

Summary of the March 2026 KY K-12 Education Technology Leaders' Virtual Meeting

In case you missed it or want a refresher, the following is what we talked about during the March 17, 2026, EdTech leaders' virtual meeting. A copy of the video and audio can be found at: <https://mediaportal.education.ky.gov/technology/2026/03/edtech-webcast-march-17-2026/>.

Public viewing of the archived webcasts and written summaries are also available on the KDE Media Portal at: <https://mediaportal.education.ky.gov/technology/district-technology-leadership-webcast/>. Numbers in **RED** indicate the timestamp for that portion of the discussion so it can be easily located on the full digital recording.

This was a joint meeting with our OET staff and all the districts joining via Microsoft Teams and/or YouTube. We will continue to make these available from our KDE media portal so that you can watch the archived discussion and share with the appropriate people in your district. Poll questions were not posed during this particular webcast due to its shortened length and closed session discussion on the CIO Summit feedback. Please remember that in addition to these webcasts being available on the KDE Media Portal, each month's webcast is accompanied by these written summaries. We encourage you to share the link and all or any portion of these summary notes with staff throughout your district who may find the information beneficial to them in their position.

(3:28) Dates of Importance Coming Up:

- ❖ **25 March.** Kentucky Educational Television (KET) will record a focus on AI in KY K-12 classrooms during their Education Matters broadcast. OET's Marty Park will be a panelist along with representatives from KY K-12 school districts and higher education. This will be led by KET's Kelsey Starks who is a huge advocate of STLP! Go to [Education Matters | KET](#) to find the specific dates that it will air (e.g., 6 April at 8 pm, 12 April at 2 pm, etc.)
- ❖ **3 April.** This is the deadline for districts to identify any exceptions regarding implementing the GoGuardian Internet content management filtering service for SY 2026-2027. This is an annual process for exception renewals, including required senior district leadership sign-off.
- ❖ **24 April.** The 2026 STLP State Championship in Lexington at the Central Bank Center and Rupp Arena. Go to [STATE – STLP](#).

(5:55) Legislative Session and Budget Updates: David Couch led a comprehensive discussion on the current legislative session, focusing on the status of budget requests for Kentucky Education Technology System (KETS), the impact of funding cuts, and the need for district leaders to advocate for restoration and cost-of-living increases, with Lisa Moore providing updates on relevant bills and legislative timelines.

- **KETS Additional Budget Request (ABR):** David explained the additional budget request to increase KETS funding by \$14.6 million annually, noting that this is our third attempt to recover from previous cuts and address the lack of cost-of-living increases since 1992. The request has not yet been identified for funding, and there are consequences to all districts if it is not approved and funded.
- **District Financial Impacts:** David emphasized that if KETS funding is not restored, districts will have to absorb costs for services which include funding for Infinite Campus online registration, cybersecurity defense, increasing KETS offers assistance to districts, addressing KY K-12 student IT Academy growth, cost of living increase to MUNIS and a new proposal for an artificial intelligence professional learning network. The costs that could shift to districts will often be at a much higher rate (40 to 60%) than if funded as a KETS shared service. He urged district's CIOs and EdTech Leaders to communicate these impacts to their Superintendents and CFOs.
- **Legislative Process and Advocacy:** David and Lisa discussed the legislative process, including the roles of the House, Senate, and conference committee in finalizing the budget. They encouraged district leaders to advocate for technology funding and highlighted past successes where district CIOs and EdTech helped secure KETS shared service funding.

