



News to Use

September 2018

A letter from Reecie Stagnolia, vice president for adult education



Dear local Kentucky Skills U providers,

For those of you whom I haven't had the pleasure of meeting, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Reecie Stagnolia, and I'm the vice president for adult education, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. I have worked in adult education in Kentucky since 1992, when what is now known as Kentucky Skills U was called the Department for Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL). My passion for adult education is fueled not only by the experiences I've had over the past 26 years, but also by personal experience; my father was a GED® graduate who served in the Navy, took advantage of the GI Bill, and later became the superintendent of schools in our home county.

As you may know, adult education started in Kentucky, with Cora Wilson Stewart's Moonlight Schools. Since then – and even since I began my career – adult education has transformed significantly.

Some things have stayed the same; adult educators are still working diligently to meet the educational needs of adults in our communities. However, just as our Commonwealth's workforce needs have changed, the nature of our business has been steadily shifting over the past few years, from an emphasis on providing basic literacy and GED® instructional services to an ever-increasing emphasis on preparing Kentuckians for college and career.

The shift in adult education services, reflected in the federally mandated Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), is being brought to life in Kentucky via Kentucky Skills U and our core partners. Two of the most significant, recent indicators of this shift have been our rebranding and the recent RFA, both of which were designed to address the ever-evolving role of adult education in Kentucky and the depth and breadth of our services.

Change is rarely easy or comfortable, but as George Bernard Shaw said, "Progress is impossible without change." I am committed to helping our agency and our local programs evolve to help ensure that Kentucky adults get the academic and essential skills they need for long-term jobs in high-demand fields that provide sustainable wages. We are hopeful that the changes we make help our students progress further faster and make changes and choices that will break cycles of under-education, unemployment/underemployment and poverty – positive effects that will be felt in families, communities and the state-at-large.

Thank you for the hard work you do every day; its impact will ripple on for generations.

Sincerely,

Reecie D. Stagnolia

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AND MORE!

Kentucky Skills U staff news

Natalie Cummins named senior associate

Natalie Cummins has been named a senior associate on KYSU's Administration & Accountability team. Natalie, previously an associate, fills the role vacated by Natasha Murray, who is now employed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle, Washington.

Reecie Stagnolia says, "Natalie's experience coming from a local Skills U program (Jessamine County) has been invaluable to the team. She will continue to provide leadership and technical assistance support to her assigned region of the state as she takes on a more active role in leadership and other new assignments in the Administration & Accountability area."

Jacqueline Korengel published in COABE Journal

Dr. Jacqueline Korengel, associate vice president, Kentucky Skills U, has published an article in a special Career Pathways edition of the COABE Journal: The Resource for Adult Education. The national publication is produced by the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE).

Jacqueline's article is entitled Nurturing Adult Students' Locus of Control to Improve Self Efficacy and Achievement; it can be found on page 93 in the publication, available for viewing [here](#).

Burlington English is excellent tool for ELLs



Looking for a way to integrate career exploration and essential (soft) skills instruction into your English Language Acquisition (ELA) curriculum? The Burlington English Career Exploration & Soft Skills blended course, provided free to programs by Kentucky Skills U, allows you to easily integrate these topics for beginner-, intermediate- and advanced-level English Language Learners (ELLs).

This course is designed to help ELLs plan their career pathways and explore career options, gain the essential (soft) skills necessary to find a job and succeed in the workplace, and learn about educational and training opportunities.

Rebecca Watkins, ELA instructor for Skills U at Southcentral Kentucky Community & Technical College, uses Burlington English (BE) products regularly with her students. She says, about BE products in general, "We really believe it to be a wonderful tool for adult English language learners. It is research-based and aligns better with CASAS than any other curriculum I have tried." She sees benefits to using Burlington English for both students and instructors. "It provides a lot of flexibility for students to work at their level and pace," she says. "Once instructors become familiar with the program, it significantly cuts their planning time. It also provides a lot of flexibility for teachers to tailor it to their individual learning styles."

Rebecca has the following student anecdotes to share related to Burlington English:

- **"When exploring career clusters, the students became really involved researching careers that appealed to them. It was so cool to witness that level of enthusiasm."**
- **"I had one student that really took to the program and clocked in 40 hours in three weeks."**
- **"I have another student who will work on the program at home when she can't come to class because of limited access to child care."**

Interested in learning more about how you can use Burlington English in your ELA classroom? Contact Joyce Bullock at joyce.bullock@ky.gov or 502-892-3015.

Rae Smith presents at GEDTS conference



Rae Smith, Kentucky GED® administrator, represented Kentucky Skills U well at the GED Testing Service® Conference, held July 25-27 in San Diego, California.

