



## Five Years of Progress in Kentucky Public Education (2009-2014)

- **Implemented Senate Bill 1 (2009).** This legislation raised the bar on public education in Kentucky in an effort to better prepare students for success in college and postsecondary endeavors.
  - **Adopted and implemented new academic standards in English/language arts and mathematics (2011) and science (2013).** The new Kentucky Core Academic Standards define the minimum that Kentucky students are expected to know at every grade level. These standards are more rigorous than previous standards and are aligned with college/career-expectations. They promote creative and critical thinking over rote memorization, and prepare students with the problem-solving, collaborative, creative and communication skills that today's jobs demand.
  - **Implemented the Kentucky Core Academic Standards Challenge** as a way to raise awareness of the standards being taught in Kentucky classrooms and solicit feedback to inform the Kentucky Department of Education's regular review of the English/language arts and mathematics standards implemented in 2011. Through an online tool, <http://kentucky.statestandards.org>, educators and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide specific feedback on each classroom-level standard – whether they support it as written or wish to provide suggestions on how it may be improved.
  - **Created a system of Leadership Networks.** The networks are designed to support the high-quality implementation of Senate Bill 1 (2009). By involving teachers and leaders from every district in the state along with staff from the Kentucky Department of Education, education cooperatives and higher education, the regional networks build the capacity of each school district as it implements Kentucky's Core Academic Standards and aligned assessments, develops assessment literacy among all educators and works toward ensuring that every student is college- and career-ready.
  - **Implemented new assessments, Program Reviews and a balanced accountability system.** New, more meaningful assessments aligned with college/career-readiness standards include both formative assessments that inform instruction as well as summative assessments of student performance and progress. Program Reviews in arts and humanities, practical living/career studies, writing, K-3 and world language (high schools: 2014-15; middle and elementary schools: 2015-16) ensure student learning opportunities in subjects critical to a well-rounded education and support program improvement. The Unbridled Learning accountability system more accurately reflects all the major elements that define school and district success and ultimately impact student success.
  - **Created an online School Report Card.** In an effort to increase transparency and encourage improvement, an online database, <http://applications.education.ky.gov/SRC/Default.aspx>, provides key performance, financial and other school, district and state education information to parents and the public.
- **Secured flexibility (initial two-year federal waivers and a one-year extension) on some provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).** Federal waivers allow Kentucky to have a single accountability system for both federal and state purposes that is based on more than just proficiency and promotes continuous improvement rather than labeling schools and districts pass or fail. It reveals student learning gaps that were unintentionally masked under No Child Left Behind. Waivers provide districts more flexibility in the use of federal dollars for school improvement and promote increased educator effectiveness through professional growth and learning.
- **Restored funding to 2009 levels.** The per-pupil guarantee increased from \$3,827 in FY14 to \$3,911 in FY15 and will increase to \$3,981 in FY16. Flexible Focus Funds (extended school services, professional learning, safe schools, instructional resources and preschool) increased by approximately \$30 million in FY15 and will increase by approximately \$61 million in FY16, which includes the expansion of preschool.
- **Won a \$17 million Race to the Top grant.** The money was used for professional learning and to support implementation of new standards (see next item on CIITS) and to expand AdvanceKentucky sites, which provide access to, preparation for and successful student participation in Advanced Placement (AP) courses.
- **Developed and implemented the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS).** This online technology platform brings together academic standards, instructional materials, formative assessments, student performance results, educator evaluation and prescriptive professional learning into a one-stop shop to support student and educator improvement. The system is registering more than a million logins each month. To date, teachers have created about a quarter-million formative assessments and nearly a half-million lesson plans in CIITS.
- **Won a \$44.3 million Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant.** Administered by the Governor's Office of Early Childhood, the grant supports the expansion and improvement of the STARS rating system to all public preschool, Head Start, and early learning and development programs in order to provide families with valuable information to understand, select and engage with early learning providers.

