

2nd Annual Student Access Summit

ABCs of Student Access:

Accelerating Access, Breaking Barriers and Creating Connections

November 2, 2026

Knicely Conference Center, Bowling Green

CPE | HIGHER EDUCATION Matters

NOTES

Futuriti

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From career advising to financial aid tips and tricks, to student recruiting, students across the state are using Kentucky's own college and career ecosystem to make data-informed decisions.

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AGENDA-AT-A-GLANCE

Time (CT)	Session	Location
7:30-8:30 a.m.	**Registration, Continental Breakfast & Exhibit Hall Opening**	West Lobby
8:30-8:50 a.m.	**Opening Remarks** Welcome to the 2nd Annual Student Access Summit	Ballroom 208
8:50-9:35 a.m.	**Keynote Address** Accelerating Access to Postsecondary Education	Ballroom 208
9:45-10:45 a.m.	**Breakout Sessions – Round #1** Behind the Walls, Beyond the Barriers: Designing Access for Every Student Building Brighter Futures with the Predictors of Post-school Success CLIMB 2.0: A Collaborative Model for Student Access & Success From Framework to Practice: Introducing the GPS Advising Toolkit	 Rm 112 Rm 163C Rm 208GH Rm 208IJ
11:00-12:00 p.m.	**Breakout Sessions – Round #2** Data-Informed, Student-Focused: Efficient & Proactive Enrollment Strategies From Classroom to Career: Building Professionalism, Breaking Barriers College Access Begins in Middle School From Access to Action: Rethinking How We Support Military-Related Students	 Rm 112 Rm 163C Rm 208GH Rm 208IJ
12:00-12:45 p.m.	**Networking Lunch**	Ballroom 208
12:45-1:15 p.m.	**Special Announcement: A New Futuriti Partnership**	Ballroom 208
1:15-2:00 p.m.	**Lunch Keynote** Fire & Glory: Breaking Barriers Through Resilience, Purpose, and Leadership	Ballroom 208
2:15-3:15 p.m.	**Breakout Sessions – Round #3** Beyond Accommodations: Creating Connected Student Access Building a Statewide College-Going Culture From Connection to Career: CTE, Early Warning & Student Persistence From Exploration to Action: Building a Culture of Postsecondary Advising	 Rm 112 Rm 163C Rm 208GH Rm 208IJ
3:30-4:30 p.m.	**Closing Session** Creating Connections from High School to Workforce: Early Advising Strategies for Statewide Success	Ballroom 208
4:15-4:30 p.m.	**Closing Remarks** Breaking Barriers Together, Accelerating Success: Closing Remarks and Celebrating IPSL Class of 2026	Ballroom 208

Futuriti KAA Kentucky Advising Academy gear up kentucky CPE HIGHER EDUCATION Matters

KENTUCKY STUDENT ACCESS SUMMIT

Monday, November 2, 2026

8:30-8:50 a.m.
Ballroom 208

Welcome Remarks

WELCOME TO THE 2ND ANNUAL STUDENT ACCESS SUMMIT

How do we turn the promise of higher education into a proactive reality for every student? This opening session frames the 2nd Annual Student Access Summit by exploring Kentucky's evolving postsecondary landscape through the ABCs of Student Access. Grounded in landmark statewide momentum—including the 2026 passage of the My Kentucky Future Act, which empowers institutions to proactively notify students of college eligibility—this session sets our shared vision for breaking barriers and expanding opportunity.



Dr. Dawn CheNeen Offutt
Executive Director for Student Access
Council on Postsecondary Education



Dr. Aaron Thompson
President
Council on Postsecondary Education

8:50-9:35 a.m.
Ballroom 208

Opening Keynote

ACCELERATING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

As postsecondary options expand, clear and straightforward enrollment processes are vital to helping students and families plan for the future. This session will provide a national overview of proactive and direct admissions models designed to simplify the application experience and reduce unnecessary administrative steps. Attendees will explore practical frameworks for making postsecondary options clear, transparent, and actionable for every student preparing for the transition to higher education.



