

Districts of Innovation Report – Jefferson County

Cohort I - 1st Monitoring Year 2014-15 School Year

Monitoring Districts of Innovation

701 KAR 5:140 directs the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to monitor the implementation of the Districts of Innovation plans. The specific requirements for monitoring are found in Section 4 as follows:

Monitoring of Plan Implementation. (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.

The 2014-15 school year was the second year of innovation plan implementation for the first cohort of Districts of Innovation, and thus the first year when monitoring was required. Monitoring was contoured to meet the specific Innovation Plan for each participating district.

A 3-part rubric was developed for the monitoring process. Parts 1 and 2 referred specifically to requirements listed in the regulation and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by each district of innovation. Part 3 was tailored to the individual innovation plan of each district.

Monitoring was discussed with the districts of innovation as a whole during the 2013 district of innovation retreat and again at the fall 2014 retreat. Districts of innovation were asked for input on what additional measures they felt would provide evidence of the effects of the innovation plan.

Staff met with superintendents and/or leadership team members in each of the districts of innovation to discuss the monitoring rubrics which had been provided to each district at the 2014 retreat. Districts were asked to complete the rubrics by February 15, 2015.

Visits to Jefferson County did not involve site visits to schools or discussions with staff, but rather meetings with the leadership team and superintendents/points of contact.

A meeting with the Educational Recovery Director (ERD) in Jefferson County was held to discuss the Priority schools and the relationship to the innovation plan. Inasmuch as Louisville Linked was the only segment of the plan implemented to date in those schools, there was no reason for site visits this year. The new schools of innovation were still in the creation stage and not yet operational. It is anticipated that site visits to the new schools and to specific innovation plan related programs in the Priority schools will be made throughout the 2015-16 school year. In addition, once the request to amend the plan for the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) is approved, any schools added to the plan will receive site visits. KDE will continue to work closely with JCPS innovation leadership to provide technical support and guidance as needed by the district.

Monitoring Summary:

Jefferson County has made modest progress in the implementation of its District of Innovation Plan and intends to make some modifications in the coming year.

Topic: Incorporation

The district has incorporated the approved District of Innovation plan into the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan and Comprehensive School Improvement Plans of participating schools; or has replaced the CDIP/CSIP with the District of Innovation Plan as required by (701 KAR 5:140 (4)(1)). The district reported that priority schools and the district have included several strategies identified in the District of Innovation application into the CSIPs and CDIP. Each year the schools and district revise the CSIPs/CDIP and will continue to focus on strategies included in the District of Innovation application; the district stated that it is behind schedule in implementing and incorporating strategy 1, but on-track for strategy 2 and 4 (See Miscellaneous Plan Components pages 8-11) . The district provided a detailed grid showing where the innovation plan had been incorporated into the various school CSIPS and by reference in the CDIP district plan.

Topic: Website

According to the signed MOUs, all districts of innovation were required to “post to any website specified by the KDE, all non-proprietary products and lessons learned from the implementation of the district’s plan”. KDE established a District of Innovation SharePoint web site, presented this at the 2013 Districts of Innovation retreat, and verified that all districts could access the site. None of the districts utilized the site. The Division of Innovation has been working to refine the posting process and has not penalized any District of Innovation for failing to post.

Topic: Leadership Team

The District established a leadership team per the requirements of 701 KAR 5:140 and reported the following: “Weekly meetings were held during the 2013-14 School Year with the district leadership team to discuss progress and support of the 18 priority schools. Agendas for these meetings are available for review.”

“During the 2014-15 school year, because of the progress made in the priority schools, the educational recovery director and CAO [Chief Academic Officer] meet on a regular basis to discuss support and progress. Additional meetings with the full district leadership team are held as needed.”

“Schools of Innovation meetings occurred on a weekly basis during the fall semester 2014 with representatives from the six divisions (operations, finance, academics, diversity, data managements, and communications). Meetings now occur on a regular basis with appropriate representatives as needed. District provided minutes of school of innovation cross-functional team.”

Staff Recommendation:

KDE recommends that the district utilize meeting time to drive the innovation agenda forward, and address how the plan is being implemented. These meetings should reflect the work outlined in the innovation plan. The Educational Recovery Director should be more involved in how the implementation of the innovation plan impacts the students in the Priority schools.

Topic: Student data reporting per 701 KAR 5:140

Required documentation of student progress toward graduation and college and career readiness was provided through the School Report Card and these other data sources: CCR Dashboard; JCPS Preliminary Cohort Listings for 2015 four year graduation rates; 2014 EXPLORE results, and February 2015 ACT results. The documentation was comprehensive and provided the required information.

