

2026 MidSouth Education Policy Workshop Agenda, updated 9/21/2026

Notes:

- We are still working on finalizing a few logistics so this schedule is subject to change.
- Space is limited and attendance is limited to registered guests. If you would like to register, please email Zitsi Mirakhur (zitsi.mirakhur@uky.edu) and Regina Lewis (regina.lewis@uky.edu).
- The location for all events (unless otherwise specified on agenda below) is: Gatton College of Business and Economics (550 S Limestone, Lexington, KY 40506).

THURSDAY, 10/8	
12:30-3pm	Registration Third floor foyer
1:00-2:30pm Room 230	AI Training Session: Beyond the Hype: Building a Critical Intuition for Effective Uses of AI Assistants for Your Work (pre-registration required) FACILITATOR: Brian Kim, OpenAugments
1:15-2:30pm Room 391	<i>Paper session: Student Supports, Classification, and the Conditions of Learning</i> CHAIR: Zitsi Mirakhur Creating a Nuisance? Housing Nuisance Ordinances and Their Impacts on Student Outcomes (presenter: Mark Chin) Unpacking Treatment Effect Heterogeneity in a Large-Scale Dropout Prevention Experiment (presenter: Chloe Gibbs) Low-Level Lead Exposure and Children's Human Capital: Evidence from Piston-Engine Aircraft (presenter: Jiee Zhong) Kentucky Student Perspectives on and Experiences with AI in Their Learning and Schooling Lives (presenters: Caroline Segebarth, Katie Stinnett)
2:45-4pm: Room 230	AI Training Session: Accelerating Responsible and Rigorous Quantitative Research with AI Agents: An Introduction to Agentic Orchestration and the Data Analyst Augmentation Framework (DAAF) (pre-registration required) FACILITATOR: Brian Kim, OpenAugments

2:45-4pm Room 391	<i>Paper session: Emerging Pathways and Returns in Postsecondary Education</i> CHAIR: Brent Evans Elective Work-Based Learning, Persistence, and Completion in Kentucky Public Higher Education (presenter: Miles Feroli) Degrees within Reach: Who Benefits from Community College Baccalaureate Introduction? (presenter: Julia Turner) Employer Perceptions of Three-Year Degrees (presenter: Katie Blanchard) IDR as Insurance: Employer Effects of Income-Driven Repayment of Expansion (presenter: Jon Conzelmann)
4:15-6pm Grand Court Room, University of Kentucky College of Law (620 S. Limestone)	<i>Plenary: Career-Connected Postsecondary Education</i> PANELISTS: Kate Akers (Vice President, Data Quality Campaign) Alisher Burikhanov (Executive Director, Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board) Jessie Schook (Senior Director, Employer Engagement, Competency-Based Education Network) MODERATOR: Rajeev Darolia (University of Kentucky)
FRIDAY, 10/9	
8:30-11:00am	Registration Third floor foyer
9:00-10:15am Room 399	<i>Paper session: Educator Work, Working Conditions, and Institutional Constraints</i> CHAIR: Ron Zimmer Whose Rainbow? Assessing Intersectionality and Cultural Competency in Special Education Work-Based Learning Curricula (presenter: Kioshana LaCount Burrell) Vouchers, Catholic Schools, and Teacher Workforce Dynamics: Evidence from Indiana (presenter: Joseph Waddington) Pushed to the Breaking Point: Teachers and the Limits of Care and Discipline Under Racial Capitalism (Abby Beneke)

