

BCPS honored with state strategic priority award

FRANKFORT – The Bullitt County Public Schools (BCPS) were recognized with the Kentucky Board of Education's (KBE's) 2025 Kevin C. Brown Strategic Priority Award at its Feb. 5 regular meeting.

The district was recognized for using partnerships to meet local goals aimed at ensuring success for every student.

"We are deeply honored to be selected for the Kevin C. Brown Strategic Priority Award and especially grateful to receive an award that bears the name of a leader whose service to Kentucky students exemplified clarity, courage and a steadfast commitment to doing what's right for kids," said Superintendent Dr. Jesse Bacon. "This recognition affirms the intentional work our district has undertaken – hand-in-hand with families, staff, students and community partners – to clearly define what student, school and district success looks like for our community and to hold ourselves accountable to those expectations."

"We are proud of the collective commitment across Bullitt County Public Schools to create learning experiences that are relevant, authentic and joyful, and to build a local accountability system that brings transparency, trust and actionable insight to the work of continuously improving outcomes for every learner."

The award is named for Kevin C. Brown, current general counsel for Jefferson County Public Schools, who previously held several



prominent roles at the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). He served as interim commissioner of education from December 2019 to September 2020, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Bullitt County Schools are demonstrating the vision of United We Learn – Kentucky's vision of the future of education – as they form partnerships to help prepare today's students for their future success," said Commissioner of Education Robbie Fletcher.

"On behalf of the board and the Kentucky Department of Education, we're proud of the work being done in Bullitt County and their commitment to being All In for student success."

The 2025 award recognizes a public school district that has demonstrated a strong commitment to developing and/or implementing a localized accountability system.

Criteria for the award included:

Notable efforts in supporting the development and/or successful implementation of localized accountability systems.

Evidence of localized co-creation to define student success. This includes strong consideration of parental engagement, community partnerships and non-academic factors affecting school quality and the overall schooling experience in the development of the local accountability system.

Evidence of collective commitment to create learning experiences that are relevant, authentic and joyful for every learner. This includes efforts to design and promote vibrant learning experiences for all students, as well as professional development and support for staff focused on vibrant learning experiences.

Concerned that test scores alone were an incomplete picture of success, education leaders in Bullitt County issued a districtwide call to action in

2016, asking "What are we missing?" and "Which measures will truly reflect life-ready graduates?" Over the next two years, teachers, parents, students, business partners and community members joined together to draft the Board's Aspiration Statements, Core Values and Graduate Profile, anchored in real stories of local learners.

"That collaborative effort led to cohort-based professional learning and the launch of the Community Collaborators for Innovative Learning Team in 2021 – culminating in fall 2024 with the formal establishment of the Community-Based Accountability (CBA) Steering Committee," wrote Jason Adkins, chief executive officer and director of development at the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC), and Kathy House, chief of educator

success at OVEC, in their nomination letter. "The district didn't just open the front door to community input – it invited the community to help

redesign the house. BCPS recruited a 40-member committee that reflected the full spectrum of its community."

The CBA Steering Committee began with a shared purpose for accountability rooted in trust, vision and community values. The district designed each session with intentionality, balancing structure, reflection and responsiveness to ensure participants felt seen, heard and valued.

Every meeting began with a community builder rooted in the district's Graduate Profile or Core Values. These short reflection prompts and table conversations created the psychological safety needed for participants to speak honestly, challenge assumptions and build trust across roles, the nominators wrote.

Each session was dedicated to co-creation of a refined set of

Community-Based Accountability Pillars for Bullitt County's accountability system: Student Learning, Fiscal and Operational Care, Life Readiness, Engaged and Well-Rounded Students, Community Collaboration and Engagement, and Student Safety and Well-Being.

Expectations for each pillar were identified through concrete descriptions of what it looks like when the pillar is alive in the system.

Each session ended with a reflection, as participants noted what was working and what could be improved. This reinforced that this was their process, not just the district's. This on-going process was

shared with the wider community.

As the school district moved beyond compliance to embrace life readiness, authentic learning experiences shifted from rare exceptions to everyday practice, the nominators wrote. Through cohort-based professional learning, teachers have launched authentic learning experiences that immerse students in real-world challenges, culminating in vibrant student exhibitions where learners showcase their work to peers, family and community partners.

"Early indicators show this student-centered shift is fostering deeper connections between learning and life: attendance at exhibitions is up, survey feedback highlights increased motivation, and students report greater confidence in their own learning," Adkins and House wrote.

"As BCPS continues to refine its local indicators, the true impact will be measured not only in traditional data points, but also those representing the curiosity, agency and community-minded spirit of its learners."

"The district is finalizing its locally co-created accountability pillars and launch of a public-facing dashboard, mapping each pillar to clear, measurable indicators. Steering committee subgroups will partner with district data teams to define 'student-friendly' metrics for everything from Life Readiness to Community Collaboration, ensuring the dashboard speaks in plain language and invites ongoing feedback."

WEAPONS

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Bacon said a community survey would be sent to make sure there is support for the detection machines.

The board gave its approval for the district to seek requests for proposals.

The purchase and instal-

lation would be followed by training.

The goal is to start the program by the beginning of the next school year in August.

In response to a question from board member Nita Neal, Bacon said the Montgomery County system worked quickly. If there was a student who showed a detection of a weapon, there was an

opportunity to get rid of the weapon before any other action was taken.

Sarah Smith, who leads the district's Safe School program, said that backpacks would be scanned and students could be made to walk through the line a second time.

There is no physical pat down of any student, said Smith.

Bacon said there would

have to be policies set up for those who visit the schools during the day.

And Smith said another advantage to the system is that software could be updated to detect other materials. And they can be designed to detect certain types of vape materials.

The board voted unanimously to allow the district to move forward with the weapons detention plan.

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Tues. & Thurs.8:30AM

Sunday Confessions

8:15-8:45

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