Dr. Taylor Odle
Assistant Professor of Educational Policy Studies
University of Wisconsin-Madison

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KENTUCKY STUDENT ACCESS SUMMIT

Monday, November 2, 2026

9:45-10:45 a.m. CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS - ROUND 1

Please choose one of the four breakout sessions to attend; sessions do not repeat.

Room 112

BEHIND THE WALLS, BEYOND THE BARRIERS: DESIGNING ACCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT

What can students facing some of the greatest barriers to higher education teach us about access for everyone? Through the experiences of incarcerated college students, this interactive session explores what happens when traditional pathways to college are difficult or unavailable. Participants will look beyond the prison walls to identify barriers within our own systems and consider how designing access around students with the greatest challenges can create stronger pathways for every student.

- *Christy Kissick-Arnett, MSW, Prison Education Coordinator, Maysville Community and Technical College*

Room 163C

BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES WITH THE PREDICTORS OF POSTSCHOOL SUCCESS

What key experiences best prepare students with disabilities for life after high school? Backed by research, this session explores the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition's Predictors of Postschool Success - evidence-based factors linked to positive outcomes in employment, postsecondary education, and independent living. In this interactive session, participants will evaluate school, family, and community practices to move from awareness to action, learning how to embed these predictors to boost student access, engagement, and long-term independence.

- *Magan Gaddis, Coaching Coordinator, Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Early Learning*
- *Tracy Parks, Coaching Coordinator, Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Early Learning*

Room 208 GH

CLIMB 2.0: A COLLABORATIVE MODEL FOR STUDENT ACCESS & SUCCESS

In rural Kentucky, access to college and rewarding careers can feel out of reach. CLIMB 2.0 addresses this challenge by connecting high school students to behavioral health career pathways through cross-sector partnerships among secondary schools, higher education, and industry leaders. By combining early college credit, industry-recognized credentials, and hands-on experience, the initiative reduces barriers in under-served communities—empowering students to build meaningful postsecondary success while actively building the region’s essential healthcare workforce.

- *Josh Adams, Rural Outreach Coordinator, UK Center of Excellence in Rural Health*
- *Jan Goldman, Senior Fellow, Council on Postsecondary Education*

Room 208 IJ

FROM FRAMEWORK TO PRACTICE: INTRODUCING THE GPS ADVISING TOOLKIT

Kentucky is developing a GPS Advising Toolkit to help first-year and dual credit advisors integrate Growth Mindset, Purpose, and Sense of Belonging into daily practice. Building on the GPS framework's success with gateway faculty, this toolkit offers practical strategies for supporting student transitions. Participants will explore the toolkit, examine key activities, and discover how GPS-informed advising helps students connect academic choices to long-term goals while considering how to adapt these resources for their own institutions.

- *Ashley O'Neil, Associate Director, Kentucky Student Success Collaborative, CPE*
- *Fallon Willoughby, KYSSC Senior Fellow & Assistant Professor, Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College*

KENTUCKY STUDENT ACCESS SUMMIT

Monday, November 2, 2026

11:00-12:00 p.m. CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS - ROUND 2

Please choose one of the four breakout sessions to attend; sessions do not repeat.

Room 112

DATA-INFORMED, STUDENT-FOCUSED: EFFICIENT & PROACTIVE ENROLLMENT STRATEGIES

Students often encounter postsecondary barriers not because resources are missing, but because institutional communication is fragmented. This session will highlight how Somerset Community College leverages data-informed strategies to align recruitment, financial aid, and advising into a unified engine driving 10% enrollment growth for Fall 2026. Participants will explore how cross-departmental messaging eliminates student confusion, then engage in a "Data & Barrier Diagnostic" workshop to analyze drop-off points and map out communication strategies within their own institutional workflows.

