

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Districts of Innovation Update

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 156.108, 160.107

History/Background:

Existing Policy. In its regular session for 2012, the Kentucky General Assembly passed, and Governor Beshear signed into law, KRS 156.108 and KRS 160.107 related to Districts of Innovation. KRS 156.108 authorizes the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) to approve “Districts of Innovation” for the purposes of improving students' educational performance. Districts of Innovation shall be provided flexibility from selected Kentucky Administrative Regulations, Kentucky Revised Statutes, and local board of education policies for school administrators, teachers, and staff to meet the diverse needs of students. KRS 156.108 requires the KBE to promulgate administrative regulations to prescribe the conditions and procedures to be met by a local board of education to be approved as a district of innovation.

At the June 5th Kentucky Board of Education Meeting, the board approved four districts as “Districts of Innovation”: Danville Independent, Eminence Independent, Jefferson County, and Taylor County.

Since the approval of the first four Districts of Innovation, staff at the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) have been working with each of the four districts to ensure they are ready to proceed with their plans. In addition, the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) has met with each of the four districts to review the EPSB-related waiver requests that were denied by the Kentucky Board of Education. In most cases, EPSB has worked out solutions with the districts that resolve those requests. Staff have also begun finalizing the Memorandums of Understanding with each district.

In addition, staff has contacted each of the other twelve applicants and has provided them with feedback, including responses to their waiver requests, which in most cases did not require waivers of regulations.

Staff has also begun designing a technical assistance program for districts as well as incorporating those districts that did not participate into the Innovation Lab Network.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

Allowing local school districts flexibility with regard to statute and regulation will provide a an excellent opportunity to better engage students and, in turn, increase the opportunities for students to graduate college- and career-ready.

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Commissioner of Education

Date:

August 2013