Rae served on two panels at the conference. Her first panel session was "Leveraging Technology to Improve Outcomes in Corrections," about which Rae says, with a laugh, "My claim to fame is that I know how to give the GED Ready Test™ in correctional settings in three different ways." She says, "We (in Kentucky) see innovation at our local jail level. Once they've offered a computer-based test, there's a willingness to offer computer-based instruction – and even some Internet instruction. The modest growth we saw in GED® testing in FY18 was due to increased testing at local jails."

The second panel on which Rae served was during the closing plenary session, which was attended by more than 500 people. During this session, "Success Beyond the GED®: Connecting Students to Post-Secondary Education and Jobs," Rae talked about the KY Skills U rebranding and the adoption of the college readiness recommendation by all Kentucky public universities and KCTCS. [This adoption of the American Council on Education (ACE) recommendation means that GED® testers who score a 165 or above on a module or modules may enroll in a corresponding credit-bearing course (i.e., English 101 for RLA, 100-level social studies/science, quantitative math). Those scoring a 175 or above on math may enter college algebra.]

Rae says, "We are doing some forward-looking things in Kentucky and it was a privilege to share a couple of our initiatives at the conference plenary session."

(Almost) Everything You Need to Know About Professional Learning (PL)

Kentucky Skills U is implementing many changes this year, and one of the most significant changes is the transition from professional development to professional learning being implemented by the College & Career Prep team.

What is the difference between PD and PL?

Professional development (PD) is comprised of trainings that are episodic updates of information delivered in a didactic manner, separate from authentic work experiences. PD increases general knowledge and builds educator awareness through attending off-site events. Professional learning (PL), by comparison, is rooted in authentic work experiences because it is job-embedded.

What was the impetus for the change from PD to PL?

There were two primary drivers – changes at both the federal and state levels – that precipitated the change.

Changes at the Federal Level:

The first series of changes came from the federal level. In response to a 2012 National Research Council Report that recommended “federal and state policy makers should ensure that professional development and technical assistance for [adult literacy] instructors are available,” the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), via the Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS), released the [Adult Education Teacher Competencies](#). These competencies were designed to improve the quality of U.S. adult education teachers by identifying the specific, requisite knowledge and skills for the role.

Further, in a September 2015 blog post by former OCTAE Acting Secretary of Education Johan Uvin titled *Throwing Down the Gauntlet for Professional Development*, Uvin argued, “A serious conversation and commitment to Adult Education professional development is long overdue. We should be talking more extensively and with higher-level commitment about the conditions we need to create for work and learning in our field, for the good of adult learners and our nation.”

A complete re-design of the [LINCS PD Center](#) followed. The re-design contained vital planning tools, such as the [LINCS State Leadership Self Assessment Tool](#) and the [State Asset Map Tool](#), designed to assist states with revamping their professional development models to ensure WIOA compliance and data-driven, job-embedded, collaborative professional learning.

Changes at the State Level:

In response to the changes at the federal level, the KY Skills U Leadership Team charged the College & Career Prep (CCP) team with creating a “blue sky” reinvention of professional learning that would be aligned to new federal best practice guidelines. This reinvention had to occur within the parameters of a new regional service delivery model, group cohorts geographically by Kentucky’s 10 local Workforce Development areas, better align CCP and Administration and Accountability functions, consider focus group feedback from program directors, and value PD survey feedback from providers.

What is a PLC?

PL solves specific work-based problems, focuses on improving student learning, and fosters an organizational learning culture primarily through work-based professional learning communities (PLCs).

These job-embedded PLCs allow participants to learn from shared experience and action research. PLCs function by identifying data-informed problems of practice, collaborating with local and state-level colleagues to create an action plan, implementing the plan, and reflecting on the results.

In 2018-19, PLCs will include Program Directors, Assistant Program Directors, and Instructors working 500+ hours per year. PLC work will kick off in a series of WIB-based rollout events, the schedule of which can be [viewed here](#).

Susan Pittman serving as PLC advisor



[Susan Pittman](#) has provided innovative and cutting-edge professional learning opportunities to adult educators for more than 15 years. With a passion for the adult learner, Susan has established herself as a respected leader on the local, state and national levels of adult education. Susan will serve as KY Skills U PLC Advisor for 2018-

19. In this capacity, she will develop PLC resources, train PLC coaches, and provide support to local PLCs.

The Instructional Framework Series links to resources aligned with TABE 11/12 – and more!