- *Melissa Chmura, Admissions & Recruitment Coordinator, Somerset Community College*
- *Carla Rose, Director of Center for Advising, Retention and Engagement (C.A.R.E.), Somerset Community College*
- *Parker Tucker, Admissions Supervisor and Coordinator of International and Immigrant Students, Somerset Community College*

Room 163C

FROM CLASSROOM TO CAREER: BUILDING PROFESSIONALISM, BREAKING BARRIERS

Too many students leave college career-ready in their major but unprepared in skills employers value most: communication, professionalism, and workplace readiness. To ensure all students gain these essential competencies, Western Kentucky University's Gordon Ford College of Business embedded professionalism directly into the required business core without adding tuition costs. Participants will explore how combining required coursework with comprehensive career support expands access to professional growth, while gaining a replicable framework to adapt within their own institutions.

- *Dr. Evelyn Thrasher, Dean of Gordon Ford College of Business, Western Kentucky University*
- *Monica Duvall, Director of Student Experience and Success, Western Kentucky University*

Room 208 GH

COLLEGE ACCESS BEGINS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

College access begins long before students apply or step onto a campus. This session explores how Ignite, a three-year middle school program in rural Kentucky, helps students build college aspirations, career awareness, and confidence through intentional relationships and authentic learning experiences. Participants will examine how career exploration, campus visits, and community partnerships accelerate access for young learners, leaving with practical, adaptable strategies to strengthen early college and career readiness within their own schools, districts, or organizations.

- *Rachel Evitts, Program Manager for Ignite and Middle School Programs, Muhlenberg Achieves*

Room 208 IJ

FROM ACCESS TO ACTION: RETHINKING HOW WE SUPPORT MILITARY-RELATED STUDENTS

How can institutions transform military experience into academic success? Beyond basic enrollment, military-connected students need targeted support to navigate institutional barriers, balance complex responsibilities, and persist to graduation. This interactive session examines practical, student-centered strategies for reframing these high-capacity learners. Participants will explore early Joint Services Transcript evaluation, prior learning assessment, responsive advising, and resource mapping—leaving with actionable tools to streamline academic pathways and accelerate completion for military-connected students on their campuses.

- *Jan Goldman, Senior Fellow, Council on Postsecondary Education*
- *Tracy Teater, Associate Director, Kentucky Student Success Collaborative, Council on Postsecondary Education*

KENTUCKY STUDENT ACCESS SUMMIT

Monday, November 2, 2026

12:00-12:45 p.m.
Ballroom 208

NETWORKING LUNCH & EXHIBIT TABLES OPEN

Join colleagues and summit attendees for lunch, open conversation, and exhibit browsing. Use this time to refuel, visit exhibit tables highlighting key access resources, and strengthen cross-sector connections committed to student success. Exhibit tables include:

Futuriti — How Kentuckians find their future.

CTE — Learning that works for Kentucky

CPE — Higher Education Matters

Level All

common app

12:45-1:15 p.m.
Ballroom 208

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: A NEW FUTURITI PARTNERSHIP

As lunch wraps up, CPE will take the stage for a special announcement about a new Futuriti partnership that will give Kentucky school districts a way to intentionally advise students and meet Individual Learning Plan (ILP) requirements for free.



Jessica Fletcher
Chief Communications Officer, Council on Postsecondary Education



Mitzi Holland
Director of Kentucky Advisory Academy, Council on Postsecondary Education



Kevin Kenny
Founder and Co-CEO, LevelAll

1:15-2:00 p.m.
Ballroom 208

Luncheon Keynote

BREAKING BARRIERS THROUGH RESILIENCE, PURPOSE, AND LEADERSHIP

What does it truly take to build a championship culture in our schools? Join educator, state champion coach, and Mercer County Superintendent Jason Booher for an inspiring luncheon keynote on overcoming barriers in postsecondary access. Rooted in his extraordinary personal journey of resilience and decades of leadership in Kentucky education, Booher explores how leaders can eliminate procedural and cultural hurdles, spark purpose in young people, and equip every student to cross the finish line to lifelong success.



Dr. Jason Booher
Superintendent of Mercer County Schools
State Champion Basketball Coach and Survivor of our Nation's Deadliest DWI Crash

KENTUCKY STUDENT ACCESS SUMMIT

Monday, November 2, 2026

2:15-3:15 p.m.

