

Student-led Individual Learning Plan promotional project unveiled during KDE’s Superintendents Webcast

Submitted by the Kentucky Department of Education

During the Superintendents Webcast on Aug. 11, leaders with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) presented a new project aimed at promoting Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) with direct input from students and educators.

An ILP is a comprehensive framework for advising students in grades 6-12 to engage in coursework and activities that best prepare them for college and career success. Members of the 2025-2026 Commissioner’s Student Advisory Council were interested in helping students prepare to transition out of high school and developed the ILP Video Showcase to highlight how important ILPs are for students.

As part of the showcase, KDE is seeking videos from students across the state, ranging from 30 seconds to 2 minutes long,

showing how the ILP helps students explore careers, set goals and map out their futures. Some of the students on the Commissioner’s Student Advisory Council produced a video promoting the ILP Video Showcase.

The ILP Video Showcase is open to all middle and high school students, teachers and counselors. Submissions will be accepted between Aug. 17-Oct. 23. More details, including how to submit a project, can be found on KDE’s ILP webpage.

Special Education Monitoring

Superintendents heard a presentation from KDE’s Office of Special Education and Early Learning on the fiscal and programmatic monitoring of special education programs.

KDE Associate Commissioner Gretta Hylton said the presentation was one of KDE’s follow-up actions from a focus group the department convened with superintendents in April to examine trends

with the monitoring of programs that fall under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Jessica Jones, branch manager within KDE’s Division of IDEA Monitoring and Results, provided several positive trends taken from the districts, including how several districts:

Utilized early learning buses to bridge students from preschool to kindergarten, delivering hands-on instruction in literacy, mathematics, art, science, dramatic play and motor skills to children and families throughout rural communities;

Hosted family nights throughout the school year to provide learning opportunities and family engagement;

Increased peer participation within moderate and severe disabilities classrooms;

Held reverse transition fairs where students presented resumes and presentations about

themselves to community members; and

Established partnerships with community-based training centers and enrolled students in programs that developed independent living and employment skills.

Jones said one district utilized volunteer grandparents to work with small groups of students.

Jones and Division Director Jarrod Slone reviewed trends in areas where noncompliance has been identified through KDE’s programmatic and fiscal IDEA monitoring, highlighting common issues for districts to consider as they prepare for the upcoming monitoring year.

Senate Bill 4 Principal Leadership Listening Tour

In response to Senate Bill 4 (2026), KDE’s Office of Continuous Improvement and Support is inviting education leaders and partners to help shape the future of principal leadership in Kentucky through

a series of regional listening sessions.

The regional sessions are designed to gather feedback on the knowledge, skills and supports that new principals need to succeed, with participant input directly informing the design of a statewide Kentucky Principal Leadership Development Program. KDE Associate Commissioner Kelly Foster said the initiative reflects KDE’s commitment to building a leadership system that is informed by the voices of practitioners and stakeholders from across the Commonwealth.

Three listening sessions – which will each run from 9 a.m.-noon local time – will be held across the state to maximize participation. The locations and dates are:

Sept. 14 at the Embassy Suites in Bowling Green;

Sept. 15 at the Downtown Marriott in Lexington; and

Sept. 16 at the Kentucky Valley Educational

Cooperative in Hazard.

KDE encourages superintendents, district staff, principals, assistant principals, regional cooperative staff, higher education representatives, legislators and other education partners to attend and share their perspectives.

Registration is available through the QR code on the Shaping the Future of Principal Leadership flyer.

During the webcast, superintendents also:

Heard updates on the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE), including new members and new leaders, as explained in Kentucky Teacher’s coverage of the Aug. 5-6 KBE meeting;

Received information about KDE training sessions to help with the new Cognia Improvement Platform; and

Received a reminder about the Aug. 21 deadline to request changes with career and technical education pathways for the 2026-2027 school year.

Looking back to Aug. 20, 2018

Written by Jonathan Wright

The following information was entered into the Aug. 20, 2018, edition of The Ledger Independent:

Robots invade RULH curriculum

RIPLEY, Ohio —As technology continues to rapidly evolve, many schools are also taking steps to engage students with the new avenues it provides.

