

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Action/Discussion Item:

Proposal to place the Danville Independent Schools on probation as a District of Innovation

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 156.108, KRS 160.107 and 701 KAR 5:140

Action Question:

Should the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) place the Danville Independent Schools on probation as a District of Innovation per 701 KAR 5:140(5)?

History/Background:

Existing Policy. KRS 156.108(2) states: “The Kentucky Board of Education is hereby authorized 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. The initial approval of a district of innovation shall be for a five (5) year period. Each renewal of a district of innovation shall not exceed five (5) years and shall comply with administrative regulations promulgated by the board pursuant to subsection (4) of this section.”

701 KAR 5:140(4) describes the process for monitoring the implementation of each District of Innovation plan:

- (1) District and school innovation plans shall:
 - (a) Be incorporated within the overall district comprehensive plan; or
 - (b) Replace the district comprehensive plan.
- (2) At the completion of the second year after plan approval and each year thereafter for the term of the approval status, a district approved as a District of Innovation shall annually provide data to the commissioner that shall include the following:
 - (a) Number of students served by the innovation plan, total number and by socio-economic status, race or ethnicity, gender, disability, and grade level;
 - (b) Number of students served by the innovation plan not on track to graduate from high school, total number and by socio-economic status, race or ethnicity, gender, disability, and grade level;

- (c) Documentation of student progress toward graduation and college and career readiness;
- (d) Total number of certified teachers participating in the innovation plan and their roles and responsibilities;
- (e) Documentation of certified and classified staff operating in a non-traditional school environment;
- (f) Documentation of any extended learning opportunities in which students in the school of innovation participate for the purposes of earning or recovering credit, including qualifications of instructors, time spent, and student outcomes; and
- (g) Other measurable outcomes specific to the district's innovation plan as described in the initial application or through modification of the original plan.

(3) At the end of the second year after plan approval and each year thereafter for the term of the approval status, a district approved as a District of Innovation shall receive an annual site visit from a review team selected and trained by the department. The purpose of the visit shall be to monitor progress and interview staff and students to collect qualitative data on the effect of the innovation plan and for future research needs.

701 KAR 5:140(5)(1) gives the KBE the authority to place a District of Innovation on probation based on the documentation submitted and results of the site visit: “. . . after its annual review of a district's implementation report and the report of the site visit team, the Kentucky Board of Education may, on the anniversary of the application approval, determine that a district shall be placed on probation and shall provide the district with a corrective action plan.”

During the spring of 2015, KDE staff collected documentation of implementation of the innovation plan since Danville is in the second year of the program. In addition, a site visit was conducted and interviews occurred with teachers, building principals and district administrators. The status report resulting from this process appears as an attachment to this staff note on the board's online materials system.

In the initial year of implementation of the District of Innovation plan (2013-14), the Danville Independent Schools made adequate progress. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that the plan was the focus of the district during the 2014-15 school year. Additionally, several specific elements of the plan, as directed by the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the district, were not followed. For example, there is little evidence to show that the strategies outlined in the district's Innovation Plan have been incorporated in the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan; although an innovation leadership team exists, there is no evidence to suggest that the meetings relate to implementation of the Innovation Plan; the district did not provide a list of certified teachers participating in the innovation plan and their roles and responsibilities; there was no evidence that the district had engaged in work to create new learning experiences and methods for awarding credit as stated in the Innovation Plan; there was no report on the component of the Innovation Plan which states that the district would develop a policy and process for awarding credit for outside learning experiences; it is unclear whether the district has used the waiver of average daily attendance requirement in the pupil

attendance regulation for SEEK funding; and, while the Innovation Plan calls for students to meet college and career ready benchmarks by 10th grade as measured by the ACT, the district superintendent has indicated to KDE Innovation staff that will not follow this strategy.

KDE staff has provided ongoing support and assistance to the district to address concerns identified in the district's self-assessment and the required site visit. KDE staff proposes that the KBE adopt a corrective action plan (attached) as required by 701 KAR 5:140.

Staff Recommendation(s) and Rationale(s):

KDE staff recommends that the KBE, per 701 KAR 5:140, place the Danville Independent Schools on probation as a District of Innovation and provide the district with a corrective action plan. The Danville Independent Schools did not meet the requirements of implementation during the 2014-15 school year. The implementation of the proposed corrective action plan will assist the district in resuming its compliance with its innovation plan and in continuing to improve proficiency.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

The purpose of the District of Innovation legislation was to create the opportunities for flexibilities from statute and administrative regulation to create new approach. A corrective action plan is necessary to get the district back on track in implementing its innovation plan.

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Commissioner of Education

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