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS - ROUND 3

Please choose one of the four breakout sessions to attend; sessions do not repeat.

Room 112

BEYOND ACCOMMODATIONS: CREATING CONNECTED STUDENT ACCESS

Access does not end when a student receives an accommodation. For students with disabilities — especially first-generation and limited-income students — success depends on navigating systems, building relationships, and accessing key opportunities. Drawing from Western Kentucky University's TRIO Student Support Services for Students with Disabilities, this interactive session examines a proactive, relationship-centered approach to access. Through case studies and reflection, participants will explore practical strategies to break down barriers and foster belonging and success on their own campuses.

- *Jimmie Martin, Project Director for Student Support Services, Trio Programs, Western Kentucky University*

Room 163C

BUILDING A STATEWIDE COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE

Creating a true college-going culture requires more than isolated programs — it takes sustained messaging, strong partnerships, and intentional statewide coordination. This session explores how KHEAA's "KY Goes to College" campaigns provide a unified framework for engaging students, families, schools, and community partners. Presenters will share strategies behind implementing statewide initiatives — including college application, FAFSA completion, and Decision Day campaigns — along with the resources, branding, and communication tools that drive participation and expand postsecondary access across Kentucky.

- *Brandi Forker, Assistant Director of Outreach Services, Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority*
- *Connor Vogt, Senior Outreach Counselor, Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority*

Room 208 GH

FROM CONNECTION TO CAREER: CTE, EARLY WARNING & STUDENT PERSISTENCE

How do we help students not only graduate, but see a future beyond high school worth working toward? This session explores how Early Warning data, student connectedness, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) align to strengthen relationships, remove barriers, and support persistence. Through real-world scenarios, participants will examine how career-connected learning fosters purpose and relevance while discovering practical strategies to leverage the ABCs of Early Warning to prepare students for postsecondary success.

- *John Paise, Education Administration Program Consultant II, Office of Career and Technical Education, Kentucky Department of Education*
- *Amy Newsome, Education Program Consultant, Office of Continuous Improvement and Support, Kentucky Department of Education*

Room 208 IJ

FROM EXPLORATION TO ACTION: BUILDING A CULTURE OF POSTSECONDARY ADVISING

To prepare for the future, 6-12 students need intentional opportunities to explore careers and postsecondary pathways. This interactive session showcases how Kentucky's Postsecondary Advising Scope and Sequence and related resources help schools transform advising from counselor-led activities into a schoolwide culture of support. Participants will explore practical strategies for moving beyond compliance, embedding advising into existing structures, and leveraging community partnerships to ensure every student gains the knowledge and guidance needed for long-term success.

- *Susie Burkhart, Senior Fellow for Kentucky Advising Academy, Council on Postsecondary Education*
- *Mitzi Holland, Director of Kentucky Advisory Academy, Council on Postsecondary Education*
- *Danyeil Reese, Senior Director, Postsecondary Leadership Coach, OneGoal*
- *Heather Zoll, Senior Director of Program Design, OneGoal*

KENTUCKY STUDENT ACCESS SUMMIT

Monday, November 2, 2026

3:30-4:15 p.m.
Ballroom 208

Closing Panel

CREATING CONNECTIONS FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO WORKFORCE: EARLY ADVISING STRATEGIES FOR STATEWIDE SUCCESS

By 2040, Kentucky high school graduates will decline by 10% due to a demographic cliff, even as 60% of workforce roles demand a postsecondary credential. This closing panel unites key components of Kentucky's statewide access strategy—proactive admissions, the Common App, Futuriti, and Level All. Panelists will share actionable insights on leveraging early advising to reveal high-demand career pathways, motivating students academically and elevating college-going rates across the Commonwealth.



