

Senate approves SB 1, Priority Education Governance Measure focused on scale, accountability, stewardship

The Kentucky Senate has passed Senate Bill (SB) 1, a priority education measure sponsored by Senate President Pro Tempore David Givens, R-Greensburg. Its passage followed extensive discussion on the Senate floor regarding governance, accountability and the responsibility that comes with managing Kentucky's largest public school systems. SB 1 addresses governance in school districts of significant scope and scale by clarifying the distinct

roles of boards of education and superintendents. The legislation reinforces the board's responsibility for long-term strategy, oversight, audits and superintendent accountability, while establishing clear executive authority for superintendents to manage day-to-day operations and implement the board-approved strategic plan. While presenting the bill on the floor, Givens emphasized that SB 1 is narrowly tailored and grounded in the realities of scale faced by Kentucky's largest dis-

trict. It is a system that educates roughly 15 percent of the commonwealth's public school students, receives approximately 8 percent of statewide SEEK funding and manages a budget approaching \$1.9 billion. He also noted the concentration of academic and operational challenges within the district, including transportation for tens of thousands of students and a disproportionate share of the state's lowest-performing schools. "As legislators, we create these gover-

nance structures by statute, and with that authority comes responsibility," Givens said. "When a system reaches this size and complexity, it is essential to have clear lines of decision-making, accountability and leadership so the organization can function effectively." SB 1 reflects guidance provided by the Kentucky Supreme Court regarding how the General Assembly may address governance in districts of exceptional size. The legislation includes detailed

legislative findings outlining the specific, articulable reasons for treating districts of this scale differently, ensuring the policy is grounded in both constitutional principles and the public interest. The bill builds on additional Senate action this session to strengthen education transparency and accountability, including SB 3, and is intended to operate in tandem with those reforms to improve governance, fiscal stewardship and public confidence. "This is not about

politics or personalities," Givens said. "It is about our moral and ethical responsibility to ensure students receive the best possible education and that the systems entrusted with that responsibility are structured to succeed." SB 1 now moves to the Kentucky House of Representatives for further consideration. Learn more about bills, committees, and other important updates on the 2026 Regular Session at www.legislature.ky.gov.

LWU student, faculty member make history in England

Lindsey Wilson University student Max Bennett '29 and physics professor Mark McKinnon are making history while spreading the school's name overseas. The two are the first members of the Lindsey Wilson community to participate in the university's new partnership at Harlaxton College in England.



Lindsey Wilson University physics professor Mark McKinnon, right, and student Max Bennett '29 present a Lindsey Wilson pennant to Kristen Strandberg, interim executive director and dean of Harlaxton College in Grantham, England. McKinnon is teaching courses this spring at Harlaxton and Bennett is taking classes there.

This spring semester, Bennett is taking a full slate of classes and McKinnon is teaching a trio of courses to students at Harlaxton College -- which is housed in a nearly 200-year-old Victorian manor in Grantham, England, that serves as the University of Evansville's study-abroad center. It's Bennett's first time studying abroad, and he's off to an adventurous start. After getting settled into his room in a carriage house at the college, Bennett visited London, which is about three hours south of Grantham, and also the city of Notting-

ham, which is about 25 miles to the west. "I've always wanted to travel, and coming over here you get that experience," said Bennett, who is a psychophysiology major on the dental school path from Hiseville. "It's just a great opportunity to see new sites and eat food

you've never had before while working toward my academic goals." Bennett is the only freshman of about 100 students studying this spring at Harlaxton. Although it's customary for college students to wait a year or two before taking an immersive study abroad

experience, Bennett said he took advantage of the opportunity during his freshman year at Lindsey Wilson "because I wanted to make sure I could fit it in my schedule." While exploring England's historic and cultural landmarks, Bennett also sampled

Vietnamese and Turkish cuisine, as well as what he described as the best pizza at an Italian-owned restaurant in London. "Nice people, fewer hills. During the week, Bennett takes a full load of classes at Harlaxton, which resembles a setting for a Harry Potter story. One of Bennett's spring semester courses is a physics class taught by McKinnon. McKinnon is also teaching a conceptual physics class for non-science and -mathematics majors as well as a class on history and issues of technology. McKinnon said he's enjoyed teaching a diverse assortment of students from U.S. schools. "Having a chance to listen to these students and their ideas has really opened my eyes," said McKinnon. McKinnon visited Harlaxton last spring as part of a Lindsey Wilson delegation to learn more about the college.

