

**KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**STAFF NOTE**

**Action/Discussion Item:**

Amending the attendance policies for the Kentucky Schools for the Blind and Deaf

**Applicable Statute or Regulation:**

KRS 167.015, 167.150

**Action Question:**

Should the Kentucky Board of Education approve amending the attendance policies for the Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) and the Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) to require regular attendance for students ages 6-18, beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, to align with the elements of Senate Bill 97, ensure college and career readiness and foreclose the possibility of disparate treatment of students coming from districts that may not have yet adopted a policy of compulsory school attendance to age eighteen (18)?

**History/Background:**

*Existing Policy.* KRS 159.030 states that students attending KSB and the KSD are exempt from compulsory attendance. However, KRS 167.015 states that KSB and KSD “shall be managed and controlled by the Kentucky Board of Education.” Additionally, KRS 167.150 provides that “the Kentucky Board of Education upon recommendation of the chief state school officer may prescribe admission policies, curriculum, and rules for the government and discipline of pupils who attend the Kentucky School for the Blind or the Kentucky School for the Deaf.”

Since the passage of Senate Bill 97 and the opportunity for local school boards to pass a policy raising the compulsory school age to 18 beginning in the 2015-16 school year, the issue arose of how this affects KSB and KSD and how the board could extend the intent of this legislation to the two schools. Although the schools by statute are exempt from the compulsory attendance statute, the board under the other two statutes cited above could amend the attendance policies of both schools to require all students between the ages of 6 and 18 to be in regular attendance. The approval of this addition to the attendance policies would align the schools with the intent of Senate Bill 97 and prevent the possibility of disparate treatment of students coming from districts that may not have yet adopted a policy of raising the compulsory school age to 18.

The attendance policies from both schools, including the proposed amendments, are provided as Attachments A and B.

**Staff Recommendation and Rationale(s):**

Staff recommends approval of the amendments to the KSB and KSD attendance policies to require that all students between the ages of 6 and 18 shall be in regular attendance. All Kentucky students are entitled to academic programs that promote college and career readiness, and such readiness is bolstered by attendance policies that reflect the KBE's commitment to high achievement standards. Additionally, this action aligns the attendance policies with the intent of Senate Bill 97 and would provide for consistent treatment of all students from all parts of the state.

**Impact on Getting to Proficiency:**

To meet the needs of all students, quality instruction and intervention that lead to college and career readiness is crucial. If students drop out of school prior to graduation, the school loses the opportunity to provide the learning experiences necessary to provide for student success.

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**Commissioner of Education**

**Date:**

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