Districts of Innovation are required to provide the following information:

- Number of students served by the innovation plan, total number and by socioeconomic status, race or ethnicity, gender, disability, and grade level;

- 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;

JCPS provided tables with this information and links to JCPS Data Books online data sources.

Topic: Certified and Classified Staff

Per the requirements of 701 KAR 5:140(4) (d), the district provided a list of certified teachers participating in the innovation plan and their roles and responsibilities. However, the data sources provided do not identify teachers nor specify the roles and responsibilities for teachers in the 18 Priority schools included in the innovation plan. A follow-up meeting with the district clarified this matter and the district will provide a list of key teachers involved in the direct implementation of the plan in the Priority schools. This information will be provided in the 2015-16 report for the two new schools of innovation coming online this fall.

Documentation of certified and classified staff operating in a non-traditional school environment (701 KAR 5:140 (4)(e)) was unavailable for the 2014-15 report as the designated Schools of Innovation will not begin implementation until fall of 2015. Frost Middle School had a summer learning program, but the district did not provide documentation of staff operating in this extended, non-traditional environment. The district is exploring a restructuring plan for alternative schools which may include non-traditional learning environments. It may request to include these schools in the innovation plan through an amendment.

Staff Recommendation:

KDE recommends that the district clarify whether the Frost Middle School summer program is considered a non-traditional program and provide certified and classified staff information as requested. This was discussed in a follow-up meeting and the district will review the program.

Topic: Extended Learning Opportunities

The district was required to provide documentation of any extended learning opportunities in which students in the school of innovation participate for the purpose of earning or recovering credit, including the qualifications of instructors, time spent and student outcomes, and other measurable outcomes specific to the district's innovation plan as described in the initial application or through modification of the original plan. (701 KAR 5:140 (4)(f)). The district provided information from the Infinite Campus (IC) Intervention Tab. Measurable outcomes specific to the District of Innovation plan were not included. As this was the first year the extended learning opportunities were offered for these 18 priority schools, outcomes were not available when the report was due. It is unclear if the extended learning programs are, or should be, classified as non-traditional programs. If they are classified as non-traditional, then documentation of certified and classified staff is needed.

Staff Recommendation:

KDE recommends that the next report by the district should include the outcomes being used to determine the effectiveness of the extended learning opportunity programs. An overall chart showing the effects of these programs on credit recovery or earning additional credit by school should be included in the next report.

The district should clarify how the district is categorizing extended learning and summer learning programs. This was discussed in a follow-up meeting and District leadership stated that they knew of only one of the priority schools with a unique extended learning program. Plans are in place for a District of Innovation team to make a site visit to select after school programs in the priority schools this fall.

Waiver Requests

The district requested a waiver of **persistently low-achieving school options to add a 5th option to create a school of innovation at a priority school**. The district reported as follows:

“Initially the district wanted to pursue using a different classification for district-wide magnet schools, such as applying 704 KAR 3:390, describing A5 and A6 status, in lieu of 703 KAR 5:240, which defines A1 status for schools. With the implementation of the School Design Contest, the district is implementing new school concepts. The district is requesting additional waivers for the two Schools of Innovation. “ [Note: These additional waivers were approved by the KBE in April 2015 and will be included in the 2015-16 monitoring report].

“However, all current Priority schools in the district are middle and high schools. While there were several applications submitted in the School Design Contest focusing on middle and high schools, the two winning concepts were at the elementary level. If the district pursues another School Design Contest, consideration will be given only to applications that focus on Priority middle and high schools.”

Staff Assessment:

KDE acknowledges that the district will be implementing a new school model at the K-8 level and, therefore, this waiver is not being applied to priority schools as initially requested. It was decided in a follow-up meeting with the district point of contact that the district will retain this waiver for future use when new innovation schools come on board. This may also apply to re-imagined alternative schools which will be added to the innovation plan through the amendment process.

The district requested a waiver of 703 KAR 5:240 which defines A1 status for schools and to use 704 KAR 3:390 describing A5 and A6 schools **to expand which students may be served by an A5 district-wide school**.

The district reported that after careful consideration and discussion, the district decided not to pursue this waiver for the reasons stated above. Currently, the district is in the process of

significantly redesigning alternative schools to achieve better educational outcomes for students. The district is also working with KDE to review the track back policy within Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP) for alternative schools.

Staff Assessment:

The district has since been studying the Big Picture Learning model for The Phoenix School of Discovery and Liberty for High School. If this or a similar system is implemented, this waiver may become applicable if these schools are added to the innovation plan.