Moderator
Dr. Amanda Ellis
Senior Vice President of Academic Excellence,
Council on Postsecondary Education



Panelist
Jason Hamilton, Sr.
Senior Director, Higher Ed Engagement
CommonApp



Panelist
Amanda Hutchinson
Assistant Superintendent of Instruction
McLean County Public Schools



Panelist
Price Marshall
Customer Success Manager
LevelAll



Panelist
Trey Pippin
Program Director of Outreach and Partnerships
Council on Postsecondary Education



Panelist
Jenny Sawyer
Associate Provost and Executive Director of Admissions
University of Louisville

4:15-4:30 p.m.
Ballroom 208

Closing Remarks & Adjournment

BREAKING BARRIERS TOGETHER, ACCELERATING SUCCESS: CLOSING REMARKS & CELEBRATING IPSL CLASS OF 2026

Dr. Dawn Offutt will deliver closing remarks reemphasizing the ABCs of Student Access. CPE will also proudly recognize the 2026 cohort of the Institute for Postsecondary Staff Leadership (IPSL), a professional development initiative designed to cultivate emerging higher education leaders across the Commonwealth. This year's cohort include:

- John Dylan Bays, Henderson CC
- Lassie Bowles, Madisonville CC
- Mary Breeze, Maysville CTC
- Stacey Delap, Gateway CTC
- Chester Delph, University of Louisville
- Kaitlin Fortwengler, Jefferson CTC
- Tiffany Hampton, Eastern Kentucky University
- John Hall, Somerset CC
- David Langdon, Elizabethtown CTC
- Adrian Mason, West Kentucky CTC
- Samantha Mason, Northern Kentucky University
- Leanna McClure, Murray State University
- Courtney Myers, Maysville CTC
- Jackie Perdue – Southeastern Kentucky CTC
- Katherine Reams, Bluegrass CTC
- Carla Rose, Somerset CC
- Nasharee Scott, Hopkinsville CC
- Julia Smith, Hazard CTC
- Elijah Tevis, Bluegrass CTC
- Rebecca Wheeler, Owensboro CTC

SHORT BIOS - BY LAST NAME

2026 Kentucky Student Success Summit

Josh Adams, Rural Outreach Coordinator at the UK Center of Excellence in Rural Health, develops and facilitates trainings for professionals and community members.

Christy Kissick Arnett, MSW, serves as Prison Education Coordinator at Maysville Community & Technical College, supporting students at Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex.

Susie Burkhart, Senior Fellow for CPE, is a lifelong educator with a 35-year career of fostering student-centered learning and academic excellence. Susie supports the development of the Kentucky Advising Scope & Sequence for grades 6–12.

Jason Booher is the superintendent of Mercer County Schools (KY) and a 30-year veteran of public education. A former high school math teacher, administrator, and basketball coach, he has been honored three times as Kentucky's Associated Press State Boys Basketball Coach of the Year.

Melissa Chmura is the Admissions & Recruitment Coordinator at Somerset Community College. In her role, she supports student recruitment efforts, manages the daily operations of the Admissions Office, and coordinates campus events and tours.

Monica Duvall Director of Student Experience and Success, leads GFCB's Student Success Center, overseeing academic advising, recruitment/retention, internships, and career development.

Rachel Evitts is the Program Manager of Ignite in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky, where she developed and implemented an innovative middle school college and career readiness program focused on students with strong potential who benefit from additional support and opportunity.

Amanda Ellis is the Senior Vice President of Student Access and Success at CPE and leads strategic initiatives to improve student access, success, and transition from high school to higher education, including dual credit opportunities, college readiness, and teacher quality.

Brandi Forker serves as the Assistant Director of Outreach for the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) and supports KHEAA's statewide Outreach team in its mission to help Kentuckians navigate the path to higher education.

Jessica Fletcher, MPA, has 24 years of experience communicating education and workforce policies and practices in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and serves as CPE's Chief Communications Officer.

Magan Gaddis is a Coaching Coordinator with the Transition Education Unit within KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning and brings both professional and personal perspectives to her work as the parent of children with disabilities and giftedness.

Jan Goldman is a Senior Fellow at CPE and is the Managing Partner of the Kentucky Community Learning Network (KCLN), which provides training for DCBS staff and CLIMB 2.0, an initiative focused on expanding behavioral health career pathways.

Jason D. Hamilton, Sr. is the Senior Director of Higher Ed Engagement at Common App and founded and served as the President of FinAide App in September 2019.

