Kentucky Adult Education launches Skills U

Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE) launched a new brand and logo July 1 for the free instructional programming it offers in all 120 Kentucky counties. “Skills U” reflects an increased emphasis on helping adults build academic and essential workforce skills for postsecondary education and careers.

“Our new brand is a reflection of the reality that it is no longer enough for Kentuckians to earn just a high school or GED® diploma, a reality further underscored by the implementation of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act,” says Reecie Stagnolia, vice president for adult education, Council on Postsecondary Education.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) improves connections to employment and training opportunities that lead to economic prosperity for workers and their families. For KYAE Skills U, this translates to more intentional strategies to help its students enter postsecondary institutions and be better prepared to gain and retain living-wage jobs.

“Kentucky Adult Education Skills U will continue to provide the free instructional services that have always been offered through Kentucky Adult Education – everything from foundational academic skills and essential skills identified as critical by employers to preparation for the GED® test – and beyond,” Stagnolia says. “Now, we are working more intentionally with our partners to create a seamless system that allows Kentuckians to get the postsecondary education and sustainable employment they need.”

KYAE Skills U provided many branded student success materials to local programs, including: folders, pens with highlighters, pencils, planners, backpacks and credit-card-style USB drives. Additionally, new signage featuring the new brand was distributed to local programs.

Beginning July 1, a new series of radio and TV spots began running through the Kentucky Broadcasters’ Association (KBA) Public Education Program (PEP); these spots feature a new texting campaign being run by KYAE Skills U. Click here to view the spot currently running on TV. The audio from this spot is currently running on the radio.

To view the webinar about the new branding, as well as to download materials to aid with rebranding, go here.

If you need any assistance with branding, please contact Missy Brownson, senior associate for system support, at missy.brownson@ky.gov or (502) 892-3014.

McCracken County graduate Phildon Wooden stands with a KYAE Skills U retractable banner.
The 2017-18 KYAE Skills U Professional Development Handbook was posted for viewing on June 30. This preview PDF version allows programs to begin planning their PD for the year. The actual PD Handbook, featuring active registration links, will be posted and sent to programs shortly after KAERS becomes active for 2017-18.

“Our goal was to streamline and increase the readability of the PD Handbook,” says Sharon Johnston, director of college and career prep. “In order to do so, we pulled in the system support team, who assisted in the redesign of the handbook, as well as with making it possible to provide only one document that contains everything needed to review and register for PD courses. I think the new handbook highlights and makes it easier to access the excellent courses being offered, as well as other vital professional development information.”

**EMPower Plus mathematics pilot has promising results**

*By Gayle Box, Senior Associate, College and Career Prep*

From August 2016 through May 2017, students in Pre-GED®-level math classes in 19 programs explored math concepts by connecting real-life situations and problems to mathematical principles – and most of them loved it! Some of the situations they explored in Everyday Number Sense: Mental Math and Visual Models included everyday shopping, traveling cross country, traveling through time, winning the lottery and creating a budget. They used number lines, identified patterns, and created arrays; they were introduced to equivalency, exponents, order of operations and mathematical properties. Of the participating students who post-tested in math, 81% made a level gain on the TABE.

The Extending Mathematical Power curriculum is distributed by McGraw-Hill, a partner in this pilot. The materials for the pilot included one Teacher Book, 10 Student Books and all supplies needed to teach the 14 lessons. The books, originally released in 2005, have been updated and align tightly to the CCRS for Mathematics. Participating programs of similar size were placed into cohorts which met biweekly via Google Hangouts/conference call to both their students’ and their own reactions to the lessons. Reactions to nearly all 14 lessons were extremely positive, to the point that one teacher had other students asking to join an EMPower class.

Because the response to the pilot was so positive, KYAE Skills U will offer the EMPower Pilot model as a professional development opportunity for up to 20 different programs in FY2017-18. The first meeting is August 11, so be sure to register ASAP. See page 9 of the PD Handbook for more information and registration access. The final pilot report can be accessed here.

**Report released on effectiveness of Accelerating Opportunity**

The Urban Institute, with its partner George Washington University, released its final impact report on Accelerating Opportunity on June 28. Accelerating Opportunity, a Jobs for the Future initiative, is designed to transform how states work with their adult education programs and community colleges to provide training for underprepared adult learners.

