



Daviess County Public Schools

1622 Southeastern Parkway
Owensboro KY 42303
www.dcps.org

www.Facebook.com/DaviessCountyPublicSchools
Twitter: @dcpsKidsFirst
YouTube: DCPSTV

Superintendent Matt Robbins
matt.robbins@daviess.kyschools.us
Phone 270-852-7000

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PHOTOGRAPH ATTACHED

DCHS student named to KDE Student Advisory Council

Samuel Smith, a sophomore at Daviess County High School, has been named to the Commissioner's Student Advisory Council, which meets with Commissioner of Education Wayne Lewis to provide insights from the student perspective regarding public education in the Commonwealth.

Smith and 10 other students join 11 returning students as members of the Student Advisory Council, which met in Frankfort on Tuesday, Dec. 3, to review responsibilities for their terms of service and discuss how public schools and student achievement can be improved.

Smith, son of Shannon and Craig Smith of Owensboro, is an active member of DCHS extracurricular programs and community organizations. He is the founder and president of Model United Nations, serves as co-captain of the DCHS swim team and is a member of the DCHS Student Council. He is a member of the Kentucky Youth Assembly and Kentucky United Nations, having earned Outstanding Speaker awards in both groups; and is a member of the Wendell Ford Statesmanship Academy. Smith serves as a Session Youth Representative for First Presbyterian Church, where he is also the youth representative on the Christian Education Committee. Smith is a tobacco-free youth policy ambassador for the Kentucky Youth Assembly.

The Kentucky Department of Education invited students in grades 10-12 attending any public school to apply. The application process included writing an essay about three problems or challenges the students had identified in their schools, and possibly solutions to those problems.

"The application process really made me start thinking not only of the obstacles facing our school, but also about the difficulty in finding solutions," Smith said. "It is easy to complain about things but when you have to propose solutions, it is a definite mind shift. I wrote about technology, the stress of feeling like everything we do is just for the purpose of putting it on a college application, and the difficulty that less-popular extracurricular clubs and activities face."

Smith said his responsibilities as a member of the student advisory council will include meeting with the Commissioner of Education and KDE staff members to discuss how decisions made at the state level affect students throughout Kentucky. "We provide feedback on critical issues impacting students and schools, and work with KDE staff to develop ideas to improve and transform education," Smith said. "During our first meeting, we watched a presentation and discussed the process of school rankings and the current teacher shortage we have in our state."



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Smith said he anticipates his experience as a member of the advisory council being beneficial in many ways. “In a time when seemingly everything is divisive – politically, socially, and economically – I believe diplomacy is more crucial than ever. I hope this experience will allow me to engage constructively with my peers and educators from around the Commonwealth and to offer valuable feedback to our Commissioner of Education. As a student, I am on the frontline and am impacted directly by the choices and policy decisions made by our legislators and KDE. I hope that I can not only offer my perspective, but that I can also learn and understand from the Commissioner and the KDE staff their challenges and obstacles. The first meeting has already shown me the ‘other side’ of teaching. I gained an understanding of standardized testing, and how difficult it is to implement change.”

Smith said he hopes to make a positive contribution to the council. “I truly want to help,” he said. “I care deeply about Kentucky and our school system. I think it’s sometimes very easy to blame our teachers or our school system, but we need to remember that most teachers deeply care about the students and truly want them to succeed, whatever that success might look like. I think teachers have a very hard job. I want to offer my honest feedback of the successes and problems that I see as a student. I want to listen and gain understanding so I can also hopefully be part of solving some of those problems.”

Smith said he has not committed to college or career plans at this time, but is exploring several possibilities. “I love space and rockets and might be interested in some field of aerospace. I could also see myself following in my dad’s footsteps in money management. Ever since I was little, I have loved going to my dad’s office and seeing him work with all kinds of stock market related charts and graphs. At this point, I am just trying to look into all the different options.”

NOTE TO MEDIA – Samuel Smith is available for interviews by contacting him at notsamsmith707@gmail.com

For more information, contact DCPS Public Information Officer Lora Wimsatt
(270) 852-7000 ext. 215 Lora.Wimsatt@daviess.kyschools.us