RULH Elementary School, with the collaboration of the DriveMind Group from North Canton, Ohio, will soon provide a new layer to technology education to its students. This layer, involves 15 little robots.

Mary Sonner, technology teacher at RULH, said she plans to use the humanoid robots, called the JD Humanoid, to educate her fourth grade

class on the use and application of computer programming. Sonner said her students are very receptive to their education technology, and can use a basic programming language like Blockly.

With the JD Humanoids, students can program the robots through a program called EZ Builder, in order for them to preform actions.

“It’s a software where the kids write a program and implement it to their robot,” Sonner said.

With EZ Builder, students can view their written code in action in real time, among other functions. Sonner said the goal is to further connect the implications written computer code can have on physical hardware.

RULH Elementary School came into contact with the DriveMind Group back in 2017 during the Ohio Educational

Technology Conference, according to Sonner, where the school had won a JD Humanoid model robot from the group. Through that initial meeting, the school and the DriveMind Group began their collaboration towards integrating the robots into the school’s curriculum.

According to DriveMind’s social media, it is an organization created to accelerate change in the markets of education and business.

Since that meeting, Sonner said the school purchased the 15 JD Humanoid robots which will be used for her classes. The DriveMind Group will participate periodically with Sonner’s class, both providing curriculum as well as training Sonner and her students.

While she said the robots have yet to be used



Technology Coordinator Russ Curtis, Jackie Davis with DriveMind Group and Mary Sonner, stand among the 15 JD Humanoid units that will be used for Sonner’s technology class.

in her technology classes as the time to implement them hasn’t arrived yet, she is very hopeful for the new dimension that

utilizing the JD Humanoid robots will provide to her students in understanding the relationship between software and

hardware.

“I hope to introduce them in the first nine weeks with my fourth grade class,” Sonner said.

Harrodsburg man indicted in Herrington Lake boating collision

Investigation continues following July 4 incident that resulted in one death and one seriously injured

Submitted by Kentucky Fish and Wildlife

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 19, 2026) - Kentucky Department

of Fish and Wildlife Resources Game Warden arrested Cody Casey, 34, of Harrodsburg, on an indictment

warrant in connection with the July 4 boating incident on Herrington Lake. Casey was charged with operating a wake boat that struck a pontoon boat, resulting in the death of Nazar Svintozelskiy, 25, of Nicholasville. The victim’s father, Alex Svintozels-

kiy, 58, was hospitalized following the incident with serious injuries.

The 19-count indictment was returned by the Mercer County Grand Jury on Aug. 18. Casey faces charges of second-degree manslaughter, first-degree assault, third-degree assault, failure to render aid, failure to report an accident involving more than \$500 in property damage or involving injury or death, and leaving the scene of an accident involving death.

The indictment follows an investigation led by Kentucky game wardens in collaboration with the Mercer County Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office.

The investigation determined that on July 4, a wake boat operated by Casey impacted and overrode a pontoon boat

operated by Alex Svintozelskiy, 58, of Nicholasville, on Herrington Lake.

Alex Svintozelskiy was seriously injured in the collision, and Nazar Svintozelskiy, a passenger on the pontoon boat, was ejected into the water. His body was recovered from Herrington Lake on Monday, July 6.

Game wardens have continued to gather and evaluate evidence since the collision. Thirteen search warrants have been sought and executed, witnesses have been interviewed, and multiple items of evidence have been submitted for forensic and evidentiary testing.

The indictment represents the next step in the legal process. An indictment is an accusation by a grand jury and is not a finding of guilt. Casey is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in court.

Because the case is

now pending before the court, investigators and prosecutors will not release additional details that could affect the integrity of the legal proceedings or the presentation of evidence in court.

“The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources appreciates the public’s patience as this investigation has progressed. With the magnitude of this case, we have continued to prioritize accuracy and completeness over speed,” said Col. Jeremy McQueary, head of Law Enforcement for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife.

Anyone with information about the July 4 boating collision who has not yet spoken with investigators is asked to contact Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement through Kentucky State Police Post 7 at 859-623-2404.

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