

# Kentucky Literacy Link

A Publication of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)

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## Remembering Why We Do What We Do

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Lately I have found myself discouraged. Perhaps I've been reading too many of the comments below online education articles or I followed the November campaigns too closely, but I have been feeling as though there is a lot to be done in education and even more barriers to doing it. I have seen too much resistance to change, too much clinging to the status quo, and too many people opting for what is easy or comfortable rather than what is best for kids.

The world I was born to save has seemed unsavable. And it has left me wondering if my efforts—if any of our efforts—even matter.

Then I met the kids from Eminence Independent.

If you haven't heard about what's going on at Eminence High School, check out this month's spotlight for more information. The bottom line is, they absolutely jolted me out of my slump.

This group of high school students decided that they were not getting enough out of their school experience and they went to their principal with a spark of an idea. She listened to them and the result was the creation of a new class and a student-led organization called UNLOCK.

The students of UNLOCK came to speak at the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC) regional meeting of the [Kentucky](#)

[Leadership Networks](#). There, in front of a hundred or so adults, these children spoke eloquently about their mission and their work, the journey that brought them to this place, and their hopes for the future. They led us in Socratic Seminar discussions about the necessary curriculum for a next generation learner, expertly facilitating and sustaining our conversations with thought-provoking questions, comments, and prompts. They were confident and knowledgeable and articulate. They were ready for the world.

Listening to those children reminded me why I got into this business—for kids. In the midst of all the pressures and setbacks we face each day, I hope you can remember that as well.

## Kentucky Department of Education Updates

[Information on Proposed Standards](#) Senate Bill 1 (2009) calls for Kentucky to revise all standards to be aligned with the latest research, informed by national efforts, internationally comparable, and focused on the critical thinking and practices students need for success in the 21st century. Currently, there are two sets of proposed standards in the process of adoption into Kentucky's required Academic Standards. Attached are some talking points on the proposed [Arts and Humanities](#) and [Social Studies](#) standards in the event you receive any questions about the standards. If you have any additional questions, contact [Karen Kidwell](#).

[2015 Partnership Planning Grants Request For Applications](#) Commissioner Terry Holliday and KDE announce a one-time \$5,000

grant opportunity to promote partnerships between high schools and higher education institutions to plan for implementing the Early Graduation accelerated pathway in conjunction with Dual Credit while students are in high school. The grants, totaling \$20,000, will support developing partnerships between secondary and post-secondary institutions and aligning expectations for educational rigor to prepare students for college and careers. The application deadline is Monday, December 22, 2014, at 4:00 p.m. EST. The 2015 Partnership Planning Grants - Early Graduation and Dual Credit RFA can be found [here](#).

[Kentucky Mentioned in U.S. Department of Education's Blog](#) In "Homeroom" (the official blog of the U.S. Department of Educa-

tion), Kentucky was cited for its progress on graduation rate. Click [here](#) to see the article. The work of KDE, districts and schools is making a difference!

### [KDE Receives Mental Health Grant](#)

KDE has received a five-year, \$8.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to support teachers, schools and communities in recognizing and responding to mental health concerns among youth. KDE was one of 120 state and local educational agencies awarded an Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education (AWARE) grant.



## Spotlight: Eminence High School's UNLOCK

UNLOCK is a student led organization created by students at Eminence High School. The information below comes from [UNLOCK's website](#), which is designed and maintained by the students.

UNLOCK began when the students at Eminence High School began to ask for something to do in the real world as opposed to the traditional classroom. After meeting for a few weeks, we decided we would pursue a vision of educating, equipping and empowering children for the real world. We met with a community member who gave us the idea of creating a self-sustaining community. We loved this concept and began to make it more our own. We didn't have much direction in the beginning, but stuck with that vision and soon created the idea behind the project: UNLOCK.

After creating a mission statement, we began to present the plan to potential partners: UNLOCK is a student led organization which exists to educate, empower and equip children in impoverished areas by creating a duplicable self-sustaining community. We searched for a partner who shares the vision of "unlocking" a child's dreams in impoverished areas of the world.



