

Kentucky Superintendent,

Welcome back. As a superintendent, you may be thinking *“that’s my line, I’m typically drafting the welcome back language this time of year.”* We hope this letter will serve as a bit of encouragement as we embark on Kentucky’s 2022-2023 school year. As communities are still impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, economic uncertainty, and other social challenges, we understand the critical role our schools have in ensuring a return to normalcy and a renewed focus on learning.

Thank you for providing leadership to your district and carrying the responsibility of educating future creators and innovators. There are many resources that may be beneficial to your work, and we would like to encourage you to think about how they can support your district and community.

On March 1st, the Family [Friendly School Certification](#) was launched in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education. Research shows that a family’s engagement has a direct positive impact on their student’s learning success. Encouraging family engagement is a proven strategy to cultivate a successful learning environment and improve student outcomes. We believe supporting schools via Family Friendly Certification is a great step in building trusting family-teacher and student-teacher relationships. Any parent, teacher or school staff person can lead the application and action planning process for the certification. One Kentucky principal described the experience as *“helping her transition from one-off family engagement to a system that is integrated and planned.”*

Based on family surveys and latest research, we know families are eager to be seen as a resource in their child’s school and crave transparency with 2-way communication. We encourage you to increase opportunities for families to serve in your district. Promote leadership appreciation for those serving as parent representatives on SBDM, BOEs, PTAs, PTOs, and other advisory councils. Ask families to review your volunteerism, engagement policies, and practices to let you know if there are unintended barriers on relative caregivers, English language learning families, refugees, and others. For guidance on background check requirements check out the [Guidance Document](#) and ensure staff who are collecting background checks for volunteering, understand the policies and options for families.

Finally, we encourage you to visit www.prichardcommittee.org for toolboxes with information including district community profiles, bright spot schools, current research, and blog posts on education topics. Additionally, we want to uplift and applaud innovative work being done in our state for education and solicit you [to share](#) the notable examples of work unfolding in the upcoming school year. Again, thank you for your hard work and dedication to Kentucky families, their students, your communities, and our future!



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