The district requested a waiver of the **Education Professional Standards Board local educator assignment data administrative regulation** to reconsider what constitutes a teacher of record. This waiver was denied and the district has not pursued any other options.

The district requested a waiver of KRS 158.070 and 702 KAR 7:140, **setting the school year and school day requirements**, to allow the district to educate students in different settings by creating staggered school days for some students so that these students have a schedule that works for them. The district reported as follows:

“The original intent for requesting this waiver was to give the district the ability to educate students in different settings by creating staggered school days for some students so that they have a schedule that works for them. This would allow granting credits for waiving certain basic classes in some schools. By doing that, the DOI could attract students to those schools, better differentiate instruction and move students into more rigorous reading, math, and science and social studies classes. It would also facilitate connecting students to "career pathways" and "college classes" in more meaningful ways. The District was also seeking to waive requirement of adherence to a Master Bell Schedule in a School of Innovation delineating instructional and non-instructional time periods.

The District is still exploring how to implement this waiver. Currently, Frost and Valley Prep students receive additional time during the summer. At this point, the District is looking at this waiver within the context of redesigning alternative schools to create success pathways and improve outcomes for students.”

Staff Recommendation:

KDE recommends that the district amend the innovation plan to include the alternative schools which will be re-designed. Creating a strong afterschool program that looks different from the regular school day is a key component of this approach, for all schools.

The district should provide a list of measurable outcomes in schools where this waiver is applied.

District leadership indicated that they would be reviewing the entire innovation plan early this fall and make changes where necessary, and would present the amended plan to KDE in the fall. KDE offered technical support and guidance.

The district requested a waiver of KRS 158.070's **restriction on the minimum term required of a teacher**, with an allowance for the district to give teachers additional compensation and for Jefferson County Teachers Association to later set additional conditions on the district's actions under this waiver. The district reported as follows:

“The District was pursuing this waiver provision specifically for a School of Innovation. We are continuing to explore how this waiver could be framed as being subject to additional compensation and under conditions established under an agreement with Jefferson County Teachers Association (JCTA).”

“We see the most potential with using this waiver as we work on redesigning alternative schools, but will also look at in context of Phoenix School of Discovery and JCPS eSchool courses as the district explores ways to both expand and enhance distance learning through the use of technology.”

Staff Assessment:

This waiver applies only to the schools listed in the innovation plan. Should the district expand options for virtual learning and the minimum teacher term, the district may apply this waiver only if the schools are included in the innovation plan.

The district requested a waiver of **compulsory attendance requirements and Supporting Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funding requirements** based on average daily attendance. The district cited KRS 159.010 and 702 KAR 7:125 in this waiver request, but Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) staff determined that the KRS 159.010 compulsory attendance requirement, which the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) could not waive, does not appear relevant to this request. The district provided the following information:

“The original intent was to waive provisions regarding what constitutes pupil attendance. The District was seeking to permit rigorous, monitored educational activities toward instructional targets aligned with core content outside the standard school day to be included in the determination of attendance, including for the calculation of funding under SEEK.”

“The District has not pursued this waiver to date, but continues to explore how this waiver could be used as alternative schools are redesigned as well as with the Phoenix School of Discovery and Jefferson County High School.”

[KDE note: This waiver was approved only to the extent that, pursuant to KRS 160.107, Excellence in Kentucky funds for students in average daily attendance in nontraditional programming time, including alternative programs and virtual programs.]

Staff Recommendation:

KDE recommends that, if this waiver is to be applied to the Phoenix School of Discovery and the Jefferson County High School, or alternative schools, these schools must be included in the approved District of Innovation plan. The district can use an amendment to add these schools.

In a follow-up meeting, the district indicated it would likely request that these schools be added to the innovation plan.

The district requested a waiver of **graduation requirements** specific to subject matter but in compliance with the requirement that the alternative under the waiver meet the requirements of KRS 156.108 and 160.107 (but no details regarding how or what the district plans to do). The district cited KRS 156.160 and 704 KAR 3:305 in this waiver request.

This waiver request was further clarified when Jefferson County Public Schools joined the other six (6) Districts of Innovation in applying for a waiver from 704 KAR 3:305, Minimum requirements for high school graduation. The Districts of Innovation desired to provide each high school student with an individual graduation plan that ensures college/career readiness and also meets the requirements of Kentucky's accountability model as approved under the state's ESEA Flexibility Waiver. In order to qualify under this waiver request, a student must complete a locally designed course of study, personalized to the student's needs and interests that incorporates the Kentucky Core Academic Standards. For a student to participate under this waiver, the student must first meet the accountability measures which are detailed in the waiver application.