Many children in the United States have so much more than they realize and have the opportunity to chase their dreams and forge their own futures. Children in many third world countries are taught to not dream at all. In many schools around the world, children repeat the teacher without understanding the concepts. That mindset doesn't encourage dreams and most of these children stay under the poverty line their whole lives. UNLOCK's vision encourages dreams, which includes the ability to pursue them by educating children, equipping them with support, and training them to become the next-generation of leaders. This will empower them to pursue their dreams.

Recently we have partnered with Go International, who has found us an international connection in Nicaragua. In March of 2015, we have a group of students and teachers headed to Nicaragua. Our goal is to build relationships with our native partners and

the people of the community in which we will be working. Recently, we were able to begin getting to know our primary partner via Skype. Upon returning from Nicaragua, we will begin working with our partners of the community to meet the needs of the people there.

### Other Projects: The UNLOCK Bus

A bus was donated to us, and we plan to strip the seats out and turn it into a fundraising bus. The plan is to take everything out, and turn it into a crafts bus. Kids will come into the bus and make different cultural crafts. For example, they can make different toys, musical instruments, and sample food from different countries.

*The students of UNLOCK are raising money for their trip to Nicaragua. If you would like to donate, click [here](#). Any amount is appreciated.*

*To learn more about UNLOCK, visit their [website](#) and/or their [blog](#). The [blog](#) gives powerful insights in the student's own voices and will surely inspire you, as it has me.*

—MK



## Two Great Informational Websites: The Why Files & Newsela

Created at the University of Wisconsin-Madison under the auspices of the National Institute for Science Education, the [Why Files website](#) provides scientific information to explain and expand on current news stories. Listed as a top website for 2014 by the American Association of School Librarians, this witty website updates weekly and provides a searchable archive of stories and articles. A list of National Science Education standards that

link to support Why Files articles is included. Additional classroom activities are offered that can be used with an entire class or for extra credit. There is enough intriguing information, as well as cool science images, to entice older students to explore the site on their own. Grades 5-12.



[Newsela](#) is an innovative way to build reading comprehension with nonfiction that's always

relevant: daily news. News is nonfiction with an edge. From astronomy to zoology, there's something for every student's taste and every teacher's subject area.

Every article is available at five Lexile levels, allowing every student in your class to access the same content, but at a level that is right for them. Newsela also offers related quizzes for each article that test critical thinking and close reading. You can automatically assign articles to students and see who read

the story, passed the quiz and took notes, all in a single screen.

Additionally, the annotate and collaborate feature allows you to lead students toward a deeper examination of content through interactive annotations and editable written-response questions. The teacher and administrator binder records student results and displays reading-level achievement in a crystal-clear, visual format. Drill down to see results by specific Common Core standard.

# Professional Growth and Effectiveness System News

The information below is reprinted from the November PGES Newsletter which can be accessed in its entirety, along with all other PGES newsletters and additional resources, on the [PGES webpage](#).

## New resources posted to the PGES webpages

- [Evidence Examples by Standard from Kentucky Superintendents](#)
- [OPGES Pilot Practice Paper Forms](#)
- [OPGES Think and Plan Tool](#)
- [OPGES Think and Plan Tool-Guidance Counselor Example](#)
- [OPGES Student Growth Goals for Coaching Conversations](#)
- [OPGES Observation Guidance](#)
- [OPGES Pilot Overview Video](#)
- [OPGES Pilot Implementation Video: Interview with Scott County](#)
- [Student Voice District Choices](#)

## Observations and peer observations – moving beyond compliance

For teachers to grow in their effectiveness, we must ensure observations are followed by effective feedback. This is true from intern to the seasoned veteran. Observation and feedback are crucial at every stage of a teacher's career. The question is, how can quality feedback be provided by a peer observer or an evaluator?

KDE has learned a great deal about feedback during the PGES pilot and field tests.

- Make feedback count. Help learners get it right; correct errors.

- Feedback must be timely.
- Ask the teacher to provide his/her feedback before giving your feedback.
- Be specific and realistic.
- Concentrate on the behavior and not the person.
- Offer continued support. Build confidence.
- Provide teachers with strategies and methods to improve.

A successful observation and feedback process begins before the actual observation takes place. Observers must keep the *Kentucky Framework for Teaching* in mind as the basis of observations. The framework provides a consistent set of expectations for instructional practices and an effective learning environment. Successful practice often makes use of a pre-observation conference where the observer and the teacher discuss key aspects of the teacher's lesson. Discussion items, including short- and long-term objectives, the teacher's professional growth goal and the student growth goal being pursued, set the stage for successful observations.

