



# Issues Update

September 7, 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](mailto:kmstone1951@gmail.com) or 502-223-1823.

## KY Commissioner Considers Future of Education

Much of the discussion among policy makers and legislators over the summer was about the future of education policy, funding and practice in Kentucky.

Commissioner of Education Jason Glass, Ed.D., addressed the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Education and Workforce Council virtually in August, and said he wants to start a conversation on the future of education in Kentucky. He noted the Nov. 1-2 Education Summit that will bring education experts to Louisville to discuss how to build a stronger education system with high standards in Kentucky. Registration is free and open to everyone.

Glass told the more than 50 business representatives on the virtual session the greatest peril is graduating a student who is unemployable. The changes to education must be data driven and acknowledge the forces of automation and globalization. The old paradigm of rote learning is less important, and he expressed skepticism that relying on more tests and accountability measures would pinpoint the changes needed to prepare students for the future. He hoped the discussion would not get sidetracked by politics.

**HE DID EMPHASIZE** the importance of Career and Technical Education (CTE), calling it essential. He mentioned the variety of different CTE entities and funding streams and hoped to see some "systemness," and that experiences and programs are aligned with what employers need.

**(NOTE:** Please see report at right about KACTE Advocacy Planning, which offers suggestions for funding and organizational re-structuring of Kentucky CTE. KACTE, as a Chamber member, submitted a suggestions to strengthen the Chamber's legislative recommendations for the 2022 General Assembly session regarding CTE.)

The immediate future of education funding is the issue facing the General Assembly's School Funding Task Force that is meeting during the legislature's interim session. Task Force members are Co-chairs Sen. Max Wise and Rep. James Tipton, Sens. David Givens, Reginald Thomas and Mike Wilson, and Reps. Kim Banta, Tina Bojanowski and D.J. Johnson. Tipton, speaking at a June virtual meeting of the Chamber's Education and Workforce Council suggested the Task Force's work may be more than a one-year project.

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### KACTE Advocacy Planning

At the August meeting of state government's Consensus Forecasting Group (CFP), the Governor's Office of Economic Analysis reported a record \$1.1 billion surplus at the end of the fiscal year on June 30. There was more than 10 percent revenue growth in both the General Fund and Road Fund tax revenues. A slower growth rate for Fiscal Year 2022 is projected. The CFP will meet again in October and December to set the estimates to be used to plan the next budget.

KACTE Liaison Committee Chair Mike Miller, Principal, Mayfield/Graves County Area Technology Center, will meet with KACTE's contract legislative agent, McCarthy Strategic Solutions, to recommend a plan to be presented at the Sept. 30 KACTE Board to advocate for CTE during the 2022 Kentucky General Assembly session that begins Jan. 4, 2022, and continues for 60 working days. The legislature's main task will be setting the 2022-2024 biennial budget.

KACTE will cite the white paper developed in 2020 to advocate for additional CTE funding from the available surplus and an improved organizational structure. Current CTE initiatives and proven results will be emphasized in the need to continue workforce and economic development.

**CTE, A Relevant Education: Providing an Effective CTE System for Kentucky** can be found at <https://www.acteonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Relevant-Education-Final-1-25-21.pdf>.

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.

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It will look at SEEK and non-SEEK funding encompassing academics and CTE.

Tipton said there were inequities with SEEK funding, but then asked if anything needed to be changed? He asked how student's ability to enroll at any public school, which was approved in **House Bill 563** passed during the 2021 session, will impact funding: How will those dollars flow from one district (of residence) to the enrolled district?

The Kentucky Center for Economic Policy issued a report that although the per-pupil SEEK funding approved by the General Assembly is the highest ever at \$4,000, factoring in inflation state SEEK funding has declined by 22 percent. Compounding education funding according to the Center is wealthy districts have almost \$3,000 more to spend per pupil compared to poorer districts. This presents an equity issue affecting students statewide.

**THE INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE** on Education met Sept. 1 to hear from education leaders regarding COVID-19 pandemic school policies and practices in advance of the special General Assembly session the Governor called to begin Sept. 7. Senate Education Committee Chair Max Wise said he has learned from many conversations with the education community that the goal is to maintain a safe, in-person education calendar.

Representatives of superintendents and school boards argued for funding, staffing and flexibility. The Test-to-Stay program being implemented within the Lake Cumberland Health Department area has shown success. Parents must agree to the testing. To date, it has shown a 92 percent success rate. The claim is mitigation strategies work, indicating community spread is not occurring in schools.

Speaking on KET, Education Committee member Sen. David Givens predicted the General Assembly's special session will focus on local control, non-traditional instruction (NTI) and testing protocols.

Fueling the movement to address the impact of COVID-19 is the learning loss experienced by most students during the pandemic. How, or can, learning loss be recovered? According to a new study, students in the United States returning to classes this fall are 4-5 months behind. That number grows to 5-7 months for students in low-income and minority population areas.

## More Kentucky Reports

Some good news for Kentucky's Teacher Retirement System (TRS) was reported in August with record gains of 29.94 percent in the Retirement Annuity Trust and 31.53 percent in the Health Insurance Trust. Since the 2008 great recession, TRS has earned \$20.4 billion from investments, about a third larger than the average. TRS has \$28 billion in assets, paying \$2.7 billion in benefits to 140,000 yearly.

July testimony before the Interim Joint Committee on State Government and the Public Pension Oversight Board

indicated improved financial positions for the state retirement funds, but they remain underfunded.

**NINE LOCAL AREA VOCATIONAL** Education Centers (LAVECs), better known as Career Technology Centers (CTCs) operated by a local school district, shared \$75 million that can be used for facility renovation or new construction.

A report from the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) indicated students who took dual credit courses in high school before enrolling at Kentucky Community and Technical Colleges were more likely to earn a college credential. For CTE students, those taking dual credit courses increased their probability of earning a 3.0 GPA their first year. Another CPE report showed a bachelor's degree will earn individuals \$1 million more in their lifetimes. A credential or associate degree will increase individual lifetime earnings by \$200,000. CPE is promoting a new interactive tool to obtain data on tuition, debt, financial aid and job openings. The Students Right to Know website is [https://kystats.ky.gov/Reports/Tableau/2021\\_KCSRK](https://kystats.ky.gov/Reports/Tableau/2021_KCSRK).

## Federal Notes

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a Fiscal Year 2022 budget resolution setting the targets for a \$3.5 trillion Build Back Better plan. Appropriation subcommittees were instructed to submit their contributions to the reconciliation bill by Sept. 15, but congressional observers believe that is unrealistic. The Senate has not started work on FY22 appropriations. The new fiscal Year starts Oct. 1.

The House passed FY22 appropriations for education in late July. The total was \$102.8 billion, an increase of \$29.3 billion. Perkins Basic State Grants were given a \$50 million increase for a total of \$1.38 billion. It did include a \$100 million competitive grant program to fund evidence-based middle and high school Career and Technical Education innovation programs.

More details on the Biden Administration budget proposals and congressional actions can be found in the **Issues Update** of June 2, located at: <https://www.acteonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/KY-ACTE-5-Issues-Update-6-2-21.pdf>.

**DR. AMY LOYD** was nominated by President Biden to serve as Assistant Secretary for the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE). She had been serving as acting Assistant Secretary for OCTAE.

Communication and outreach increase awareness of education-to-work pathways according to *ExcelinEd*. More awareness empowers students and families to advocate for high-quality pathways. The report recommends establishing clear definitions and metrics for the pathways, empowering families with information, and provide pathway navigation assistance.