New evidence from the final impact report finds that the initiative successfully gave underprepared students the chance to start on a career pathway at community colleges in Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, and Louisiana. Students who could not otherwise access college were able to earn college credits and credentials. Some groups of students, among the 4,300 participants, experienced employment and earnings gains.

Accelerating Opportunity Kentucky (AOKY) began as an initiative of Jobs for the Future (JFF). Although the JFF grant ended, AOKY services have continued as a partnership of Kentucky Adult Education Skills U, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board. Click here for more information about the report.
Construction/Trades is first KYAE Skills U sector partnership

By Lori Looney, Senior Associate, College and Career Prep

KYAE Skills U is targeting Kentucky’s five high-growth employment sectors as the impetus for new stakeholder partnerships. These new, strategic partnerships will create greater awareness of Kentucky's high-growth employment sectors and increase student transitions to college and career.

The first of these strategic partnerships was initiated in FY 17. KYAE Skills U developed a Construction/Trades sector partnership with Kentucky’s 16 Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, the eight adult education programs encompassed in the eight-county southeastern Kentucky Paths to Promise Zone and EKCEP.

Touchstone Energy, the employer partner, guided KYAE in the development of contextualized adult education curriculum. Touchstone Energy managers ranked the mathematics, language, and employability skills most valued in their Construction/Trades sub-sector. Subsequently, contextualized curriculum was developed around the most valued skills.

To promote the new sector-sanctioned curriculum, KYAE Skills U created two video vignettes featuring Touchstone Energy employees who had transitioned from GED® diploma attainment and from a KCTCS Lineman Training Program to a career in the sector. These vignettes will be used throughout the state in adult education learning centers, Kentucky Career Centers, and Touchstone Energy External Affairs Educational Outreach programs to promote Construction/Trades sector college and career pathways.

The chart above features a master list of lessons from the project that have been posted on the KYAE Skills U Lesson Bank. Here are links to the two videos that have been created:

- [https://youtu.be/Sf8Ev5EkByw](https://youtu.be/Sf8Ev5EkByw)
- [https://youtu.be/LSoLtsbR5Mw](https://youtu.be/LSoLtsbR5Mw)

**Ky3C hires coordinator**

The Kentucky College and Career Connection Coalition (Ky3C), of which Kentucky Adult Education Skills U is a core partner, has selected Melissa Bondurant as coordinator to continue the work started under the leadership of Kim Drummond, director of strategic initiatives at GEAR UP Kentucky. Ky3C is a voluntary, statewide network of people and organizations collaborating to expand college and career outreach in Kentucky.

Melissa has 16 years’ experience in program and event management in nonprofit organizations and state government. Her most recent position was with the Department for Public Health, Cabinet for Health and Family Services. The interview selection committee resoundingly agreed that she possesses the expertise to lead the Ky3C and align, enhance and expand statewide college and career outreach efforts for both secondary and adult students.

Melissa’s office is located within the KYAE Skills U offices and she reports to Sharon Johnston and Jacqueline Korengel.

“I look forward to working with the Ky3C board of directors, members and partners, including adult educators, to build and sustain the coalition and expand college and career outreach efforts statewide,” Melissa says. “Several organizations across Kentucky focus on college and career access, readiness and success, and I’m excited to bring us all together and help align and strengthen our message and collective impact initiatives.”
IMPORTANT: NCRC information
The following information was provided by Joe Paul, Kentucky NCRC system coordinator, on July 12, 2017.

Please Note: ACT, Inc. began transitioning from the NCRC to the NCRC 2.0 on June 1, 2017.

Important Dates:
1. Paper sunset date is August 18, 2017; all materials must be at the ACT Scoring Center before that date to be scored.
2. All NCRC 1.0 assessments will end on October 1, 2017; everyone must begin using the NCRC 2.0 assessments on that date.
3. Training for the new VALIDUS/TAO system is available in online webinars and administrators can practice in the ACT WorkKeys Training Realm.
4. If you received an email letter from ACT with a link to sign up for the new system, do not reply to it. We are doing this on a statewide level.
5. We are anticipating a September 1, 2017, start date with NCRC 2.0 for all partners.

DO NOT order any of the new tests until you are given permission from your state agency leadership.
We are scheduling changes to the KYNCRC database to accommodate the new data formats and the layout of the new certificate. We will be conducting multiple training sessions across the state to show the changes to VALIDUS online testing system and explain the new assessments.