The distinct roles of the peer observer and the administrative observer are important to keep in mind. The peer observation process is focused solely around collecting evidence and providing feedback. Supervisors assign ratings in a collaborative way. For example, Ken Bicknell, Principal at B. Michael Caudill Middle School in Madison County, shared that he "... send[s] a draft out for a teacher to see...in the post-

conference, we decide, together, where they fall." This collaborative process for assigning the performance rating has proven quite effective in the early days of the PGES rollout and has been showing great promise. Please click [here](#) to view an example of an effective post-observation conference modeled by Dr. Amanda Ellis.



## Reminder for Evaluators – Initial Certified Evaluation Training

Who needs to complete Initial Certified Evaluation Training? Any person serving in the role of an evaluator must complete the Initial Certified Evaluation Training in order to complete teacher evaluations and be trained in the new Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) regulation, Self-Reflection, Professional Growth Plans, Student Growth Goals, Student Voice and the like. Teachscape certification is completed in order to certify administrators to conduct observations. Teachscape does not cover Self-Reflection, Professional Growth Plans, Student Growth Goals, Student Voice, etc. If you have completed the Initial Certified Evaluation Training previously, you do not need to complete it again. If you will be serving as an evaluator and have not completed this training, you must do so. For questions regarding the Certified Evaluation Training, please contact [Shirley LaFavers](#) at KASA.



## 2015 Letters About Literature Essay Contest

[Letters About Literature](#) (LAL) is a reading and writing contest for students in grades 4-12. Students are asked to read a book, poem or speech and write to that author (living or dead) about how the book affected them personally.

Letters are judged on state and national levels. Tens of thousands of students from across the country enter Letters About Literature each year. Students in grades 4-

12 are eligible to enter the Letters About Literature reading and writing contest.

LAL awards prizes on both the state and national levels. Each participating state center has its own panel of judges who select the top essayists in the state. State winners will receive a cash award and advance to the national-level judging. A panel of national judges for the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress will select one national winner per competition level to receive a \$1,000 cash award.

The judges also will select one national honor per competition level to receive a \$200 cash award.

Grades 9-12 entries must be postmarked by Dec. 15, 2014. Grades 4-8 must be postmarked by Jan. 15, 2015.

Read previous national-winning entries [here](#). Read our state winners in the [May 2014](#) and [May 2013 Literacy Link](#). Click [here](#) for rules and guidelines. To access the LAL teacher's guide, click [here](#). Visit [KDE's LAL page](#) for more information.



## IRA Inspire: Supporting Student Choice



Since 1956, The International Reading Association (IRA) has been a nonprofit, global network of individuals and institutions committed to worldwide literacy. More than 56,000 members strong, the Association supports literacy professionals through a wide range of resources, advocacy efforts, volunteerism, and professional development activities.

We hear often that teachers should let students "drive the bus" in the classroom, but what does that really look like? How can we give students power in their own learning without entirely losing control?

This month, IRA tipsters look at ways to break out parts of the day to allow students the creativity and freedom to make some important choices about what (and how) they read and write. When given broad parameters to choose the topic, or even the medium with which to use it, students embrace literacy to feed their own interests with confidence and vigor.

### Clearing the Road for Young Writers

As teachers, we like to be in control. If we control what students do, when they do it, and how they do it, we think we control their learning. But sometimes, giving up control is more useful. Writing is a wonderful place to do just that.

Some students are convinced they can't write a book, but they can tell a story. Show them the only difference between a story and book is the way it's presented—a natural minilesson for writing. Don't provide the

same journal topic for all of your students. Instead, when a student comes in to school, excited to tell you about their night at tee-ball or the funny thing that happened at the dinner table, use it. Listen to the story and then say, "Will you write about it today?"

When students have chosen their topic, remove any other obstacles they may create for themselves. Don't let vocabulary get in the way. If a student says, "I can't write about my bicycle because I don't know how to spell it," a perfect response could be, "If I can show you how to write the word bicycle will you write the story?"

Providing students with a word bank for a story is an easy way to allow their creativity to flow without hesitation. Removing boundaries and obstacles—while giving students the freedom to create—builds a strong foundation for emergent writers.

