



Issues Update

February 1, 2021

Issues Update is a report from the Kentucky Association for Career and Technical Education (KACTE) written by Executive Director Michael R. Stone and shared with members. As needed, *Issues Update* will report on state and federal Career and Technical Education (CTE) policy and legislative developments. KACTE and Stone can be reached at kmstone1951@gmail.com or 502-223-1823.

Budget Is Priority for Reconvened General Assembly

The Kentucky General Assembly reconvenes Feb. 2, continuing the 2021 30-day session, which is set for adjournment in mid-March. The main task facing the legislators is approval of the Fiscal Year 2022 budget that begins July 1, 2021.

During the three week break since the General Assembly recessed, House and Senate conferees have been working on the budget. Both houses passed budgets that mostly continued the current Fiscal Year 2021 spending levels. None of Gov. Andy Beshear's budget recommendations were included. (*Please see article to the right for KACTE's budget requests for CTE in Fiscal Year 2022.*)

Some of the Governor's priorities may be included in the compromise budget the General Assembly will consider, but House and Senate leaders all have said it will be a conservative budget with little revenue or expenditure increases. They voice concern over the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the state's economy and how that may affect revenue. They also did not indicate there would be significant budget cuts.

AS INTRODUCED, Gov. Beshear proposed in **HB192** a \$40 per pupil increase in SEEK funding, but legislators indicated SEEK would be held at the current \$4,000 per pupil level. The governor proposed \$5.2 billion for K-12 education (\$142 million increase) and almost \$851 million (\$5 million increase) for the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS).

The governor's budget proposed increasing overall CTE spending by \$500,000 to \$64 million, but funding for locally operated CTE centers remained flat at \$12 million. Vocational transportation remained flat at \$2.5 million. There were increases proposed for teacher retirement and health insurance. A \$1,000 increase in teacher and school employee salaries was proposed. The Kentucky School for the Deaf and the Kentucky School for the Blind both were earmarked for funding increases.

Whether any of these proposals remain in the legislature-controlled budget will be revealed when the compromise budget is presented by mid-February. The legislature's budget will stand. With super majorities in both houses, Republicans easily can override any gubernatorial vetoes.

KACTE Finalizes CTE Paper for KY General Assembly

CTE, A Relevant Education: Providing an Effective CTE System for Kentucky is a white paper the Kentucky Association for Career and Technical Education (KACTE) wrote in response to a request given by legislators to KACTE's contract Legislative Agent, McCarthy Strategic Solutions. It recommends current funding increases and future organizational structure.

The paper is intended to provide guidance and supportive evidence justifying increased funding for CTE in the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2021. It also offers elements for consideration for CTE's long term funding and organization.

A team of KACTE members representing grassroots CTE professional educators wrote the document, which calls for \$3.5 million additional Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations for equalization of operational funding and \$3 million additional for classroom supplies, equipment and maintenance.

Long term, KACTE recommends exploring an FTE (full-time equivalent) funding model for CTE and consideration of delivery models that will bring school-funding equity and student access to CTE.

The paper notes CTE's history, documents best practices, details funding and equity concerns, and suggests long-term solutions in addition to the funding recommendations for the coming year.

TEACHER PENSION legislation, **HB258**, seems headed for passage. Rep. Ed Massey consulted with educational and other organizations in crafting the proposal, which would continue the current pension system for current employees and retirees, but create a hybrid defined benefit/defined contribution system for all new hires.

Additional legislation that may be considered include **SB25/HB149**, identical bills filed in each house. It

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would allow individuals to create educational opportunity accounts for donations to schools, public or private. The donations could be used in a variety of ways, including tuition, equipment, supplies, and teaching aids. Critics claim the resulting tax deduction will divert money from schools.

SB101 would codify language in the Fiscal Year 2021 budget allowing tech centers moving from state to local control to keep 100 percent of funding in the first year and 75 percent of funding in subsequent years.

If a school district's current per-pupil calculation is less than its 1991-92 allocation, **SB 107** will require the state to make up the difference.

ACCOUNTABILITY WEIGHTS may change if the Kentucky State Board of Education adopts the Kentucky Department of Education's School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council recommendation. The proposal would increase the weight of science, social studies and writing to 30 percent and decrease the weight of postsecondary readiness to 10 percent. The reasoning is if schools are meeting their accountability marks in these subjects as well

Comm. Glass Meets KACTE

Commissioner of Education Jason Glass, Ed.D., met for 30 minutes with the Kentucky Association for Career and Technical Education (KACTE) at its Jan. 21 virtual meeting.

Beginning the discussion thanking teachers for all the work done, especially in the past year, he concluded by observing a sense of "let's do something big for Kentucky, making great learning experiences for students."

He cited Career and Technical Education (CTE) as presenting meaningful experiences that prepare students. "The only thing that matters is what the student experiences," he said. He asked what is the student experiencing and what needs to be done differently to enhance the student experience? He hopes CTE will become more robust as it addresses equity of funding and access for students.

The Kentucky native who returned last year from Colorado, wondered what the educational system will look like post-pandemic. For sure, it accelerated change. How do we prepare kids for that world, he asked? What is the student experiencing, and how do we prepare kids for that world?

He did predict there would continue some non-traditional instruction (NTIO component in education. Some kids may learn better that way, even if it's a relatively small percentage. He felt in-person experiences would be different. "The more we can customize experiences for kids is a good thing," he said.

as in reading and mathematics, the students will be post-secondary ready.

Gov. Beshear created a Commonwealth Education Continuum to help students progress through the educational system and into the workforce by strengthening partnerships and ease transition points. Associate Commissioner for the Office of Career and Technical Education David Horseman is one of 28 members of the group co-chaired by Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman and Council on Postsecondary Education President Aaron Thompson.

Federal Items

Miguel Cardona, Connecticut's Commissioner of Education, is President Joe Biden's nominee for Secretary of Education. He spent 20 years as an elementary school teacher, principal and assistant superintendent of the Meriden, CT, schools system prior to working at the state level. The nomination must be confirmed by the U.S. Senate. The administration also nominated Cindy Marten, superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District, to be Deputy Secretary of Education.

Among the 30 executive orders President Biden issued in his first two weeks in office, one directs the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop evidence-based guidance to help schools and postsecondary institutions reopen and safely conduct in-person instruction. The administration believes reopening schools is an important action to address the pandemic and spur the economy.

Included in President Biden's \$1.9 billion plan to address the COVID-19 pandemic is \$170 billion for K-12 and postsecondary education, which includes \$130 billion to facilitate safely opening schools. The proposal is being considered by the U.S. Congress. The President wants passage as soon as possible, but there are Republican concern about the total cost.

HR447, the National Apprenticeship Act of 2021 would reauthorize the existing law passed in 1937. It includes both pre-apprenticeship and youth apprenticeship programs, authorizing more than \$3 billion to implement.

AdvanceCTE, the association of state CTE directors, released an analysis of state Perkins 5 priorities. Among the findings is 86 percent of state directors reported a moderate or severe CTE teacher shortage in at least one career cluster at the secondary level. It was 60 percent at the postsecondary level. The causes cited for the shortage were competition with the private sector for qualified individuals and many universities closing CTE teacher preparation programs.

AdvanceCTE notes that without a qualified pool of CTE professionals the United States cannot effectively educate learners and prepare the future workforce. Teacher recruitment should emphasize seeking new faculty that is representative of the students' demographics.