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- **Piloted and implemented a common Kindergarten readiness screener statewide.** Kentucky's public schools and teachers use the screener results to ensure that all children receive the support they need to be successful in school. Communities use the data to help support parents and the development of high-quality early learning opportunities for young children. In 2013, baseline year data showed 49 percent of students were ready to learn and succeed in kindergarten without interventions.
- **Created a process to encourage innovative approaches to raising student achievement.** "Districts of Innovation," created by House Bill 37 (2012), offer Kentucky public school districts the opportunity to come up with new or creative alternatives to existing instructional and administrative practices, while providing relief from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions in an effort to improve student learning. The Kentucky Board of Education has designated seven districts as Districts of Innovation.
- **Established The Fund for Transforming Education in Kentucky.** This independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation is designed to help support innovative strategies in Kentucky public schools, promoting creative and collaborative solutions by conducting research, spurring dialogue, incubating innovative ideas, brokering partnerships and scaling promising practices. The Fund seeks dollars to provide support to school districts outside of traditional state, federal and local sources.
- **Implemented a comprehensive system of school and district improvement planning and support.** House Bill 176 (2010) provided much-needed interventions in the state's lowest-performing schools. Now, Kentucky is able to offer school districts more options to help them improve. The process of improvement planning for all schools is used as the means of determining how schools and districts plan to ensure that all students graduate college- and career-ready. Hub Schools provide a regional learning center for other schools seeking improvement. A best practices website provides a platform for sharing what works best. Of the original 41 Priority or Persistently Low-Achieving (PLA) Schools, in 2013-14:
  - 5 schools progressed out of Priority status (one of the five closed due to consolidation)
  - 4 schools scored in the Distinguished category, the highest of all performance categories
  - 5 schools scored in the Proficient category
  - 19 schools were categorized as Progressing (met Annual Measurable Objective, student participation rate and graduation rate)
  - 10 had overall scores above the state average
  - 27 schools met their Annual Measurable Objective
- **Developed, field tested, piloted and implemented a new Professional Growth and Effectiveness System for teachers, principals and superintendents.** The system defines effectiveness, uses multiple measures and focuses on educator support, professional learning and continuous improvement to ensure every student is taught by an effective teacher, every school is led by an effective principal and every district is run by an effective superintendent. The superintendent system also provides the public with additional transparency of local board of education decisions and district operations.
- **Initiated a leadership training program for school and district leaders.** LEAD-KY, in partnership with the National Institute for School Leadership, is designed to build leadership capacity through distributed leadership, increase recruitment and retention of effective leaders, and improve student achievement.
- **Implemented a statewide working conditions survey of school-based educators.** Results from the biennial Teaching Empowering, Leading, and Learning Survey (TELL) are used to improve working conditions for educators that directly impact learning conditions for students. In 2013 more than 44,000 educators took part, about an 87 percent response rate.
- **Adopted a comprehensive plan to reform Career and Technical Education.** Kentucky is developing and implementing a new model of secondary career and technical education with an emphasis on innovation and integration of core academics, 21st-century skills, project-based learning and the establishment of full-time career and technical education (CTE) programs. This effort recognizes career and technical education as a viable alternative career pathway for students.
- **Implemented a new alternative programs regulation.** This new approach to alternative programs focuses on meeting the needs of each student based on innovative paths, digital learning and other alternative means to provide rich and challenging learning environments that promote high levels of student engagement, achievement and success.
- **Adopted digital learning guidelines.** The Kentucky Digital Learning Guidelines are designed as guidance for schools, districts, and digital providers when selecting or creating developmentally appropriate digital learning resources for instruction, as well as online and blended learning courses in Kentucky schools. They help ensure 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning opportunities for Kentucky students that are rigorous, differentiated, standards-based, and responsive to our increasingly information rich, and rapidly expanding networked technological culture.