—Cathy Collier (@Wisowlcathy)

### **MORE RESOURCES:**

[Building a Foundation for Writing Success](#)  
[Quiet! Teacher in Progress: Free Your Mind](#)

### BYOT (Bring Your Own Text)

Drawing inspiration from Ruth Culham and Donalyn Miller, my classroom instruction honors the choices students make as readers. We set our class textbooks aside, opting instead to build our reading and writing workshops from the novels, comics, memoirs, and other texts students seek out for themselves.

We kick off the year with a challenge to

read a set number of books in a variety of genres. Once we iron out the details of our Choice Reading Challenge together—identifying how many books and how many per genre—we head out on a quest for books to fill up our "must-read" lists. We explore our classroom library and partner with our school librarian, who booktalks a set of titles available in a particular genre during each library visit.

When students have the resources they need to come to class armed with their own text each day, we turn our attention to identifying writing mentors. Each quarter, students select a different established author to study. Our writing mentors project affords us opportunities for textual analysis, with students making claims and identifying supporting evidence from their chosen books. It also allows students to hone specific writing skills by closely examining and imitating the moves their favorite authors make in order to write compelling pieces.

Though we share a few whole-class texts throughout the year—most notably the selection for the Global Read Aloud, which connects us to other classes throughout the world—our classroom is a place where students' own reading choices come first.

—Laren Hammonds (@\_clayr\_)

### **MORE RESOURCES:**

[Leisure Reading](#)  
[Making Reading Pleasure More Central to Our Practice](#)

## Summer Reading Pledge Challenge Winners



Congratulations to the following four schools that won the 2014 "KYReads Summer Reading Contest" held in conjunction with the annual CCSSO/ MetaMetrics' Chief's Summer Reading Challenge. Each school will receive a free one-year subscription to an online resource provided by the companies listed below that partner with MetaMetrics. A total of 68 school districts participated in the 2014 KYReads Summer Reading Contest. Information about the annual challenge is shared by the Kentucky Depart-

ment of Education with school librarians who then promote it through their schools. School librarians also share information about local Summer Reading Programs sponsored by Kentucky's Public Libraries.

Kentucky students were challenged to submit their "Pledge to Read" for the summer on the "Find a Book, Kentucky" website ([www.Lexile.com/fab/KY](http://www.Lexile.com/fab/KY)) between May 1 and August 31, 2014. Kentucky was number one in the nation in summer reading pledges for the challenge!

### 2014 Winning Schools (and their school librarians)

- Calloway County Middle School, Calloway County  
Librarian: *Angie Jones*  
Prize: TeenBiz3000 from Achieve3000
- Carter Traditional Elementary School, Jefferson County  
Librarian: *Debbie Melnykovich*  
Prize: KidBiz3000 from Achieve3000

- Miles Elementary School, Erlanger Independent  
Librarian: *Janelle Hawes*  
Prize: myON reader from Capstone Digital
- A.J. Lindeman Elementary School, Erlanger Independent  
Librarian: *Janelle Hawes*  
Prize: Scholastic Reading Counts! from Scholastic

Look for information about the 2015 KYReads Summer Reading Pledge Challenge in spring 2015!

## Fifty Exemplar Lessons and Units Available to Educators



For implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to be successful, all educators need access to high quality and aligned instructional materials. Achieve launched the Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products (EQulP) initiative to build the capacity of educators to evaluate and improve the quality of instructional materials for use in their classrooms and schools.

In June 2013, Achieve launched the EQulP Peer Review Panel, a group of expert reviewers who have been trained to apply the EQulP Rubrics and quality review process to lessons and units that have been submitted by states, districts, partners and educators. To date, this group has included 55 educators who collectively represent 875 years of

classroom experience. The EQulP Peer Review Panel has reviewed and provided constructive, criterion-based feedback on close to 200 lessons or units. Achieve announced today that 50 lessons and units rated *Exemplar* or *Exemplar if Improved* are now publicly available to educators nationwide. The *Exemplar* rating indicates that a lesson or unit is well-aligned with the Common Core and ready for immediate use in classrooms; lessons or units rated *Exemplar if Improved* are aligned and require some improvement in one or more dimensions of the rubric. These materials reflect all grade bands (K-5, 6-8, 9-12) in both mathematics and English language arts/literacy.

