Review Item:

Update on Kentucky Department of Education Program Review Audit Pilot

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 158.6453, 158.6455, 703 KAR 5:230

History/Background:

Existing Policy. A Program Review is a systematic method of analyzing components of an instructional program, including instructional practices, aligned and enacted curriculum, student work samples, formative and summative assessments, professional learning and support services, and administrative support and monitoring.

Program Reviews are intended to provide opportunities for students to grow and learn. This happens when programs are planned, implemented and evaluated systemically, keeping the focus on the quality and degree of access and exposure to the key knowledge and skills all students experience in the program area.

In response to Senate Bill 1 (2009), an audit process must be designed and implemented for the Program Reviews. The purpose of the pilot was to inform the Kentucky Department of Education's future audit process and provide insight about necessary refinements for providing helpful information for program improvement to schools across the Commonwealth.

To pilot the proposed audit process, schools were selected based on a number of demographic and achievement indicators. Eight schools were selected, two in each of four program review areas (Practical Living/Career Studies, Arts and Humanities, Writing and K-3).

Throughout March and April, these schools shared some key evidences that were the basis of their ratings for the Program Reviews that were submitted in 2014. In order to keep the process manageable, yet beneficial, the KDE audit team reviewed approximately 25% of the characteristics of the identified program by accessing information in ASSIST and reviewing five characteristics chosen by KDE and four characteristics chosen by the school. Prior to the on-site visit by the four-person KDE audit team with expertise in the program area, three sources of evidence per characteristic that was considered exemplary were submitted by the school to the KDE audit team for review. Upon arrival for the on-site visit, one additional characteristic was randomly selected by staff or students at the

school. Evidence for that characteristic was provided and reviewed by the audit team during the site visit as well as interviews conducted with students, parents and staff and review of other relevant information and evidence.

To conclude the on-site visit, the audit team discussed their findings with the school principal to establish commendations and recommendations designed to inform continuous improvement of the program at the building level. Some of these commendations and recommendations were co-presented by the school principal and/or the audit team to the faculty at the end of the day. Following the on-site visit, a written report was submitted to the school principal.

General preliminary findings include:

- Providing triangulated sources of evidence was more sufficient than a single source to verify practice and program improvement;
- Aligning evidence to each of the components within a characteristic is critical when self-scoring. Attending to the language of the rubric not only provides scoring criteria, but provides next steps to improvement;
- Devising effective structures to plan, implement and evaluate programs systemically helped schools align evidence to the rubric; and
- Scoring by schools was generally higher than those of the audit team. (*No scores were changed* during the pilot; however, suggested ratings for each characteristic based on evidence submitted for review and the on-site visit were offered in the school report).

An analysis of the audit process will inform a final design that will be recommended for use. Lessons learned from this pilot include:

- The number of characteristics (approximately 25%) provided a sufficient overview of the program itself.
- A four-member KDE audit team worked well.
- Including the random characteristic selected upon arrival for the on-site visit provided little to no additional information to the findings; however, it did verify that evidence was readily available.
- An audit requires extensive preparation work to be able to gather missing or unclear evidence on-site. The average number of hours of preparation work for each individual school was four hours for team members prior to the audit, eight hours on site and twelve hours in writing the report.
- Teacher and student interviews were valuable sources of evidence; however, the questions for the interviews have to be specifically targeted to the evidences and characteristics being audited. The KDE audit team needs to do the preparation work necessary (meeting prior to the on-site visit, writing additional questions based on evidence submitted) and limit questions for the interviewees to ones that are essential and provide the missing or unclear information needed.
- At this time, a desk audit alone would not provide a sufficient understanding of a school's program and improvement efforts.

Remaining policy issues include:

1. Whether to change ratings of schools
2. Feasibility of audits
3. Number of audits each year
4. Staying true to the purposes
5. **Professional learning for deeper understanding of the language of the Program Reviews**

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

Program Reviews serve a number of purposes, which include:

- Improving the *quality* of teaching and learning for all students in all programs
- Allowing equal *access* to all students of the skills that will assist them in being productive citizens
- Allowing student *demonstration* of understanding beyond a paper-and-pencil test
- Ensuring a *school-wide natural integration* of the program skills across all contents, beyond the program areas

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