



Commonwealth Education Continuum 2024 Annual Report



Commonwealth
Education Continuum

The Continuum at a Glance

- ▶ **Kentucky is one of only eight states** with a formal P-20 council like the Continuum.
- ▶ **The group is nationally recognized** for collaborative cross-sector strategy and innovation.
- ▶ **Over 1,700 stakeholders have participated** in Continuum workgroups, various interviews, focus groups, and design teams.
- ▶ **Over 80% attendance rate** at quarterly CEC meetings.
- ▶ **The Continuum has published 450+ outreach posts** on social media to increase public awareness and engagement.
- ▶ **The Continuum has developed a real-time data dashboard** to monitor progress in focus areas.

Work Focus by Year

- ▶ **2021:** Early Postsecondary Opportunities, Educator Workforce, Postsecondary Transition
- ▶ **2022:** Ninth Grade on Track, Access to Dual Credit, Gateway Course Completion
- ▶ **2023:** Early Childhood, CEC Data Dashboard
- ▶ **2024:** K–16 Competency Skills, Postsecondary Affordability, Postsecondary Advising, Administrator Support

2024 Membership

Chaired by Lieutenant Governor Jacqueline Coleman, Council on Postsecondary Education President Aaron Thompson, and Commissioner of Education Robby Fletcher, the CEC includes 28 members representing early childhood, K–12, postsecondary, and other government agencies and employers.

Mason Dyer, Association of Kentucky Independent Colleges and Universities

Justin Mitchell, Education Professional Standards Board

Lynn Baker, Kentucky Governor’s Office of Early Childhood

Rhonda Caldwell, Kentucky Association of School Administrators

Jim Flynn, Kentucky Association of School Superintendents

Sharon Porter-Robinson, Kentucky Board of Education

Diana Woods, Kentucky Board of Education

Ashli Watts, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

John Hughes, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

Ryan Quarles, Kentucky Community and Technical College System

Madison Silvert, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

Beth Hargis, Office of Career and Technical Education, Kentucky Department of Education

Eddie Campbell, Kentucky Education Association

Jo Carole Ellis, Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority

James Tipton, Kentucky House of Representatives

Kerri Schelling, Kentucky School Boards Association

Heather Bushelman, Kentucky School Counselor Association

Steve West, Kentucky Senate

Jamie Link, Kentucky Labor Cabinet

Alisher Burikhanov, Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board

Debbie Dennison, Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board

Kathleen Christian, 16th District Parent Teacher Association

Solyana Mesfin, postsecondary student representative

Jenny Sawyer, University of Louisville

Corinne Murphy, Western Kentucky University

Robert Jackson, Murray State University

Robert Hayes, University of Kentucky

John Gregory, Office of Adult Education, Department of Workforce Investment, Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

Matt Berry, Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS)

CEC Data Team

Dede Connor, Office of Education Technology, Kentucky Department of Education

Travis Muncie, Data and Advanced Analytics, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

Alicia Crouch, Research and Policy Analysis, Kentucky Community and Technical College System



About the Continuum

The Commonwealth Education Continuum (CEC) – Kentucky’s P-20 Council – was launched in 2021 to address persistent gaps and transitions in Kentucky’s education system, from early childhood through college and into the workforce. This cross-sector initiative brings together education leaders, policymakers and others to build a more seamless education pipeline that supports stronger outcomes for students.

CEC’s Mission

The Continuum exists to remove barriers throughout the system to ensure students can access a seamless P-20 education journey. The Continuum supports actions that lead to Kentuckians earning the necessary degrees and credentials to succeed in the workforce, elevate our communities, and increase economic opportunity.

CEC’s Vision

To be the most seamless education system in the nation serving Kentuckians from cradle to career with agility, equity, and opportunity.



Why This Work Matters

Kentucky's future depends on a well-educated population. Unfortunately, many students, especially those from low-income backgrounds and underserved communities, are falling through the cracks in Kentucky's education pipeline. The mission of CEC is improve these transition points and encourage college-going and completion by:

- Reducing barriers to success
- Building bridges between education sectors
- Ensuring every student has a path to credential of value to their families, communities and workplace.

Placeholder - anything you want to advertise or data highlight



Our Strategic Areas of Focus in 2024

► Postsecondary Advising

Many students lack access to high-quality, personalized postsecondary advising. In response, CEC, through the leadership of CPE, launched the Kentucky Advising Academy (KAA) in 2022 to deliver meaningful professional development to advisors, counselors, and FRYSC coordinators. High-quality advising at the K-12 level is essential in closing information gaps and supporting more students in transitioning to postsecondary education. Since 2022, KAA has:

- Reached over 80% of Kentucky school districts with professional learning, webinars, and support.
- Developed the Kentucky Postsecondary Advising Framework in partnership with K-12 and higher education.
- Created a College and Career Advising Toolkit—accessed 9,500+ times.
- Hosted monthly advising webinars viewed 400+ times, featuring 16 KY colleges and 6 school districts.
- Awarded \$500,000+ in grants awarded to districts for expanding advising services.
- Presented to 15+ national and state professional groups.
- Facilitated a Community of Practice with 23 cross-sector members.