"The EQulP process is designed to elevate the expertise of educators and to foster a culture of continuous improvement grounded in high-quality feedback. We are honored to work with such a highly-skilled panel of

educators to highlight exemplary work. We are thrilled to reach this milestone, but the work is far from over. Achieve is striving to raise awareness of these open source exemplary materials and encourages others to make them available or include them in repositories or other platforms. We hope to double the number of exemplars while also building the capacity of educators to integrate this process and the criteria embedded within the rubrics into their everyday work," says Alissa Peltzman, Vice President of State Policy and Implementation Support at Achieve.

To learn more about EQulP or download exemplary lessons and units, please visit [www.achieve.org/EQulP](http://www.achieve.org/EQulP).

Educators also are invited to submit lessons and units for review through the [EQulP website](http://www.achieve.org/EQulP).

## MakeBeliefsComix.com Launches Free Comic E-book

More than 225,000 educators and students from more than 180 countries visit [MakeBeliefsComix.com](http://MakeBeliefsComix.com) each month to build their own comic strips and practice their language, writing and reading skills. The site was selected by Google as UNESCO as among the world's most innovative sites to encourage literacy and writing and the American Library Association chose it as a Great Web Site for Kids.

In its efforts to provide more writing tools for educators, [MakeBeliefsComix.com](http://MakeBeliefsComix.com) has launched a free interactive digital comic book for students enrolled in literacy and English Language Learner programs. The book, [MakeBeliefsComix FILL-ins](http://MakeBeliefsComix.com/FILL-ins), is a do-it-yourself comic book. The comic e-book provides a place where students can give [MakeBeliefsComix](http://MakeBeliefsComix.com) characters their own words and thoughts by following the writing prompts and filling in the blank speech and thought bubbles.

Comic situations in the book include:

- a girl depicted with several blank thought balloons around her head with the caption, "So many things on her mind"
- a character shown singing a song with a



blank balloon over her head, and the caption reads, "Quick, give her some lyrics to sing"

- a character shown with her father who has a blank speech bubble over his head, with the caption "The words she always wanted to hear"

The book's interactive PDF format allows readers to type directly into the blank bubbles. When students are done typing, they simply save the document until the next time they are inspired to write, or they can print out what they have created.

In addition to [MakeBeliefsComix FILL-ins](http://MakeBeliefsComix.com), the online comic strip generator has published another free e-book entitled *Words I Wish Someone Had Said to Me As a Kid*. It offers encouraging words to boys and girls as they make their way in the world. Says Bill Zimmerman, author of both digital books and creator of [MakeBeliefsComix.com](http://MakeBeliefsComix.com), "I lost my father when I was young and missed hearing the words that a child need to hear from his or her parent. A few years ago...I began writing a letter from him to me, saying some of the things which I wanted to hear—that he loved me and was proud of the person I had grown up to become." Zimmerman kept writing more of these letters and they grew into this book. Space is also provided for youngsters to express their own thoughts and concerns.

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"I hope young readers will turn to the book whenever they need a good word or when they are feeling lonely or unsure," says Zimmerman. The two new digital books are part of a series that also includes: *Make Beliefs to Spark Your Writing*, *Hummingbird Joy: A Book of all the Things that Make You Happy*, and *Laptop Letters: Sending Wise & Loving Messages to Young People in Your Life*.

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In addition to the two new e-books, the website has added new characters in color and word art for students to use in creating their comic stories. A lesson plan for educators working with students with autism has been added to the Lesson Plans section.

## IRA Inspire: Creating Assessments That Count



Since 1956, IRA has been a nonprofit, global network of individuals and institutions committed to worldwide literacy. More than 56,000 members strong, the Association supports literacy professionals through a wide range of resources, advocacy efforts, volunteerism, and professional development activities. Our members promote high levels of literacy for all by:

- Improving the quality of reading instruction
- Disseminating research and information about reading
- Encouraging the lifetime reading habit

Learn more and join IRA [here](#).

