

# Commonwealth Education Continuum (CEC) Meeting Minutes

**Date:** April 22, 2026

**Time:** 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**Location:** Virtual

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## 1. Welcome and Agenda Overview

**Commissioner Robbie Fletcher** and **President Aaron Thompson** welcomed the members and guests and set the focus on collaboration and moving forward.

**Dr. Amanda Ellis** (Vice President, CPE) welcomed the members. The session's objectives focused on early childhood workforce skills, the implications of AI on education, and legislative updates from the 2026 session.

## 2. Family and Community Engagement Update

**Jenny Hobson** (GEAR UP Kentucky/CPE) provided an update on the workgroup's objectives to understand family perceptions and identify barriers to postsecondary attainment. During the Family and Community Engagement update, members reviewed the workgroup's goals to better understand family perceptions, identify barriers to postsecondary access, and develop tools to support families and community-based organizations. Attendees contributed a wide range of potential partners and stakeholders, including postsecondary institutions, P–12 representatives, community organizations, and groups supporting special populations such as foster care youth and students with disabilities. There was strong emphasis on expanding middle school engagement, leveraging existing community networks, and ensuring inclusive, family-centered strategies. The workgroup will move forward with focus groups and a statewide needs assessment beginning in summer 2026.

## 3. Workforce Skills Alignment Panel

**Sherlyn Bratcher** (GRREC) moderated a panel featuring **Melissa Bell** (CPE), **Lynn Baker** (GOEC), and **Robert Meachem** (KDE).

The discussion on skills alignment highlighted the importance of connecting early childhood standards, K–12 education, postsecondary systems, and workforce expectations into a cohesive continuum. Members emphasized the need to better align the Profile of a Learner and Kentucky's Graduate Profile with employer needs, while expanding access to career exploration and work-based learning opportunities. The conversation reinforced the importance of cross-

sector collaboration, clearer definitions of skills, and leveraging existing partnerships and funding opportunities to support a more coordinated statewide approach.

#### **4. Artificial Intelligence: Education and Workforce Implications**

**Caroline Leach** (University of Kentucky, Center for Applied AI) presented on the democratizing of AI training.

The AI presentation and discussion underscored the rapidly growing role of artificial intelligence in education and workforce development. Participants noted increasing student use of AI—particularly in college and career exploration—and expressed support for integrating AI into tools like Futuriti. There was consensus that AI should be approached both as a readiness tool and as an opportunity to build AI literacy in a safe and supportive environment. Members also emphasized the need for educator training, clear guidance, and a balanced “human–AI–human” approach to implementation.

#### **5. Legislative Updates**

The meeting concluded with an overview of key legislative actions from the 2026 General Assembly impacting early childhood, K–12, and postsecondary education. Topics included child care system reforms, changes to accountability systems, proactive postsecondary admissions, workforce development initiatives, and governance changes across education sectors. Members were encouraged to review additional guidance materials and continue providing input on next steps.

#### **6. Closing**

The next CEC meeting is scheduled for August 26, 2026, with an in-person meeting planned for November 18, 2026.