

May 23, 2011

Marc Tucker

President

The National Center on Education and the Economy

2000 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 5300

Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. Tucker:

The Todd County School District (the "District") is strongly committed to greatly increasing the proportion of our high school students who leave high school ready to do college-level work and enter into rewarding careers. Therefore, the District is very excited about the opportunity to join the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), The National Center on Education and the Economy ("NCEE") and its evaluation partner, the University of Michigan, in the Board Examination Systems pilot program ("Pilot Program") beginning in the fall of 2011.

The District understands that, in agreeing to participate in the Pilot Program, we are committing to offer one or more board examination systems to students who choose to enroll in them beginning in their freshman year. Students who pass their board exams, as early as the end of their sophomore year, will be able, if they wish, to meet the requirements for high school completion, leave high school and enroll in a community college or in another higher education program leading to a 2-year or 4-year degree, without having to take remedial courses. In our case, students who successfully pass their board exams will be deemed to have met the high school graduation requirements as outlined in 704 KAR 3:305.

We understand that one of the primary goals of the Pilot Program is to offer certified board examination systems at the upper division (11<sup>th</sup> and 12 grade) level to students who pass their lower division exams at the end of their sophomore year and choose to stay in high school to prepare themselves for entrance into a selective college. Alternatively, such students might elect to stay in high school to participate in a career and technical education program designed to prepare them to earn an industry-recognized credential. The District will provide pathways for both opportunities.

We understand that participation in the Pilot Program requires the District to gauge student readiness for students who are entering high school and who wish to participate in the board examination program. In that way, we can provide supports as needed that will

enable them to succeed in the program. We will work with KDE and NCEE to determine the most efficient way to accomplish this.

Todd County Central High School ("School") within the District will be joining the Pilot Program beginning in the fall of 2011.

To facilitate the successful implementation of the Pilot Program, the District agrees that:

1. the School will utilize the requisite instructional materials, and end-of-course exams and professional development services for a successful Pilot Program from ACT Quality Core (Lower Division BES Provider) for its 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade (Lower Division) Pilot Program; (KDE will provide the instructional materials and end-of-course exams as part of the statewide assessment and will cover the cost of 50% of the teacher professional development workshops. Districts will be responsible for covering the cost of the remaining 50%.
2. in conjunction with KDE, it will set the requirements for a student to be deemed as having met the state requirements for high school graduation, including requirements in, at least, the five core course areas, English language arts, mathematics, science, history and the arts (collectively, the BES Core Subjects), through the adoption of the recommended "cut scores" for English language arts and mathematics for the Lower Division BES Provider's end-of-course exams as recommended by NCEE's Technical Advisory Committee ("TAC") and agreed upon by the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KYCTS) and KDE, the setting of reasonable college-ready "cut scores" for the remaining required BES Core Subjects, as well as any other high school graduation requirements the District deems appropriate; and
3. any student who satisfies all the high school graduation requirements shall be deemed as having met the state requirements for high school graduation, as early as the end of such student's 10<sup>th</sup> grade year, and such student will have access to public open-enrollment 2-year or 4-year post-secondary institution without the need for remediation; provided that each School also will give such students the opportunity to take an upper division course of study that will prepare the student to succeed in selective colleges and universities or career and technical education courses in the event the student chooses not to move on to an open-enrollment college after successfully completing the requirements for the Board Exam Project.

The School further agrees that it will:

1. recruit, at a minimum, the smaller of (a) 20% of its 9<sup>th</sup> grade class

beginning in Fall 2011 or (b) 35 students from its 9<sup>th</sup> grade class beginning in Fall 2011 to participate in the Pilot Program;

2. use reasonable efforts to ensure that the students in the Pilot Program are broadly representative of the student body of the School;
3. recruit/select teachers for each BES Core Subject;
4. be sure that teachers are available to attend professional development during the summer of 2011, 2012, and 2013;
5. implement courses in each of the five BES Core Subjects beginning in Fall 2011 using the syllabi and instructional resources provided by the Lower Division BES Provider; provided, however, that the School may offer a local course in certain BES Core Subjects if the Lower Division BES provider does not offer a course in such BES Core Subject;
6. extend the availability of the BES program to the next grade level each subsequent school year (e.g. to 10<sup>th</sup> grade in the school year beginning Fall 2012) until the School offers a full complement of BES Core Subjects at all grade levels from 9<sup>th</sup> through 12 grade;
7. administer the summative assessments associated with the Lower Division BES Provider's courses under appropriate security and other conditions required by the Lower Division BES Provider and any state-mandated requirements;
8. provide sufficient "safety-net" programs for students who are not succeeding in their 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade Lower Division BES Core Subjects for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12 grade students who failed to achieve a score equal to or above the applicable "cut score" on their Lower Division BES Provider end-of-course exams;
9. provide sufficient acceleration courses for students who enter 9<sup>th</sup> grade unprepared to enroll in a Lower Division BES Provider course of study;
10. allow any student who has not satisfied the BES Diploma Requirements for all five BES Core Subjects to retake any Lower Division BES Provider end-of-course exams on which such student previously failed to achieve a score equal to or above the applicable "cut score" at any future School-specified time such Lower Division BES Provider end-of-course exam is being administered;
11. ensure that all teachers attend the Lower Division BES Provider's (and Upper Division BES Provider's) spring/summer professional development training (and any mid-school-year follow up professional development

training) and, as applicable, provide (a) substitute teachers to cover teachers who attend such training, (b) stipends to teachers to compensate them for participation in such training, and (c) funding for such teachers' travel to such training; and

12. participate in the University of Michigan (UM) independent evaluation of the BES systems and provide to, and with assistance from, NCEE and the UM Evaluation Team all data required for the evaluation of the program (to the extent owned or available by the District) as described in more detail in Attachment A.

Sincerely,

Mike Kenner  
Superintendent  
Todd County School District