Test time is not always the best time to find out if students are "getting it." There are small steps that can easily be taken every day to check in on students' learning (and then adjust classroom strategies accordingly) to ensure that everyone succeeds. This month, International Reading Association (IRA) Inspire tipsters share [formative assessments](#) that have worked in their classrooms. Check out their tips, and check in with your students!

### Assessment in a Project-Based Learning Environment

One of the benefits of project-based learning (PBL) is how students are in control of their learning. They aren't preparing for a high-stakes test or a final project. It's the project that drives the learning.

As a teacher, you may be wondering, How do I know students are learning? These formative assessments below will help, not only in the context of PBL, but every day:

1. Observe Their Dialogue: Are the students focused? Are they thinking criti-

cally? When using this method, do not interrupt conversations taking place, just listen and take notes. When checking in with students, go over your informal observations with them.

2. Utilize Rubrics: Ensure the students know what is expected of them. Once again, observation is key. Are they completing each step? Are they following the project guidelines? Is there anything they are having difficulty accomplishing?
3. Exit Card Reflections: Ask the students to answer what they worked on for the day and how it relates to their learning. From this information, you can gain an understanding of the student's thinking throughout the project.

With PBL, assessment is ongoing. It's important to not wait until the end to evaluate, but to assess learning throughout the entire project.

—Brandi Leggett

### MORE RESOURCES:

[More of What's Meaningful: Formative Assessments](#)  
[Inside Information: Developing Powerful Readers and Writers of Informational Text Through Project-Based Instruction, K-5](#) by Nell K. Duke

### Using Social Media as a Backchannel

Knowing that some students in my classroom may feel hesitant about voicing their struggles to understand, I make use of a classroom backchannel as part of my formative assessment plan. A backchannel is a real-time conversation that parallels the face-to-face interactions taking place in a classroom or at an event.

For my purposes, I have used both [Twitter](#) and [TodaysMeet](#) as backchanneling tools,

and each has its own benefits. Twitter allows for outside voices to chime in with contributions to the conversation, while TodaysMeet offers more privacy and requires no account creation.

My students and I begin by setting and practicing behavior norms for the backchannel, an important step to ensure the discussion environment is a support for—not a distraction from—classroom activities. These guidelines include recommendations to stick to standard English and avoid text-speak, as well as strategies for continuing the conversation in a productive manner by acknowledging the ideas of others, asking questions, and offering personal insights and other opinions.

From there, the conversation takes on a life of its own. I occasionally post questions for discussion or offer guiding comments, and students discuss class content as we go (such as key themes present in our class reading). Reflecting on student contributions at the end of a class period allows me to identify misconceptions, assess students' levels of understanding, and determine areas of need.

This informal discussion space provides a forum for all students to share their thoughts while offering the safety net of a little time to compose thoughts before sharing them with the room, as well as an equal opportunity for all to share their perspectives.

—Laren Hammonds

### MORE RESOURCES:

[Using Blogs to Collaborate and Share](#)  
[How Do We Know What They Know?](#)

## Annual Secretary of State Essay & Slogan Contest

Eligible students are encouraged to enter the annual Secretary of State Essay and Slogan Contest. The contest, now in its 26th year, addresses election-related issues in order to expand civic awareness of students who will soon be eligible to vote.

Students in grades 6-8 may enter the voter slogan portion of the contest by submitting an

attention-grabbing word or phrase that expresses the importance of participating in elections. The winning slogans will be chosen by an online poll open to the public, and the overall first-, second-, and third-place winners will receive cash awards of \$1,000, \$600 and \$400 respectively.

Students in grades 9-12 may

take part in the essay portion of the contest, which this year focuses on the role of the media in elections. The University of Kentucky Scripps Howard First Amendment Center, one of the contest's sponsors, will judge the essay entries and a \$1,000 prize will be awarded to the winner in each high school grade level.

Prompts, rules and entry forms for the contests are available on the Secretary of State's [website](#).

All guidelines must be met for any entry to be considered by contest judges, and all entries must be electronically submitted by 5 p.m. ET on Dec. 12 or postmarked by that date.





## Edivation Strategy: Nonverbal Praise Routines

Classrooms thrive when students and teachers alike are engaged in work, effort, and encouragement. Nonverbal praise routines are a quick, quiet, and simple way to promote student-to-student praise and encouragement that doesn't interrupt instruction.