The Kentucky Skills U Instructional Framework Series was designed to provide a common instructional foundation for all of Kentucky’s adult education providers. Local adult educators (who intuitively aligned instruction with college and career readiness standards, student assessment criteria, and program performance metrics) provided the impetus for this project.

Building upon the work done by local providers, a state-level team designed the KY Skills U Instructional Framework Series to align all instruction statewide with the LINCS Professional Development Center State Leadership Self-Assessment Tool, the LINCS Adult Education Teacher Competencies, the Data Recognition Corporation TABE 11/12 Blueprints, and the GED Testing Service® High Impact Indicators (HIIs). (Continued on p. 4)

• (Almost) Everything You Need to Know About PL, continued •

The Instructional Framework Series links to resources aligned with TABE 11/12 – and more! (continued from p. 3)

The result is a four-framework series comprised of:

- [The Student Persistence/Retention Framework](#) – Research and strategies targeted to adult student retention and persistence, aligned with LINCS AE Teacher Competencies
- [The Mathematics Instructional Framework](#) – Instructional resources aligned with TABE 11/12 levels and GED® HIIIs
- [The Reasoning Through Language Arts Framework](#) – Instructional resources aligned with TABE 11/12 levels and GED® HIIIs
- [The Instructional Technology Framework](#) – Instructional resources, accompanied by detailed screenshot and video tutorials, aligned with LINCS AE Teacher Competencies

The KY Skills U Instructional Framework Series provides comprehensive, assessment-aligned instructional support to adult educators. The frameworks serve as the basis for intensive, ongoing, job-embedded professional learning in the form of provider-based professional learning communities and targeted, framework-aligned, online professional learning elective courses.

New online, elective professional learning opportunities now available

Another key aspect of the 2018-19 Professional Learning Model is the re-design of professional learning electives. All electives (with one exception) will now be online and will range between 6-8 hours each, with most offerings being 6-hour courses spanning 4 weeks.

Highlights include:

- New TABE 11/12-aligned Math and RLA electives
- New elective based on a model Google Classroom inspired by the book, *The Problem with Math is English*
- New LINCS-based Corrections elective
- New elective to orient participants to the new English Language Proficiency Standards and align with CASAS assessments

Details about these and other PL course offerings can be found in the [2018-19 Professional Learning Handbook](#).

KY Skills U hires Director of Strategic Partnerships, Career Navigation Coordinator

About Anna Larson, Director of Strategic Partnerships

On July 16, Anna Larson joined the Kentucky Skills U team as Director of Strategic Partnerships. Anna will be responsible for the oversight of regional Strategic Partner Coordinators, who will act as conduits for student and client services and work hand-in-hand with adult education providers and comprehensive career center service providers. Anna, who served as Director of Innovation and Partnerships at the Kentucky Department of Workforce Investment before joining the KYSU team, will provide support and counsel to the Vice President and Associate Vice President on various administrative, organizational and programmatic issues related to workforce partners, as well as leverage resources and strategic partnerships to inform and advance students' educational and career outcomes.

Before her work at KDWI, Anna spent 13 years as manager of workforce development at Jefferson Community & Technical College; previously, she had worked as project director over One-Stop Career Centers – Adult and Dislocated Workers for Kentuckiana-Works (the Louisville-area workforce investment board), as well as state coordinator for outreach and admissions for Job Corps.

Anna says, "I'm so excited and energized to have joined Kentucky Skills U in my new role overseeing strategic partnerships across the Commonwealth. I am very proud to have spent my entire career as a public servant in various aspects of workforce and educational initiatives. I'm looking forward to getting to know each of you and taking advantage of learning about all the great work that you do to contribute to the Skills U family, our students and the community."

About Susan Hopkins, Career Navigation Coordinator

On August 22, Susan Hopkins began her role as the Kentucky Skills U Career Navigation Coordinator. Susan will lead the needs assessment, planning, development, evaluation and continuous improvement of support aimed at improving adult student transition outcomes through the deployment of statewide career navigation services. Susan will assist Sharon Johnston, director of KY Skills College & Career Prep, in convening, training and coaching local career navigators.

Susan came out of retirement to join the KY Skills U College & Career Prep team; previously, she worked 28 years at the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA). For her last 20 years at KHEAA, Susan was responsible for leadership and oversight of KHEAA's outreach programs. During that time, Susan guided growth in the outreach area and oversaw statewide, regional and mobile outreach programs and staff; served as Project Lead for the U.S. Department of Education's College Access Challenge grant program; served on the regional leadership team as a key decision maker in the Kentucky College Coaches program; and served on the Board of Directors of the Kentucky College Access Network.