Educate & Elevate hosts webinar series
Educate & Elevate, a collaboration of the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) and the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education (NCSDAE), is a national campaign of 55,000+ adult education leaders to move learning opportunities forward for all Americans to achieve economic and social mobility. (Reecie Stagnolia, KYAE Skills U vice president, serves as chair of NCSDAE.) This campaign was created to help policymakers understand the value that adult educators bring to students, workers and businesses in contributing to social mobility and economic growth. As stated on the Educate & Elevate website, “If we educate, then we elevate.”

Educate & Elevate is hosting a webinar series to support adult educators’ efforts in outreach. These webinars are being recorded, so they may be watched live or after they air.

The next webinar is:
• Social Media Strategies | July 26 | 2:00 p.m. (EST)

Past webinars are:
• Kickoff / Get Connected – Get the Tools – Get Ready
• News Media Outreach
• Working with Legislators
• Hosting a Special Event

Go here to register for the next webinar and view past webinars.

Resources available to help individuals with disabilities
High-quality service to individuals with disabilities is a critical goal of WIOA partners and practitioners. For this reason, Workforce GPS has created a series of 10 “playlists” that provide a carefully selected set of links to technical assistance resources such as toolkits, reports, online courses and videos on a specific topic related to improving service to individuals with disabilities.

Here are the topics of the playlists that are available:
• Guidance for WIOA Programs, Service Providers, and Practitioners Working with Individuals with Disabilities
• Including Individuals with Disabilities in Outreach and Recruitment
• Disability Etiquette – Effective Communication with Individuals with Disabilities
• Physical Access for Individuals with Disabilities
• Technology Access for Individuals with Disabilities
• Employer Engagement Strategies to Recruit and Retain Individuals with Disabilities
• Individuals with Disabilities – Partnerships to Support Education, Training, and Employment
• Legislation Relevant to Individuals with Disabilities
• Guidance for Employers and WIOA-Related Service Providers Working with Students with Disabilities
• Guidance for Employers and WIOA-Related Service Providers Working with Veterans with Disabilities

To access these playlists, go here.
After 10 years with Kentucky Adult Education, I find that it is time to tell you goodbye. It has been a privilege to work with so many of you over the last decade. I fell in love with the mission of adult education while serving 2002-2007 as the lead instructor for Perry County and am grateful to Charlene, Frona and Scott, not only for their dedication to their students, but also for their patience with this transplant from Texas.

For the last 10 years, it has been an honor to work with the talented staff at the state office, helping to shape standards-based instruction across 120 counties. Along the way, I discovered a passion for mathematics instruction and so appreciate the many opportunities I’ve had to learn and promote student-centered mathematics instruction.

Adult education is challenging work – I applaud the efforts you make daily and wish you all only the best. Thank you for our time together.

- Gayle Box
Senior Associate, College & Career Prep

To paraphrase Dr. Seuss, I’m not going to cry because it’s over. Instead, I’ll smile because of the good fortune to retire from a job that is rewarding and meaningful. I’ve worked 49 years, 47 of which have been with the University of Kentucky, the Council on Postsecondary Education, and Kentucky Adult Education. I’m happy to have landed in the GED® office. Working with Rae and Benita has been a joy and meeting staff from around the state via email and phone has been a pleasure. Every day, KYAE/GED® staff make a difference. I’ve never been in a position where the dedication to students is more apparent.

I thank everyone in the KYAE/GED® family for the opportunity to work with you. It truly has been my pleasure.

If nothing ever changed, there would be no butterflies.

- Jerry Ann Warmouth
Business Specialist, GED® Services

The Skills U Adult Education program at Bluegrass Community and Technical College in Fayette County has developed a partnership with the Eastside Public Library, of which one of the results is classroom space in the library. Pictured is the library classroom, which features computers with the capability to log into the BCTC network using Direct Access, as well as such items as printers, a SMART Board and Scantron machine.

By Gayle Box, Senior Associate, College and Career Prep

✓ GCFLearnFree.org – If you’ve never gone to this site, you’ll want to check it out. Besides free lessons for math, science, social studies and reading, its lessons include computer basics and Microsoft Office. In fact, GCFLearnFree offers more than 180 topics presented as lessons, tutorials, videos, interactives and games.

✓ CUNY HSE Mathematics Curriculum Framework – To meet the demands of the new HSE tests, the City University of New York (CUNY) offers curriculum frameworks for math, science and social studies. The mathematics framework is an instructional guide including curriculum maps, descriptions of topic units and illustrative lesson plans. What a resource – and it’s free!