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The Gleaner

WEEKEND

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PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Pollution,
politics and
public health

EPA aims to roll back regulations,
advocates are worried in Evansville

Sarah Loesch
Evansville Courier & Press | USA TODAY NETWORK

Evansville has long been called a “sacrifice zone” due to nearby pollution hazards, and the current attitude of federal leaders toward environmental safeguards has local advocates concerned. • Nicole Chandler, Sierra Club’s Beyond Coal campaign organizer for Southwest Indiana, said there isn’t one specific regulation the Environmental Protection Agency’s could roll back that would be bad for the area. Instead, she said, rolling back any of them would be detrimental.

See EPA, Page 8A

F. B. Culley Generating Station is coal powered and located along the Ohio River in Warrick County. MACABE BROWN/COURIER & PRESS



Education
audit in
KY: Critical
or not?

Investigation yields very
different reactions from
department, auditor

Krista Johnson
Louisville Courier Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Roughly eight months and \$1.2 million later, an investigation into the Kentucky Department of Education yielded a 556-page report focused on the entity’s effectiveness over the last four years.

The report examines multiple areas of the department’s operations — and how it should be read seems to be up for debate.

The investigation was conducted by Kentucky Auditor Allison Ball’s office in partnership with a national management consulting firm and was released July 1.

A press release from Ball’s office portrayed the audit’s findings as heavily critical, highlighting “inefficiencies and gaps” within the state department. However, a statement from KDE framed the report differently.

“In every section, the report highlights the good work agency staff have been doing to support the students and educators of Kentucky,” Commissioner Robbie Fletcher wrote following the report’s release. “The audit showed that morale at KDE is high, our staff members truly believe in the agency’s work and that superintendents believe they can rely on KDE to provide them with high-quality resources.”

An examination of the report by The Courier Journal also found that while the audit identified areas in need of improvement, it also praised the department multiple times and did not back up some findings in Ball’s press release.

For instance, the release said the audit found the department’s diversity initiatives were “a waste of money.” But the report did not include details on such funding.

The report came out of House Bill 825, passed in 2024, which required an audit of KDE and the “operation of the schools, departments, projects, and initiatives under its jurisdiction, including identification of those departments, projects, and initiatives that do not serve to improve the edu-

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