► Early Postsecondary Opportunities

Dual credit and other early postsecondary opportunities (EPO) save students time and money, and increases college readiness. Investing in EPOs is a significant undertaking for states, but these programs have been proven to reduce the time and cost to degree. They help build momentum for college success, and they increase educational opportunity for underrepresented and lower income students. In response, CEC has:

- Spearheaded the creation of the nation's first dual credit attainment goal: 50% of Kentucky high school graduates complete at least one dual credit course.
- Created the Early Postsecondary Opportunities Toolkit (330 active users).
- Developed a Dual Credit Community of Practice with 60+ members across various education and government sectors.
- Awarded \$86,000+ in grants awarded to 33 programs to support dual credit success.
- Advocated and supported state-funded dual credit scholarships administered through the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) (\$21.5m in 2023).

Placeholder - anything you want to advertise or data highlight



► Summer Bridge Programs

Summer bridge programs are pre-college experiences designed to help incoming students transition successfully into postsecondary education. These programs help level the playing field by providing resources and support to students who may not have had access to college-readiness programming in high school. Key outcomes:

- 1,200+ students participated in 40 CEC-sponsored programs at 27 institutions (2021–22) and enrolled the following fall.
- Since 2022, CEC has awarded \$6.5 million in grants to campuses to support summer bridge efforts; and programs generated over \$315,000 in additional tuition revenue from returning students..
- Bridge students had higher fall-to-fall persistence rates across all student groups: academically underprepared, low-income and underrepresented minorities. Six institutions achieved 85%+ persistence for bridge students in at least one year.
- KCTCS programs were especially effective. Twelve of the 17 programs over the two years analyzed had higher fall-to-fall persistence rates for summer bridge students than the overall freshman class.

► FAFSA Completion

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) completion is a critical step in terms of college access and success. Completing the FAFSA is the key to accessing federal grants, loans, and work-study, as well as state scholarships and institutional aid. For example, students can't receive a Pell Grant (up to \$7,395/year in 2024–25) or Kentucky-specific aid (e.g. CAP grant and Work Ready Kentucky scholarships) without it. FAFSA completion also is a strong predictor of college enrollment, particularly for lower income and underrepresented students. CEC partners have led efforts to elevate the importance of the FAFSA completion and improve completion rates including:

- KHEAA established a state-wide partnership team focused on expansion of FAFSA communications and increased completion rates.
- KHEAA shared web-based resources, onsite FAFSA face-to-face support locations, and training opportunities to help promote FAFSA completion.
- KAA and the KHEAA outreach team collaborated to share resources and spread information to stakeholders for increased communication to students, families, and school staff for support.

- GEAR UP KY and KHEAA collaborated on a television commercial to promote FAFSA. It has played on public television over 137,000 times and continues to run.

► Educator Workforce

Improving the educator workforce (teachers and school leaders) is a key priority of the CEC. A strong teacher and school leader pipeline leading to greater success of Kentucky's students and schools is essential for an effective education system. Among the year's successes in this area include:

- EPSB extended Praxis test eligibility from 5 to 10 years, improving teacher candidate retention.
- The University of Louisville's C4 Summer Bridge Program for aspiring educators achieved a 97% retention rate.
- A CEC workgroup completed a statewide study of principal preparation and support, leading to detailed recommendations for the state and districts related to principal preparation programs and ongoing professional support for aspiring, novice and experienced principals.

► Futuriti: A Career and College Planning Platform

Futuriti is a one-stop, user-friendly online career and education planning platform created through a partnership between CEC, CPE, KDE, and the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYStats). Futuriti helps users connect education choices with real job outcomes. It is designed to encourage early and informed decision-making, support Kentucky's goal of aligning talent development with economic growth, and promote greater access to postsecondary and career information. Key information about Futuriti:

- Launched in the winter of 2025, the site was designed collaboratively by CPE, KDE, and KYSTATS, with input from over 1,200 stakeholders, including students, career counselors, and employers.
- It features data on 700+ career paths, wages, and job demand; college cost, completion, and debt outcomes by institution; and all majors and pathways offered across KY public and private institutions and high schools
- The site is being promoted through middle/high schools, Kentucky Career Centers, and adult education offices.



Our Policy Priorities Moving Ahead

Over the past four years, the CEC has worked to break down existing silos within the government and our schools and colleges to improve educational opportunity and success for Kentucky's students. The key priorities and strategies of the CEC have evolved in response to the state's needs and priorities of the various partners.

As we move into the second quarter of the 21st century, the CEC will build on the momentum of the last four years with a policy and program focus in the following areas:

- **Postsecondary Affordability:** Expand access to financial aid, improve FAFSA completion rates, and strengthen financial literacy.
- **Educator Pipelines:** Implement recommendations of the recent principals study and support effective practices to strengthen the teacher and principal workforce.
- **Dual Credit and Bridge Programs:** Scale access for low-income, rural students and other underrepresented students.
- **Data:** Leverage the CEC dashboard, and data from partner agencies and organizations to target strategies and monitor progress.
- **Career-Aligned Advising:** Expand use of Futuriti and KAA tools to help students make informed choices about college and career.

The CEC's approach centered on collaboration and evidence-based strategies is making a difference. From helping increase dual credit participation to building advising frameworks, to elevating conversations about issues facing Kentucky students, to building a consensus among disparate groups and individuals, the CEC is helping more Kentuckians move seamlessly from school to college to career. With continued investment and leadership, the CEC can help Kentucky build a system where every learner has the opportunity to succeed.



Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
100 Airport Road, Third Floor
Frankfort, KY 40601
cpe.ky.gov