Susan says, "I am absolutely thrilled to join the Kentucky Skills U team! Throughout my career, I have remained passionate about helping Kentuckians realize their dreams and look forward to helping Kentucky adult students obtain the education they need to earn a sustainable wage and to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families."

Work Ready Scholarship provides excellent opportunity for Kentucky Skills U students

The Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship (WRKS) provides a great opportunity for Kentucky Skills U students to earn – at no cost to them – a career certification and/or associate of applied science (AAS) from KCTCS colleges. The WRKS provides financial aid for eligible Kentuckians who have not yet earned at least an associate’s degree – including individuals without a high school diploma who wish to obtain their GED® diploma in tandem with pursuing a career certification or AAS degree in one of Kentucky’s [top five career sectors](#).

Leta Martin, Morehead State Adult Education Academy coordinator, has had a positive first-hand experience with the WRKS; her son Layden was a recipient. Leta says, “Layden always struggled with school. I never gave up and I never let Layden give up because I knew the importance of education. My parents did not finish school and they instilled in my sister and me to be sure to get an education. I also wanted that for my son. After becoming interested in welding, he became more interested in school. Now he is focused on obtaining certificates and that makes all the struggle worth it. When I found out that my son had received this scholarship, I was overwhelmed with gratitude. I knew this would be a way for him to attend vocational school, receive his certificates, and find sustainable employment. Through this scholarship, Layden has the opportunity to finish his education.”

Leta reports that Layden is now taking the two remaining classes he needs to receive a Pipeline Welder certificate. In addition to this certificate, Layden will graduate from Maysville Community and Technical College in December with the following certificates: AWS National Skills Standards Level I, Welder Helper, Gas Welder, Tack Welder, Production Welder, Arc Welder, Shielded Metal Arc Welding, Gas Metal Arc Welding and Gas Tungsten Arc Welding.

Layden is also now employed in his area of interest and ever-growing expertise. Leta says, “In February, Layden’s welding instructor told him that he had an opportunity to begin working at Link Belt – but he would have to pass three welding tests. Layden successfully passed all three tests, then was hired temporary full-time. In June, he got a raise. He is currently working within the temporary agency within Link Belt, until he has acquired the time and experience he needs to be hired full-time with Link Belt. Layden has said that he would like to eventually become ‘core’ at Link Belt and further learn more skills and gain more experience to help him in his welding career.”

Helping your students apply for the WRKS has been made easier – and instructional! The KY Skills U Lesson Bank features a lesson on applying for the WRKS. The lesson, called *Don’t Let Cost Be Your Goal Buster: Ways to Pay for Higher Education*, can be accessed [here](#).

ITTS program no longer provided by KY Skills U

Please note: The Instruction Targeted for TABE Success (ITTS) online learning program is no longer provided by KY Skills U. However, KY Skills U provides and recommends the use of the Fast Forward and Burlington English online learning programs, and use of the free EdReady online learning program is also recommended.



Layden Howard, son of Morehead State Adult Education Academy Coordinator Leta Martin, is a prime example of the positive impact the Work Ready Scholarship can have.

Need inspiration?

Meet Stella Massey.

*By Nichole Braun,
Program Director,
Campbell County Skills U*



I met Stella Massey at a back-to-school event. She was a single mother of three boys and everything seemed to be a struggle. Stella was a high school dropout and struggled with day-to-day finances. She was naive enough to give me her phone number and I didn’t give up until I got her into GED® classes. Several weeks into class she noticed I was having a computer issue that I couldn’t figure out and offered to resolve it for me. I knew at that minute she was something special.

Since that day, I have been blessed to witness the following things:

- The day she earned her GED® and was the student speaker at graduation.
- The day she got her drivers license.
- The day she got out of public housing and off all public assistance.
- The day she came in crying after voting in a national election for the first time.

I attended the high school graduation of her oldest son; he was the first person in her family to graduate high school. Since then, all three of her boys have earned high school credentials.

I was there when she graduated from Gateway CTC with an associates degree and was once again asked to be student speaker, but this time she spoke in front of thousands of people at Northern Kentucky Convention Center.

Stella was accepted into NKU, where she received multiple honors and achievements, including the President’s List Academic Scholarship and Honor Society. In December 2017, she earned her bachelor’s degree; she had a 3.9 GPA.

And she did all that while working part-time, taking care of a critically ill family member, quitting a lifelong smoking habit and losing 90 pounds.

Currently, Stella is going to school full-time working toward a masters in social work, teaches math 20 hours a week at Campbell County Skills U and continues to give so much to her students, colleagues and community.