- **Relevant Bills and Status:** David and Lisa provided “at this time” updates on House Bill 500, House Bill 314, House Bill 307 (pre-admission bill), and other bills noting the progress and potential impacts of each:
 - [HB44](#) – Robotics Competition Grant bill; this one has not progressed.
 - [HB257](#) - Assessment and Accountability Legislation; David noted that assessment and accountability legislation, particularly regarding summative testing, is likely to pass in some form, with ongoing debates about its content. The team is monitoring these developments closely due to their significant impact on K-12 education. This bill has not yet moved in the Senate, but there is a meeting with Senate leadership and we anticipate movement. Within OET, we will be watching for changes to online assessment and the SRC dashboard.
 - [HB307](#) – This is a pre-admission bill that includes KHEAA, CPE, and KySTATS. We already do a lot of data collection of our students, and it is our priority to continue to prioritize student privacy and not build duplicative systems. There are already existing methods for this to happen, and we have recommended that we do not build another process/system, especially if there are no funds appropriated to cover this additional work and required reporting. There are still efforts being made to move this bill forward.
 - [HB314](#) – This bill has the potential to help us get all our 174 KDE Internet Hub connections operating in a consistent way.
 - [HB463](#) – This is a new edtech data reporting bill regarding inventory and repair of district technology. This bill did not progress after our staff met with the bill sponsor to educate them on what we already have in place that adequately addresses inventory and repair.
 - [HB500](#) –The ABR was not addressed at all in the bill as it was introduced. It is going before the Senate A & R on 3/18 and will begin taking more shape as it most likely heads to a conference committee.
 - [HB727](#) – This bill identifies funding for the replacement of the KEPS system; this is the Kentucky Educator Placement System. Passed out of the House on 3/11 and is now in the Senate.
 - [SB121](#) – As part of the cleanup bill, we are requesting repeal of an outdated statute and removal of references to the Council for Education Technology.
 - [SB181/HB67](#) – There are two versions of the cleanup language from last year’s SB181 on traceable communications. We aren’t sure which one will make it, but HB67 is the one currently progressing.
 - [SB318](#) – This bill was introduced on 3/2 and relates to restricting/removing screen time during the school day. It has not been assigned to committee yet and OET has spent a good deal of time preparing an excellent bill review and will be available to educate legislators on this topic. David discussed the misconceptions about technology use in classrooms, and the importance of educating legislators and communities about actual practices, with Marty providing insights from other states and emphasizing the need for balanced technology integration.
 - **Screen Time Proposal Details:** David described a legislative proposal to cap education technology use for K-5 students at 45 minutes per day, noting the challenges in tracking usage and the need to consider averages rather than maximums.
 - **Misconceptions and Education Efforts:** There are misconceptions that a very high percentage of students spend nearly all day on computer screens, when actual usage is significantly lower. David and Marty stressed the importance of educating legislators, district staff, and communities about the reality of technology use in schools.
 - **Comparisons with Other States:** Kentucky can learn from their experiences to proactively address concerns and promote accurate understanding of technology integration.
 - **Role of School-Issued Devices and Classroom Controls:** David explained that school-issued devices are managed by teachers and content management systems, ensuring controlled and purposeful use. He advocated for moderation and face-to-face interaction skills for both students and adults.
 - **Interstate Collaboration:** David emphasized the value of relationships with counterparts in other states, which allows for direct comparison and clarification of legislative actions, benefiting Kentucky’s advocacy and policy alignment.

(34:31) CIO Summit and Kentucky Association for School Technology (KAST) Conference

Reflections: David and Marty reflected on the recent CIO Summit and KAST conference, emphasizing the collaborative efforts between districts, the Department of Education, and vendor partners, and the value of feedback and networking for advancing Edtech initiatives.

- **Collaboration and Leadership:** The team discussed the unique collaborative environment in Kentucky, where districts, the Department of Education, and vendors work together to advance technology initiatives, noting the importance of leadership and teamwork.
- **Feedback and Direction:** David and Marty highlighted the value of feedback received during the summit, which affirmed the direction of current initiatives and provided insight into district challenges and successes.
- **Event Organization and Impact:** David and Marty acknowledged the significant effort required by the KAST leadership to organize these events and the positive impact they have on professional development, networking, and morale among Edtech leaders.

At this time, we moved into closed session for districts and OET staff to share and discuss the feedback of the KY K-12 CIO Summit that occurred on 11 March 2026 at the Kentucky Association of School Technology (KAST) conference in Louisville.