DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION

KRS 156.108 and 160.107 (House Bill 37, enacted 2012) provide Kentucky public school districts the opportunity to apply to the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) to be exempt from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions, as well as waive local board policy, in an effort to improve the learning of students. By "re-thinking" what a school might look like, districts will be able to redesign student learning in an effort to engage and motivate more students and increase the numbers of those who are college- and career-ready.

What is a District of Innovation?
A District of Innovation is a district that has developed a plan of innovation, in compliance with these statutes, which has been approved by the KBE and exempts the district from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions to improve the educational performance of students within the district. **This is not a grant program. There are no additional funds directly associated with the status.**

What is a School of Innovation?
A School of Innovation is a school that voluntarily participates in a District of Innovation plan to improve instruction, including waivers and exemptions from local board of education policies, selected provisions of Kentucky Administrative Regulations promulgated by the Kentucky Board of Education and selected sections of the Kentucky Revised Statutes, as permitted under these statutes.

Can individual schools apply to be Schools of Innovation?
No, only school districts can apply. An individual school may make a request to its local board of education and ask the board to apply on its behalf.

Can schools be forced to participate in their district's application and subsequent implementation, if approved?
No, each school must vote and at least 70 percent of the staff of that school must approve in order for the school to be included in the application.

For how long is the approval?
The initial term of the designation as a District of Innovation is for five years. After five years, the district's status can be renewed, in five-year increments, or revoked based on processes defined in the administrative regulations.

What does "District of Innovation" mean?

A District of Innovation IS	A District of Innovation IS NOT

• A district that has set a high bar designed to create whole school re-design
• A district ready to move to the level of requesting flexibility to waive statutes
  - Calendar
  - School Governance
  - Facilities
  - Funding
  - Job Classifications
• A district that is willing to serve as both an incubator and observation site
• A district that sees innovation as a chance to re-allocate funds and "selectively abandon" business as usual instead of looking at everything as a need for more funds
• An opportunity to say "what if", increased partnerships with business and community to expand learning opportunities and focus on personalized learning with a mastery approach.
	• A district that wants to "tack on" innovation but keep the current system
	• A district that wants "permission" to do things they can already do
	
	• A district that wants to be recognized for innovation
	
	• A district looking for additional funding

Who applied in 2013?

Sixteen (16) Districts applied for status in 2013:

Cloverport Schools

Danville Schools

Eminence Schools

Fayette County Schools

Gallatin County Schools

Jackson Schools

Jefferson County Schools

Jessamine County Schools

Kenton County Schools

McCracken County Schools

Montgomery County Schools

Owensboro Schools

Owsley County Schools

Taylor County Schools

Trigg County Schools

Woodford County Schools

Of these applicants, four (4) were chosen as 2013 Districts of Innovation:

Danville Schools

Eminence Schools

Jefferson County Schools

Taylor County Schools

What set the approved districts apart?

Program Design	Districts Selected
Innovative Design	• Clear and concise alignment of goals, objectives and student outcomes to waiver requests (Waivers clearly identified and justified) • Identified programs, models, strategies, etc. clearly connected to current district initiatives
Student Service Plan	• Student populations identified and strategies specific to the needs of the populations • Plan addresses multiple grade levels or targets transition points • Plans either very comprehensive or very strategic
Timeline	• Balanced implementation. Spends time on foundational learning but moves swiftly and continuously with specific activities and targets (Urgent, yet rational) • Strong monitoring/implementation plans. Plan visibly seen from year 1 of implementation to year 5 **and beyond.** • Baselines currently established and goals established for five years
Outcomes for Student Learning	• Outcomes specific to the needs of the students • A comprehensive approach given to student learning • Approaches and strategies research-based • Outcomes focused on continuous improvement and ability to be measured and monitored

Program Design	Districts Not Selected
Innovative Design	• Waivers not clearly identified and justified • Waivers not necessary for implementation of identified programs, models, strategies, etc. • Plan does not appropriately reflect innovation (For example, technology does not automatically mean innovation) • Plan can be carried forward without waiver or support from KDE • Strategies vague and do not show connection to current district initiatives. Seems random or disconnected
Student Service Plan	• Plan does not communicate specific populations, nor does it clearly show how the populations will be targeted • Plan addresses only a specific grade level and shows no relationship to the other levels
Timeline	• Plan does not communicate a FULL program at the end of 5 years. Plan may show a school level change but NOT a comprehensive cultural shift for innovation • Plan does not show how the innovation will unfold over 5 years and beyond. Connection between the use of time and the strategies lacking seemed detached • Baselines and goals unclear or unfocused
Outcomes for Student Learning	• Outcomes vague and not included • A comprehensive approach not given to student learning • Approaches and strategies seem random or not truly innovative • No focus on continuous improvement • Plan may be difficult to monitor or measure over a period of time

What were the big ideas?

Danville Independent	Eminence Independent	Jefferson County	Taylor County
• Requested waiver of assessment requirements to design a different set of assessments while still being held accountable under KY's accountability system. Waiver was denied but KDE is looking at seeking a "Waiver of our federal ESEA Waiver". • Shift to a focus on the skills and dispositions a child needs to be successful in postsecondary life taught in the context of the core academic standards. Our current system teaches the core academic standards with little focus on the key 21st century skills and dispositions.	• Blurring the lines between K-12 and postsecondary programs. Basically, change the focus from talking about high school graduation and start talking about getting every child to a readiness level even if that takes the district 14 years. • Bringing postsecondary down to the high school rather than sending all kids away to dual enrollment or early college. Again, blurring the lines between K-12 and postsecondary.	• New, innovative approach to addressing the needs of the persistently low achieving schools in Jefferson County. Based more on a "zone" of these schools and not focusing on each school individually. • Creation of a "master teacher" on-line approach that will allow these schools to have better teachers without having to move them physically from their current work station.	• No more classes, grades or seat time. All progress is based on mastery of the core academic standards. • A funding formula was suggested where funding is based on the district completing its responsibility to make each child "proficient" and not on their attendance. This removes the disincentive for districts to move kids as ready because they fear losing funding.

What are KDE's Next Steps?

Federal	State Policy	Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB)
1. Present assessment and accountability ideas to Secretary Duncan as potential "waivers to the Waiver"	1. Collaborate with legislative leaders to shift to an alternate funding model not tied to seat time	1. Work with EPSB staff to find solutions to intricate credentialing issues
2. Discuss certification issues that may affect "highly qualified" status	2. Make modifications to DofI statutes reflecting lessons learned from round one	2. Pursue possible changes to EPSB statute and regulation based on implementation efforts in DofI
3. Create set of metrics for Districts of Innovation (DofI) based on the federal response to #1	3. Create set of metrics for DofI based on common elements of applications	

above		