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New KDE task force will aid districts during COVID-19 closure period

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New KDE task force will aid districts during COVID-19 closure period

(FRANKFORT, KY) – The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has formed the Education Continuation Task Force, a group that will serve as a guiding coalition to help facilitate the delivery of services to Kentucky students during the current period of school closure.

Interim Education Commissioner Kevin C. Brown announced the formation of the task force March 16. He said it will meet virtually at least once a week to ensure Kentucky's school districts have knowledge of and access to all available resources, both educational and otherwise, during this closure period.

This task force will focus on providing timely information, research and instructional resources to school districts as they deal with a potentially unprecedented length of school closure. It also will provide information and feedback to schools and district on at least a weekly basis.

“While Kentucky is way ahead of other states with our Non-Traditional Instruction Program, we can always do more to assist districts, particularly during a time of crisis,” Brown said.

The task force will include representatives of Kentucky’s educational cooperatives, educational partner organizations, Kentucky Educational Television, the Southern Regional Education Board and other relevant partners. KDE’s eight associate commissioners will lead subgroups that will coordinate their offices’ responsibilities.

“I appreciate the willingness of our partners to step up and help us assist our districts and students during this time,” Brown said. “Just like a family, Kentucky’s education community always rallies to do what’s best for kids.”

The Southern Regional Education Board works to strengthen student learning in the 16 states it serves, and its president, former Kentucky Education Commissioner Stephen Pruitt, said its role with this task force will be to help educators share best practices and resources that are backed by research.

“The hope is that we’re able to supply quality instructional time to every student to make sure that they’re able to keep up,” Pruitt said. “It’s important that our states step up to the plate in a time of crisis to make sure our students don’t miss any instructional time, and Kentucky has a rich history of doing that.”

During this closure period, much of the instruction in Kentucky’s schools is occurring under the Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) Program.

As of today, 171 of Kentucky’s 172 school districts, Kentucky School for the Blind and Kentucky School for the Deaf are utilizing or plan to utilize the NTI Program. Eighty-three districts were approved to participate in the NTI Program during the 2019-2020 school year prior to the start of the school year. Over the past week, another 88 districts have applied or will apply for a waiver opportunity that would allow them to use the program.

“I fully anticipate that by Friday we will have all 172 districts on board for delivery of NTI during school closure due to COVID-19,” Brown said. “This represents tremendous work on the part of district administrators and teachers over the past week in getting prepared for closure.”

Kentucky Department of Education

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