

# **KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

## **STAFF NOTE**

### **Action/Discussion Item:**

Kentucky Education Technology System (KETS) FY 2015 Unmet Need for LEAs

### **Applicable Statute or Regulation:**

KRS 156.670  
KRS 156.690  
KRS 157.655  
KRS 157.660

### **Action Question:**

Should the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) approve the FY 2015 unmet education technology need of \$156M for school districts?

### **History/Background:**

***Existing Policy.*** According to KRS 157.655, the School Facilities Construction Commission (SFCC) can provide a Kentucky Education Technology System (KETS) Offer of Assistance to a school district only after the state board approves the district's unmet need. Therefore, each fiscal year the KBE approves each district's technology unmet need.

The Master Plan for Education Technology, which was originally approved in 1992, describes in detail the process for determining KETS Offers of Assistance, the school planning process, the state review and assistance calculation methods, and examples of how data extracted from the plans relates to funds allocated to schools. The annual FY 2015 unmet need for each district is the amount needed to minimally operate, maintain, and incrementally upgrade existing investments while also acquiring new and emerging technology. The FY 2015 unmet need is \$156M (i.e., approximately \$262 per student). This \$156M figure is derived from the 2013-2018 KETS Master Plan Budget that contains the initial acquisition cost, ongoing operational cost and average lifespan of each line item.

The KBE approved the six-year KETS Master Plan in October 2012. The Master Plan design and its corresponding budget involved extensive stakeholder input. Focus groups included students, university admissions staff, district teachers, technology resource teachers, district technology leadership, state agency leadership and members of the business community. Because of the process used, more people provided direct input for the Master Plan than ever occurred before. The process also included identifying line items that are essential to meet the most basic needs (i.e., \$156M) along with those line items that are discretionary that districts may optionally pursue to go above that basic unmet need (e.g., a 1 to 1 workstation ratio for

secondary students). Historically, the annual KETS unmet need for school districts has been underfunded by approximately \$30-50M per year. Therefore, it is essential to preserve the existing funding sources that are currently in place for the educational technology products and services that are used by all 173 school districts while at the same time identifying other funding to make up that difference.

In addition, districts may pursue education initiatives that foster better levels of education technology service delivery than the minimum goals described in the Master Plan (e.g., lower workstation ratios to improve ease of access to electronic instructional content for all students, electronic projectors and interactive student devices in all classrooms for formative testing). These are considered optional, versus required approaches in the KETS Master Plan, that districts have the choice to implement. Optional items are not included in the \$156M annual unmet need calculation; however, we do track how much money is spent on these discretionary line items each year through the MUNIS technology spending reports and the technology readiness survey.

KETS offers of assistance only represent part of the funding strategy needed to support each district's technology services. In the 2013-2018 KETS Master Plan and the FY 2015 KETS expenditure plan, we identify a variety of federal, state, local and private funds that can be used to pay for a district's unmet need.

Staff requests that the KBE approve the unmet need. In the FY 2015 KETS Expenditure Plan, the board will be made aware of a variety of FY 2015 funds that are available to go toward that FY 2015 unmet need. Districts will need to continue to secure alternative funding sources beyond the KETS funds (e.g., federal funds, local grants, corporate donations, etc.) to fully fund the unmet need.

The four basic categories of unmet need are operations, maintenance, incremental replacement and new technologies. Of the four categories, expenditures in Operations and Maintenance are necessary to sustain current levels of service. That is, if unmet need within the Operations and Maintenance categories is not addressed in accordance with program guidelines, the integrity, sufficiency, and capacity of the district technology infrastructure will degrade until services are seriously curtailed or eliminated. These include items like student and teacher workstation repair, instructional software/services improvements, classroom printer repair, instructional file server repair, school and district management software improvements, initial/ongoing technology integration professional development, student technology leadership services, Internet instructional content, telephone communications to parents, distance learning service, help desk services, e-mail services, and enterprise data system access.

The unmet need for Incremental Replacement constitutes a framework for replacement of various technology components on a scheduled basis over time, in accordance with the life cycle of each item or service. These include items like student workstations, teacher workstations, instructional file servers, assistive and adaptive technology, school laser printers, classroom color printers, wireless networks, student hand-held devices, high-speed fiber networks, desktop conferencing, and digital projection devices.

The following must occur before a district receives its funding: (1) Kentucky Board of Education approves the unmet need for each district; (2) School Facilities Construction Commission (SFCC) approves the unmet need; (3) The district successfully meets all of the statutory requirements of KRS 157.655 and KRS 157.660; (4) the district verifies its final ADA count to KDE; and (5) KDE calculates Offers of Assistance based on these variables. The districts must follow requirements of the SFCC by receiving approved board action and proof of deposit of funds into a local interest bearing technology account. The SFCC will then wire funds to the district's technology account.

**Staff Recommendation and Rationale:**

Staff recommends approval of the FY 2015 KETS essential unmet need of \$156M. Staff certifies that the districts recommended by the Commissioner (see attached list) have met all the statutory requirements of KRS 157.655 and KRS 157.660 and will be required to adequately describe their unmet need and current KETS inventory before FY 2015 Offers of Assistance are distributed.

**Groups Consulted:**

- Kentucky Society of Technology in Education
- Student Technology Leadership Program including teachers, parents, and students
- District education technology leadership (e.g., Chief Information Officers, District Technology Coordinators, Chief Education Technology Officers) staff
- Assessment Interest Group
- Administration and Finance Interest Group
- Communications Interest Group
- Teaching and Learning Interest Group
- Education Technology Vendors
- Students and parents
- Connect Kentucky and College Admissions Office staff

These groups/persons are in support of the approval of the FY 2015 Unmet Need.

**Impact on Getting to Proficiency:**

Approval of the unmet need amounts for local school districts is the first step required to allow local school districts to receive state funding to assist them in purchasing hardware, software, personnel, professional development and other technology items that will support administrators, teachers, and students in achieving proficiency, closing gaps, and increasing college/career readiness and graduation rates.

**Contact Person:**

David Couch, Associate Commissioner  
Office of Knowledge, Information and Data Services  
(502) 564-2020, ext. 2229

[David.Couch@education.ky.gov](mailto:David.Couch@education.ky.gov)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Holliday". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

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**Commissioner of Education**

**Date:**

June 2014