Nonverbal routines include thumbs up, snaps, and sending "magic." These routines

are excellent ways of engaging students during classroom lectures and activities while building their confidence and self-esteem.

Watch instructors at Akili Academy in New Orleans, Louisiana demonstrate student involvement that contributes to a greater sense of classroom community. As you watch, consider:

- How were characteristics of nonverbal praise routines (as outlined in the guidebook for this segment) demonstrated effectively in this video?
- What other elements could contribute to effective nonverbal praise routines?

This video includes elementary and secondary instruction and comes with a [downloadable guidebook](#) and can be viewed [here](#).

## Kentucky Network to Transform Teaching (KyNT3)

The [Kentucky Network to Transform Teaching](#) is funded by a US Department of Education Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant and is implemented by a local partnership of the Education Professional Standards Board, Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky Education Association and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

KyNT3 works to transform teaching by working to:

- Increase the number of National Board Certified Teachers in Kentucky, and
- Innovate and improve teacher leadership opportunities for existing NBCTs.

KyNT3 offers support and resources to assist you as you consider certification.

Click [here](#) for a one pager of information on national board certification and [here](#) for additional resources including a webinar. If you have further questions, contact [Suzanne Farmer](#).



### Upcoming Events!

#### 2015 KCTE Conference

The 2015 Kentucky Council of Teachers

of English Conference will be held in Lexington on Feb. 27-28. The conference theme is "Balancing Passion and Practice: Kentucky Teachers Leading the Way." Good teaching is as much about passion as it is about best practice. Now more than ever we are asked to evolve, to repurpose our practice to address new standards. We are asked to adapt to new evaluation systems and assessment measures. How do we adapt yet still follow the drive of our passion for learning? How do we build a culture of learning that balances passion and best practice? Join us as we learn how Kentucky teachers are leading the way in education! Click [here](#) to view the featured speaker flyer.

#### Bread Loaf Teacher Network (BLTN)

[BLTN](#) is a network of teachers educated at Bread Loaf and supported during the academic year by Bread Loaf staff and faculty. Its primary goal is to encourage year-round collaboration among Bread Loaf teachers, faculty, and their students on innovative online projects designed to promote culturally sensitive and transformative literacy. All Bread Loaf students, whether they come for

just one summer in continuing graduate education or are working on an MA in English, are welcome and encouraged to join BLTN. Click [here](#) for details about the next BLTN meeting.

#### 2015 National Reading Recovery and K-6 Literacy Conference

Teachers, reading specialists, school administrators, literacy coaches, pre-service educators and others who are interested in early literacy education are invited to attend. The National Reading Recovery & K-6 Literacy Conference will be held in Columbus, OH, February 7-10, 2015 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. Over 115 sessions, led by nationally respected literacy experts, are offered focusing on all aspects of K-6 literacy including: comprehension, struggling readers, writing, building on students' strengths, Common Core State Standards, RTI, non-fiction, ELL, assessments, parental involvement, literacy coaching, Reading Recovery, children's literature, administration, and much more. The conference also includes featured speakers, preconference institutes, and keynote speakers; Mary Fried, Lucy Calkins, and Joy Cowley. For more information, visit the [conference webpage](#).

#### 2015 Let's TALK Conference

Planning is underway for the 2015 Let's TALK Conference to be held June 15-16,

2015 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Louisville. Visit the conference link to [download the flyer](#). Registration will open soon. Watch for a call for proposals and session strands including the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System, standards implementation, closing achievement gaps, teacher leadership, and National Board Certification.

#### Kentucky Historical Society Summer Teacher Workshop

This weeklong workshop, entitled *Torn Within, Threatened Without: Kentucky and the Border States in the Civil War*, will be held Sunday, June 21 to Saturday, June 27, 2015. The workshop's sessions will be conducted by leading scholars in the field who are experienced in working with educators. The 25 selected participants will receive an \$1100.00 stipend, a professional development certificate for hours completed, lunch provided on travel days, and a significant selection of educational materials. To apply send a current resume or c.v., a letter of recommendation from a principal or department chair, and a one-page maximum statement of why you wish to participate and how you plan to use what you will learn [tim.talbott@ky.gov](mailto:tim.talbott@ky.gov) postmarked by March 4, 2015.