"One of the biggest things I missed when we visited last May is how nice people are," said McKinnon. "Everyone is so friendly. The people are wonderful. I really love the atmosphere we have here." Both Bennett and McKinnon plan to explore more of Europe this semester, including a trip to the Scottish capital of Edinburgh and a spring break trip to Ireland. Bennett also plans to visit Paris, where he hopes to see the famed soccer club Paris Saint-Germain play. In addition to having easy access to the rest of Europe, McKinnon said they are also enjoying the pedestrian-friendly East Midlands, a region of England much more flat than Southcentral Kentucky's hilly terrain. "It's kind of nice when we take a walk down to the restaurant that we take a nice, flat walk instead of going up those hills," said McKinnon.

Winter

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Shedding light on SAD
Natural light is one of the most powerful environmental factors influencing human health. It helps regulate our circadian rhythms, the body's internal clock that governs sleep, alertness and hormone production. When daylight becomes scarce during the winter months, disruptions in this rhythm can contribute to feelings of fatigue, sadness and loss of motivation and ultimately result in a SAD diagnosis. Symptoms of SAD are typically consistent with those found in other types of depression, such as persistent sadness, hopelessness, irritability and low mood. According to Mental Health America, however, there are some symptoms that more commonly occur with SAD than other types of depression, including sugar cravings, extreme fatigue and sleepiness, increased appetite and weight gain. Mental Health America estimates 5% of the U.S. population experiences SAD each year.

using a specially designed light box that simulates natural sunlight. The light emitted from these boxes helps stimulate the production of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that regulates mood, while also influencing melatonin, the hormone responsible for sleep. Consistent use, typically 20 to 60 minutes each morning, can help reset your internal clock, increase energy and ease depressive symptoms within just a few weeks. For safety and effectiveness, light boxes should emit 10,000 lux (a metric for illuminance) of UV-free light, be used at the recommended distance as prescribed by a medical professional and should be positioned to ensure the light is hitting your eyes without a direct glare. Exposure to daylight or light that mimics it has been shown to boost mood, improve focus and support better sleep quality. In health care environments, for example, studies have found that access to natural light and views of nature can reduce stress, lower blood pressure and even shorten recovery times. Before beginning light therapy, however, it's important to consult a health care provider, as SAD is a serious depressive

disorder that sometimes requires a combination of therapies. **Designing for daylight**
Beyond therapeutic devices, our everyday environments also play a major role in how light affects our well-being. A layered lighting approach balancing natural, ambient and task lighting can create spaces that support both physical comfort and emotional health. Ambient lighting establishes comfort, task lighting supports precision and safety, and natural light provides critical biological and psychological benefits. Together, these layers create spaces that can promote alertness and overall wellness. **To make the most of limited daylight during winter months:**
Maximize window light by keeping blinds open during the day and using reflective surfaces to help bounce light around. Choose light, soft paint colors such as warm whites, creams or pale grays to make spaces feel brighter. A flat white finish on ceilings can also prevent glare. Use adjustable LED bulbs with variable color temperatures (3,000 to 6,500

Kelvin). Cooler white light promotes alertness and energy, while warmer tones create a sense of relaxation. Opt for light-colored fabrics for curtains and furniture. Lighting concepts can be applied in all spaces, but these tips are particularly helpful in living rooms and bedrooms. **Brighter days ahead**
Whether through

deliberate lighting design or small daily habits, simple changes can have a big impact on mood and overall well-being. Open the blinds, take a walk during daylight hours or carve out a bright corner near a window for your morning coffee. Every bit of light helps and remember, the darker months are temporary. Following the winter solstice in December, daylight has slowly begun to return. Each

sunrise brings a little more light, and with it, a renewed sense of energy, balance and hope for the season ahead. This week's column is by the University of Kentucky College of Design's Lindsey Fay, associate dean for research and health care design scholar, and Joseph Rey-Barreau, associate professor and lighting designer with more than 45 years of teaching experience.

DID YOU KNOW?

Almost 9 out of 10 newspaper readers vote in local elections.

	Ky adults	Newspaper readers	Non-newspaper readers
Vote in state/national elections	69%	71%	60%
Vote in local/school board/city elections	84%	86%	72%

Your Local Newspaper

Greensburg Record-Herald

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Source: The Kentucky State Study 2023: Conducted by Coda Ventures, Base: Total adults