

**Excellence for All**  
**An Early Graduation Model**  
**Attachment A**

A model used to inform the criteria for early graduation has been *Excellence for All*. In 2010, the National Center for Education and the Economy (NCEE) offered Kentucky the opportunity to join a state consortium dedicated to piloting the kinds of aligned instructional systems that are found in the highest achieving educational systems around the world, and greatly increasing the proportion of high-need high school students who leave high school ready to do college-level work without the need for remediation. Kentucky, along with Arizona, Connecticut, and Mississippi, committed to participate in the program, named *Excellence for All* (formerly the Board Examination Systems program). In the fall of 2011, six schools (high schools in Estill, Logan, Paris, Todd and both of Franklin County's high schools) began implementing *Excellence for All*. In three of the districts (Logan, Paris and Todd), the entire freshman class is participating in the program while the other three began with a smaller cohort of freshmen. The early graduation criteria have been modeled after the lower division contained in the *Excellence for All* program. In the lower division (generally the freshman and sophomore years), all participants take a rigorous instructional program using ACT QualityCore courses in Algebra I and Geometry, English I and II, World and U.S. History, Biology and Chemistry, and a Humanities course.

Students who pursued early graduation as part of the *Excellence for All* model may:

- Graduate from high school early with a performance-based high school diploma and attend open admissions colleges without the need for remediation.

Students choosing not to move on to college immediately may:

- Participate in rigorous course work designed to prepare them to succeed in competitive four-year colleges or universities;
- Pursue career and technical training with the goal of earning certificates or other professional credentials;
- Avail themselves of dual enrollment opportunities that may exist at their high school through virtual learning opportunities or through colleges.

The *Excellence for All* pilot informed this regulation in the following ways:

- Because not all students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade are capable of completing the rigorous coursework, it is incumbent upon schools to provide programs and create scheduling options so that students can, if they choose, enter this program at a reading level of no more than two years behind their peers.
- *Excellence for All* is a specific alternative pathway and was not intended for all students entering high school.
- Determining entry criteria into the program and readiness measures at the middle school level would alleviate some issues of student success in the first two years of the program.

- Schools and districts did not have incentives to allow students to graduate early, and were in fact, penalized for losing enrolled students.
- Students lost the potential by graduating early to earn KEES money.
- Professional Learning is currently limited to several days in the summer.
- Professional learning to support teachers should be on-going, job-embedded, and differentiated to meet the unique needs of the schools and teachers.
- Messaging to all stakeholders during initial roll-out about the intent and scope of the program was not comprehensive or consistent.
- To indicate college-readiness, the *Excellence for All* students need to take the state-administered ACT earlier than their junior year; mechanisms did not exist to allow for this.
- Monitoring procedures of the success and transition of students into, through, and exiting the program were not established.

The *Excellence for All* model is just one pathway to early graduation.