	Health Benefit Changes and Retirement Behavior in the Public Sector (presenter: Iulia Shybalkina)
9:00-10:15am Room 233	<i>Flash talk session: Educator Careers and the Provision of Educational Opportunities</i> CHAIR: Kate Kennedy It's Not (Just) About the Money: Pay and the Value of Working Conditions in Teaching (presenter: Carolyn Tsao) Moving Schools or Moving Sectors? The Career Paths of School Leaders Who Enter and Exit Education (presenter: Kathryn James McGraw) Hype or Hope: Registered Apprenticeship Programs for Early Care and Education (presenter: Collin Shepley) What Do They Call Me?": The Mental Violence of Silence, Deliberate Indifference, and the Duty to Mitigate Race-Based Traumatic Stress for Black Womxn Educators and Black Gyrls (presenter: Shauna Evans) A Systems-Focused Analysis of Music Education Course Offerings in Kentucky (presenter: David Miller)
10:30-11:45am Room 399	<i>Paper session: Postsecondary Credentials, Pathways, and Workforce Returns</i> CHAIR: Mike Kofoed The Shortcomings of Higher Education: Understanding the Queer Student Experience in Modern Academia (presenter: Jonathan Hurley) Heterogeneous Returns to Sub-Baccalaureate Credentials: A Machine Learning Approach (presenter: Chuanyi Guo) An Evaluation of a Community-Based Academic Coaching Program: Findings from Year 1 (presenter: Mitchel Mandel) Negative Selection and Peer Effects in Indiana's Voucher Program (presenter: Kendyl Guzman)
10:30-11:45am Room 233	<i>Paper session: School Choice, Governance, and Access</i> CHAIR: Joseph Waddington Breaking Boundaries: Competitive Effects of Inter-District School Choice (presenter: Pietro Pellerito)

	Who Bears the Cost of School Consolidation? Access, School Quality, and Fiscal Savings in Puerto Rico (presenter: Reza Moradi) Dismantling by Design: Governance Restructuring and the Privatization of Indianapolis Public Schools (presenter: Bryan Duarte) Closing the Gaps: An Examination of Early Impacts of Dallas ISD's Opt-out Policy on Advanced Course Enrollment (presenter: Dareem Antoine)
11:45am-1pm	LUNCH
1:00-2:15pm Room 399	<i>Paper session: Educational Opportunity, Human Capital, and Social Inequality</i> CHAIR: Matthew Truwit Looking Ahead? The Role of Future Educational Opportunities on Pre-College Human Capital (presenter: Virna Vidal-Menezes) Food Access and Student Achievement: Evidence from Federal Summer Meal Programs (presenter: Cade Lawson) The Central Office Lab: A Research Agenda for Research, Policy, and Practice (presenter: Kate Kennedy) The Effects of Delayed English Learner Reclassification: Evidence from Texas's Introduction of Automated Grading (presenter: Eleni Packis)
1:00-2:15pm Room 233	<i>Flash talk session: Postsecondary Finance, Credentials, and Student Pathways</i> CHAIR: Regina Lewis A State-Level Framework for Reengaging Adult Learners (presenter: Tracy Teater) Betting on Your Future: The Impacts of Online Sports Betting on Undergraduate Graduation in the U.S. (presenter: Macleod Drury) Formal and Informal Federal Loan Opt-Out Across U.S. Higher Education (presenter: Brent Evans) Pandemic Shocks, School Reopening, and Voter Support for Texas School Bond Referenda (presenter: Tangchen Liu) The Labor Market Value of Community College Bachelor's Degrees: Initial Evidence from a Resume Audit Study in Early Childhood Education (presenter: Julia Turner)

2:30-3:45pm Room 399	<i>Paper session: Policy Design and Distributional Consequences</i> CHAIR: Adam Kho Beyond Stabilization: Short-Run Effects of Enrollment-Based Payment Adoption on Childcare Provider Supply (presenter: Valentina Osunmade) School Play Selection and Casting in Kentucky’s Changing Legal Landscape (presenter: Jane Jones) An Attention Game: Unintended Consequences of ChatGPT (presenter: Fernanda Carriedo-Fagan) Are Schools Filling the Gap? Interrelated Geographies of the Non-Profit and School-Based Human Services (presenter: Sara White)
2:30-3:45pm Room 233	<i>Flash talk session: State and Local Policy Change, and Implementation</i> CHAIR: Emily Wilcox Walls Low Income Housing and School Performance: Evidence from New York State Report Cards (presenter: Thaddeus Meadows) Comparing the Impacts of Universal vs. Means-Tested Vouchers on Student Achievement and Absenteeism in Indiana (presenter: Ron Zimmer) Initial Compliance with and Preemptive Adoption of Changing School Discipline Law in Districts Across Kentucky (presenter: Matthew Truwit) Kentucky House Bill 499: Performance-Based CTE Funding and the Distribution of Postsecondary and Labor-Market Opportunity (presenter: Sze Man Robershaw) The Civil Rights Road to Deeper Learning: Advancing Equity in Kentucky Schools (presenter: Justin Bathon)