of years, KYSTATS has partnered with the Privacy and Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) to review processes and find potential weaknesses or areas for improvement.

In response to Representative Decker, Dr. Berry said KYSTATS has statutory authority to expand the KLDS and to integrate new sources of data. Authority for the agency's activity is also governed by its Board, depending on the scale and scope of the data that is collected.

Kentucky Libraries - Overview

The Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA) and the Education and Labor Cabinet were represented by Denise Lyons, State Librarian and Commissioner; Jacob Fouts, Assistant Director, Division of Fiscal Management; and Cali Mills Arnold, Executive Director of Legislative Services. Ms. Lyons gave an overview of state and federal funds distribution and reporting, and the types of assistance provided to 120 local libraries and state institutional libraries.

KDLA provides access to library resources and services, and ensures government records and activities are documented, preserved, and available to the public. The Division of Library Services specifically supports library services for state employees, the Kentucky Talking Book Library, and consulting services for libraries. The Division of Archives and Records Management provides a variety of records management services, including state, local, and permanent records, as well as assistance with research and genealogy. KDLA provides guidance and training for library administrators and staff, plus governance for library operations, management, construction, technology, finance, data collection, policies, and programming. Libraries provide summer reading programs, STEM/STEAM learning, outreach services, and adult education. Kentucky has received more than \$28 million since 1998 through a federally-funded reimbursement program for technology and communications. KDLA assists libraries with records management, provides reference services to inmates in prison libraries, and provides some funding support for databases through the Kentucky Virtual Library. Kentucky receives grant funds from the Grants to States program through the federal Library Services and Technology Act.

The following members of the Kentucky Library Association (KLA) and the Kentucky Public Library Association (KPLA) discussed the mission, structure, and funding mechanisms of public libraries: Jean Ruark, Director of the Paul Sawyier Public Library; Dave Schroeder, Director, Kenton County Public Library; and Jamie Collins, Director, Marion County Public

Library. They were accompanied by Jena Scott, an associate at Government Strategies LLC. KLA is the parent association for the Kentucky Public Library Association, the Kentucky Association of School Librarians, and the Kentucky Association of College and Research Libraries.

Ms. Ruark stated that KPLA's mission is to grow resilient communities by supporting the development of public library staff and services. Ms. Collins discussed statistics, reporting, and transparency. The KDLA releases comprehensive annual statistical reports. The 2023-2024 report indicates 11.1 million people visited a Kentucky library, more than 118,000 programs were offered, and over 50 percent of Kentuckians are public library cardholders. Wi-Fi sessions increased 43 percent from the previous year, and libraries trained approximately 43,836 people on electronic resources. Ms. Collins also spoke about program offerings and additional services offered by public libraries.

Mr. Schroeder discussed establishment statutes, funding mechanisms, and oversight. Public libraries have been established by various statutes. Most are special purpose governmental entities governed by a board of trustees. Kentucky has 119 library districts. They are primarily funded at the local level and do not receive direct federal or state funding. A list of government and private grants for libraries can be found on the KDLA website.

In response to Representative Donworth's inquiry about state funding of databases, Mr. Schroeder explained the Kentucky Virtual Library is a cooperative arrangement between the Kentucky Department of Education, KDLA, and several other organizations. The Virtual Library leverages funding from the agencies and organizations to provide citizens with access to databases. Many of the databases are workforce related.

Representative Hodgson inquired about the impact on private businesses and the possibility of incurring liability when libraries lend out tools, household items, and equipment. Ms. Ruark said libraries view the lending as a value-added service and a cooperative agreement with communities. Patrons have the option to subsequently purchase items, and there have not been conflicts with local businesses.

Responding to Representative Koch, Mr. Schroeder discussed the history behind 13 of the 119 library districts being locally funded. He noted the 13 locally funded districts had not previously been taxing districts.

In response to Representative Donworth, Ms. Collins discussed various ways libraries partner with and support community groups and organizations. Mr. Schroeder discussed outreach programs and support provided to communities in Kenton County.

Adjournment

There was no further business, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 PM.