Your contributions of ideas and lessons that work are welcome. E-mail [mikkaka.overstreet@education.ky.gov](mailto:mikkaka.overstreet@education.ky.gov) to submit. Your submissions may be included in the Literacy Link to help connect teachers across the state by sharing ideas, insights and best practices.

Access this and past Literacy Links on KDE's website:  
[Click Here](#)



**If you have questions or concerns, we want to help. Contact:**



- Rebecca Atkins-Stumbo – Literacy/Early Childhood Consultant – [rebecca.atkins-stumbo@education.ky.gov](mailto:rebecca.atkins-stumbo@education.ky.gov)
- Kelly Clark – Literacy Consultant – [kelly.clark@education.ky.gov](mailto:kelly.clark@education.ky.gov)
- Robin Hebert – Literacy Coordinator – [robin.hebert@education.ky.gov](mailto:robin.hebert@education.ky.gov)
- Kathy Mansfield – Library Media/Textbooks Consultant – [kathy.mansfield@education.ky.gov](mailto:kathy.mansfield@education.ky.gov)
- MK Overstreet – Literacy Consultant – [mikkaka.overstreet@education.ky.gov](mailto:mikkaka.overstreet@education.ky.gov)
- Teresa Rogers – Literacy Consultant – [teresa.rogers@education.ky.gov](mailto:teresa.rogers@education.ky.gov)
- Pamela Winger – Literacy Consultant – [pamela.winger@education.ky.gov](mailto:pamela.winger@education.ky.gov)

**Feedback from the Field**



*Your feedback helps us to tailor the Link to best meet the needs of teachers. We want to hear from you!*

[E-mail MK Overstreet.](mailto:MK.Overstreet@education.ky.gov)

"Thank you so much for including various content areas in the literacy

newsletter. As an elementary teacher, I appreciate being able to find cross disciplinary ideas all in one place!

–Lily

"Thank you for writing about signs of depression in children. We don't talk enough about the importance of

mental health to student success."

–Lindsay

"The Kentucky Literacy Link sets a high bar for Kentucky educational newsletters!"

–Mike

**Additional Reading and Other Resources**

- Kentucky State Park Foundation offering scholarships for school visits- The Kentucky State Park Foundation (KSPF) is offering School Field Trip Grants (KSFT). The program helps students explore the outdoors by providing transportation and program support to schools, allowing them to enjoy state parks and historic sites. Once in the parks, a world of learning begins as young people discover their natural, cultural and historical heritage; participate in volunteer and service-learning activities; enjoy recreational opportunities and most importantly, begin a lifelong relationship with Kentucky State Parks. An application for the School Field Trip Grant may be downloaded [here](#). Questions should be directed to the State Parks Foundation office at (859) 351-8430.
- Kentucky Professional Learning Guidance Available- In 2011, Kentucky was selected by Learning Forward to be the demonstration state for their initiative: *Transforming Professional Learning to Prepare*

*College and Career Ready Students.* As a part of that work, a broad stakeholder group formed the Professional Learning Task Force to study the state of professional learning in the state and created a report that included a number of recommendations for improving the system of professional learning. One recommendation was that a guidance document be created for stakeholders that provide or facilitate professional learning for Kentucky's educators. The guidance includes a wealth of information to support the planning, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning. It makes explicit and practical connections to work occurring around PGES, including information on professional growth goals and student growth goals. A number of tools and strategies are included or linked within the resource. You can locate the Kentucky Professional Learning Guidance on [KDE's Professional Learning webpage](#) or you can access it within [Kentucky's Model Curriculum](#)

[Framework](#) under "Professional Learning in the 21st Century".

- Each year, NEH offers tuition-free opportunities for school, college, and university educators to study a variety of humanities topics. Stipends of \$1,200-\$3,900 help cover expenses for these one- to five-week programs. For more information and application instruction click [here](#).
- Register to receive access to the electronic edition of USA TODAY at NO COST for your classroom, courtesy of the USA TODAY Charitable Foundation and/or one of our generous partners in education. We are now accepting requests for grants that will begin in January 2015 and run through the spring semester. The e-Edition is the exact digital replica of the print edition of the newspaper and is available 5 days per week. Educators (elementary, middle and high school) may register [here](#) to receive complimentary access to the e-Edition for use in the classroom.

