



Issues Update

December 17, 2015

Issues Update is a report from the Kentucky Association for Career and Technical Education (KACTE) written by Executive Director Michael R. Stone and presented on its website, www.kacteonline.org. 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 kmstone@mis.net or 502-223-1823.

CTE Among Issues Facing Legislators During 2016 Session

Statements offered at two recent events indicate Career and Technical Education (CTE) will continue to receive emphasis both within the Kentucky Department of Education and from the Kentucky General Assembly.

Commission of Education Stephen Pruitt, Ph.D., said at the Dec. 10, 2015, meeting of the CTE Advisory Committee he is more than a supporter of CTE; "I'm a promoter (of CTE)." He said KDE, within the context of the newly adopted federal re-write of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act -- *the Every Student Succeeds Act* -- must make sure CTE has a place to help kids get from school to a career, making sure there are no unintended consequences. He saw an "incredible opportunity," adding that "I don't see other states have the reach we have through the ATCs (Kentucky TECH system of Area Technology Centers)."

ESSA Is a 'Game Changer'

Pruitt reiterated his opinion that ESSA is game-changing legislation. Speaking at the 2015 Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Legislative Preview held on Dec. 14, 2015, in Lexington: "It is an opportunity to bring all shareholders together to build an accountability system," explaining he uses shareholders, not stakeholders, because everyone shares in addressing educational issues. In answering a question about KDE's budget priorities, he started with CTE. "I value the opportunity CTE gives students. CTE in the department lets us think about educating the whole child."

U.S. Congressman Andy Barr (District 6, centered around Lexington) also stressed at the Chamber Legislative Preview the importance of Congress passing ESSA. He noted ESSA was a bipartisan, bicameral piece of legislation signed into law by President Obama on Dec. 10. Barr called it the largest devolution of federal power to the states.

According to the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE), which supported passage of ESSA, CTE now will be included as a core academic subject. CTE will be incorporated in determining school success, using career readiness indicators in accountability systems. It will enhance career guidance programs and encourage professional development efforts to integrate academics in CTE programs.

Budget to Dominate 2016 GA Session

Budget issues facing the 2016 Kentucky General Assembly, which begins its 60-day session on Jan. 5, were mentioned in almost every presentation at the Chamber Legislative Preview. Several speakers mentioned CTE as one focus area, and some additionally cited CTE-related topics of economic development, workforce development, and job creation. Governor Matt Bevin, in his closing address, cited two areas of emphasis: education and infrastructure. He suggested postsecondary funding should be outcomes based. Attention to infrastructure likely will impact CTE in developing the workforce for building and maintaining the infrastructure.

The elephant noted in all the budget comments was the state retirement systems for teachers and state employees. Most indicated continued funding of the Annual Retirement Contribution (ARC) contained in the 2013 agreement regarding the Kentucky Retirement System for general state employees puts that issue on a path to resolution. However, Gov. Bevin said the state has to move to a defined contribution retirement system for future hires, saying the demographics of the workforce demand it.

KTRS Will Be Critical Issue

The Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System (KTRS) is a different problem. Its \$19 billion liability must be addressed. Representative John (Bam) Carney, a member of the House Education Committee who works in educational administration, said he could not reveal specifics, but there was a plan forthcoming that will be "viable, doable and with shared sacrifice." Senate President Pro-Tem David Givens, whose wife is a teacher, said legislators are working vigorously to come up with a solution. He added there likely will be changes to KTRS, "but with changes, we've got to find ways to pay teachers more."

Legislative speakers pointed out that between new revenue growth and carry-forward reserves, the General Assembly will have more than \$1 billion to appropriate than in the last biennium. However, the two retirement issues, plus Medicaid expansion, compensation for the Kentucky State Police, postsecondary and K-12 education needs, and other requests far outstrip the amount of money available.

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Finding additional revenue will not be easy. Speakers said tax reform would be incremental. Two speakers mentioned expanded gambling, with Speaker of the House Greg Stumbo saying 70 percent of the resulting revenue to the state would be directed toward education. Several commented on efforts to spur economic development, with a growing economy and more jobs resulting in more revenue to the state. Representative Carney said, "The key is to continue to create revenue; can't create revenue without an educated workforce."