- **Studied dual credit opportunities** to ensure equitable access for all students. A task force report is due in December 2014.

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- **Put in place a statewide electronic transcript service.** eTranscript makes it easier for students to submit high school transcripts to colleges. The system is free to students attending all in-state and many out-of-state colleges.
- **Implemented a fair and consistent way to assess school facilities.** The Kentucky Facilities Inventory and Classification System assesses the physical condition, educational suitability and technology readiness of the schools to guide funding decisions.
- **Raised the compulsory school age to 18.** Senate Bill 97 (2013) cleared the way for districts to adopt a policy raising the compulsory school age to 18 starting in the 2015-16 school year. To date, 159 of the state's 173 school districts have done so. The new compulsory school age policy will become mandatory statewide in the 2017-18 school year.
- **Increased the percentage of students graduating from high school.** In 2013, Kentucky moved to a cohort graduation rate, the same as what most other states use and a more accurate way to measure the number of students who graduate. Kentucky's four-year adjusted cohort rate of 87.4 percent (2014) is up from 86.1 percent in 2013.
- **Increased the percentage of students ready for college and careers.** Nearly two-thirds of all graduates (62.3 percent) now are considered ready to take credit-bearing college courses or a postsecondary training program. The rate is up from 34 percent in 2010. In cooperation with the Department of Workforce Development, the Kentucky Department of Education designed and implemented Operation Preparation, a community-based advising program for 8th- and 10th-grade students. A partner initiative out of the Lieutenant Governor's office – Close the Deal, which originated in Jefferson Co. – has expanded to 11 more districts. The program challenges high school seniors, especially in districts with low college-going rates, to pursue additional education after graduation.
- **Increased student achievement.**
  - In 2013-14, overall student performance improved, with the percentage of Proficient and Distinguished students increasing in nearly every subject at every grade level on state assessments.
  - On the National Assessment of Educational Progress, Kentucky 4th- and 8th-graders continue to outperform their peers nationally in reading, even with the inclusion of more students with special needs. In science, 4th- and 8th-graders scored significantly above the national average.
  - More students, including more minority students, are taking Advanced Placement tests and scoring higher. In 2013-14, Kentucky students outpaced the nation in the percentage growth of those receiving qualifying scores of three or higher.
  - Public high school graduates' performance on the ACT has increased in every subject and overall composite scores on the ACT increased significantly – by nearly one point compared to a one-tenth of a point increase nationally.
  - The percent of recent Kentucky high school graduates who entered college in Kentucky and met statewide standards for readiness in English, mathematics and reading increased from 52 percent in 2010-11 to more than 68 percent in 2012-13, according to Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education data.
- **Earned national recognition for education improvement.**
  - In *Education Week's* annual Quality Counts report of key education indicators, Kentucky ranked 10th, moving up from 34th place in 2010. This reflects efforts to improve teaching, raise student achievement and advance many other variables related to public education.
  - A Harvard study ranked Kentucky eighth in student performance improvement in the last two decades.
  - Code.org, a national nonprofit organization that promotes computer science education and computer programming or coding, has recognized Kentucky for its “progressive state policy to make computer science count” as a core graduation requirement.
  - According to the Data Quality Campaign, Kentucky has implemented all but one of 10 actions to ensure effective data use among teachers, policymakers and parents – making it among the state leaders in effective educational data use. The average among states was 6.6 actions; only two states had implemented all 10.
  - In a recent [report](#) by the Education Commission of the States (ECS), Kentucky's online [School Report Card](#) was singled out as one of only eight nationwide that was easy to find, informative and readable. The report went on to praise the state for including what ECS calls the five essential indicators of school accountability: student achievement, achievement gap closure, student academic growth, college/career-readiness and graduation rate. Kentucky is one of only 13 states that include each indicator as part of the accountability system and reports the results of each on its school report cards.
  - The National Association of School Boards of Education named Commissioner Terry Holliday as its 2014 Policy Leader of the Year.