Mitzi Holland serves as the Director of the Kentucky Advising Academy, an initiative of CPE, and leads statewide efforts to strengthen postsecondary advising.

Amanda Hutchinson currently serves as the assistant superintendent of instruction for McLean County Public Schools.

Kevin Kenny is the Founder & Co-Chief Executive Officer at Level All based in New York City.

Price Marshall serves as customer success manager at Level All, where he leads onboarding and training for 1000+ schools and organizations, impacting 200,000+ students.

Jimmie Martin is the Project Director for Student Support Services, Trio Programs, at Western Kentucky University, and focused on designing programs and systems for first generation, low income, and students with disabilities.

Amy Newsome is a Persistence to Graduation Program Consultant with the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Student Success, and holds degrees in Secondary Science Education, Teacher Leadership, and Instructional Leadership and is a certified DPP.

Dr. Taylor Odle is an Assistant Professor of Education Policy and, by courtesy, Data Science and Public Affairs, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Taylor is an expert in the economics of education, where his work focuses issues in college access and success, financial aid, and program evaluation.

Dr. Dawn Offutt serves as the Executive Director of Student Access at the Council on Postsecondary Education.

SHORT BIOS - BY LAST NAME

2026 Kentucky Student Success Summit

Ashley O'Neil is Associate Director of the Kentucky Student Success Collaborative at the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, where she leads the statewide Gateway Course Success strategy.

John Paise is an Education Administration Program Consultant with KDE's Office of Career and Technical Education, where he leads statewide efforts to strengthen career and technical education pathways, with a focus on supporting high school to postsecondary transitions and postsecondary readiness initiatives.

Tracy Parks, Ed.D., is a Coaching Coordinator for the KDE Office of Special Education and Early Learning's Transition Education Unit, and her experience centers on instructional coaching, curriculum design, and the development of data systems to support continuous improvement.

Trey Pippin is the program director for Futuriti at CPE, and is known for his high-impact communication, stakeholder engagement, and visionary thinking that delivers results.

Danyeil Reese is a dedicated leadership coach, advisor, and licensed educator, and in her current role, she activates leadership teams to drive systems-level improvements that address structural barriers in preparing every student for success in college and future careers.

Carla Rose is the Director of the Center for Advising, Retention, and Engagement (CARE) at Somerset Community College, leading advising and persistence initiatives.

Jenny Sawyer is the Executive Director of Admissions and Associate Provost at the University of Louisville.

Tracy Teater serves as Associate Director of Adult Attainment at CPE, where she advances statewide strategies to increase postsecondary attainment among adult learners through cross-sector collaboration, innovative practices, and change leadership.

Dr. Evelyn Thrasher, Dean and Professor of Analytics and Information Systems at WKU's Gordon Ford College of Business, has served WKU since 2008 as faculty, Senior Associate Dean, and Interim Dean, previously directing the Professional Education and Knowledge (PEAK) Program.

Dr. Aaron Thompson, has served as the CPE President since 2018, and formally served a variety of positions prior to that including interim president of Kentucky State University, CPE Executive Vice President and Provost, and faculty member at Eastern Kentucky University.

Parker N. Tucker serves as Coordinator of Admissions Operations and International/Immigrant Students at Somerset Community College, managing application processing, credential evaluation, and F-1 visa compliance.

Connor Vogt serves as a Senior Outreach Counselor in the Northwestern Kentucky region with the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA), where he helps students and families navigate college planning, financial aid, and the resources available to make higher education more accessible.

Fallon Willoughby is an Associate Professor of First Year Experience at Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College (SKYCTC) and serves as a Senior Fellow for the Kentucky Student Success Collaborative - Gateway Course Success.

Heather Zoll is a Senior Director of Program Design at OneGoal, where she creates systems impact materials and programs that advance postsecondary success for schools and districts nationwide.

View full bios and photos on the Access Summit page at:

https://cpe.ky.gov/events/access-summit/index.html

HIGHER EDUCATION Matters

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Printed with state funds
November 2026

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