Funding for CTE

Representative Carney made a direct plea for CTE funding, asking the business community at the Chamber Legislative Preview to support the KDE budget request. Adopted by the Kentucky State Board of Education as one of its funding priorities in the 2016-18 biennium, the CTE funding request is:

- A \$30 million bond issue to upgrade equipment to support instruction linked to regional and state economic sectors. This requires about \$2.5 million in annual debt service.
- \$1 million to reimburse industry certification testing.
- \$6.3 million to enhance Locally Operated Centers.
- \$1 million to pilot four regional technical centers.
- \$3 million for professional development.

The budget request was sent to the Governor's office, and Gov. Bevin will submit an Executive Branch budget proposal to the General Assembly in January. The State Board of Education included a plea to retain the basic SEEK funding level. Additionally, it asked for funds to expand pre-school eligibility to 200 percent of the poverty level, develop new assessments in science and social studies and address enhancements to English/language arts and math assessments, increase SEEK transportation funding to 80 percent, and increase Education Recovery staff to support low-achieving schools.

CTE, even if not directly referenced, surfaced throughout the Chamber Legislative Preview. The panel on health-care issues noted the lack of trained instructors for nursing and allied health fields. Senator Max Wise, during the Education panel, said he hoped the "stigma" could be removed from vocational jobs, with programs keying on the right professions and the right directions. Newly elected State Auditor Mike Harmon said, "We need to encourage people to enter the trades."

Other Educational Issues

Momentum appears to be growing for charter school legislation, although speakers at the Chamber Legislative Preview stressed it would be public, not private, charter schools. Commissioner Pruitt said he could support charter schools in the right situation and if well planned. Both Commissioner Pruitt and Rep. Carney addressed a

question about moving away from Common Core. The Commissioner said with revisions made since its adoption in Kentucky in 2009, it's not Common Core in Kentucky any more. He said teachers need standards to know what they will be held accountable for teaching. Representative Carney suggested there were more important issues facing the state than Common Core. He said the power still is with the site-based council. Standards are just a target. Regarding postsecondary education, the only specific topic discussed was developing a performance-based funding system.

CTE already is the subject of several bills pre-filed for the 2016 General Assembly Session.

- **BR250** (Rep. Belcher) would grant career ready status to any student scoring a 36 on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB).
- **BR334** (Rep. Imes) would re-establish a general election for the Commissioner of Education.
- **BR369** (Sen. Julian Carroll) is a resolution encouraging expansion of collaborative efforts in support of CTE.
- **BR462** (Sen. Owens) would limit testing to no more than 5 percent of a student's instructional time.
- **BR854** (Rep. Denham) would permit limited use of private vehicles to transport students.
- **BR856** (Rep. Smart) would establish a minimum of 60 minutes each day for teacher non-instructional time.

OCTE Sets Strategic Priorities

At the Dec. 10, CTE Advisory Committee meeting, Laura Arnold, who is serving as the interim director of CTE, reviewed the Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) 2015-16 strategic priorities. There are four areas of concentration.

Effective CTE Programs of Study -- Among the efforts will be determining relevant pathways, including creating frameworks and structures to develop the pathways. Key will be determining what success looks like. Other areas are instructional support tools for teachers, shareholder partnerships, and industry needs alignment and workforce sector strategies.

Career Readiness Accountability -- This priority focuses on working with shareholders from business and industry to review the Kentucky Occupational Skill Standards Assessment (KOSSA), industry certifications, ACT WorkKeys, and accountability monitoring and program improvement processes.

Professional Learning for All Shareholders -- In addition to Technical Upgrade Training and the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System implementation, this strategy will examine teacher instruction programs and preparation programs for occupational-based teachers.

Advocacy for Rigorous and Relevant CTE -- This area will address outreach training for shareholder groups, the economic competitiveness agenda, Career and Technical Student Organization integration, and CTE funding needs.