This waiver was approved by the KBE in the Spring of 2015. Jefferson County Public Schools stated that it is looking closely at performance based assessments to demonstrate mastery, for example, something similar to what is being used by the New York Performance Standards Consortium (PSC), which is endorsed by the Jefferson County Teachers Association. Data on these schools indicate success with a school population that is demographically more challenging than the state or national averages. The New York PSC has developed an assessment system that leads to quality teaching and enhances, rather than compromises, a student's education. Consortium school graduates go on to college and are successful.

The district will provide information on how this waiver is being applied, especially with regard to the priority schools and other schools currently in, or added to, the innovation plan.

The district requested a waiver of **Education Professional Standards Board certification requirements for persons to hold certified positions and perform certified duties in school districts**. The district cited KRS 161.020 (and stated that the district would not evaluate these employees under certified evaluation in 16 KAR 1:010) in this waiver request. This waiver was denied and, after an initial meeting with Education Professional Standards Board once the District of Innovation designation was awarded, Jefferson County Public Schools decided not to pursue this waiver. The Education Professional Standards Board indicated that there was sufficient flexibility within current regulations and policies for the district to implement strategies outlined in the District of Innovation application. This waiver will likely be removed from any subsequent versions of the innovation plan.

Miscellaneous Plan Components

The district innovation plan included four main strategies which apply to the entire district but are a main component of the innovation plan as well. These strategies were reported on as follows:

District Strategy 1 - Creating Equal Access to Highly Effective Instruction through Professional Collaboration.

The district reported on the overall use of technology to connect highly effective teachers and classrooms to less experienced teachers and classrooms. Priority schools were included, but no documentation on how many priority schools were involved, and how many teachers from priority schools were trained.

Staff Recommendation:

KDE requests that the district provide data that demonstrates the effect of this strategy on the schools included in the District of Innovation plan. For example: How many teachers from Priority schools received training? How are the Professional Learning Communities including the teachers from Priority schools? How will this be applied to the new schools of innovation or to the restructured alternative schools?

District Strategy 2 - Extending learning opportunities so students may learn anywhere/anytime that they have access to instructional materials.

The district reported as follows:

“Fully implementing this strategy has proven to be the most challenging for us. After multiple attempts to complete the development of the tools identified in our application, CatSpan™ and Opporteen™, we decided to move on to another tool because we could not make sufficient progress with the company developing those two tools. The developer originally committed to working with us to fully develop both the tools and pilot them at no cost. Repeated attempts to finish the tools were not successful.

We will identify two pilot schools during Summer 2015, to begin implementation during Fall 2015. Our intent is to choose pilot schools from our priority schools group. We will continue to pursue mobile device options. Until a mobile device application is found that meets district security standards, we will use the district option of JCPS Online to pilot the program which already has many features necessary to successfully implement strategy two, including online learning, online groups, calendars, messages, notes, announcements, and mail.

The district will use multiple avenues to implement and monitor the effectiveness. Computer Education Support and Guidance Services will partner to choose two pilot schools and train appropriate students and school personnel. Feedback will be gathered via anecdotal methods as well as on online survey.”

Strategy 3 - Creating Schools of Innovation.

The district provided the following information:

“As a way to engage the community in school reform, we proposed a communitywide school design competition to identify and develop innovative ideas for the creation of one or several Schools of Innovation. The process began as an open-ended, anything-goes idea generator, then moved to translate the best, most powerful, innovations into concrete structures and actions, into a real school or schools serving real kids.”

“The design competition had two phases. The first included an open call for interested teams to submit applications and make a brief presentation in a public forum before a Design Review Panel.”

“In the second phase, four finalists had until July 2014 to expand upon their proposal, receiving technical assistance from JCPS staff, to move from a "Big Idea" to a final proposal, to address preparation of a baseline budget, operational requirements, curriculum alignment, and other issues.”

“Four finalists presented proposals at the July 28, 2014 board meeting. The Jefferson County Board of Education selected two of the concepts, Louisville Reach Academy and Catalpa School, as winners of the JCPS School of Innovation Design Contest.”

“Louisville Reach Academy, a school where the physical, social, emotional, and academic need of all children are met. The school will provide expanded learning opportunities through extended day and summer programming, extensive use of technology, and offering targeted intervention and enrichment. Developed by Brandeis and Klondike Lane Elementary teachers, the Reach Academy will provide family services, including medical and dental care, family therapy, government services, adult education, job shadowing, and family education workshops.”

“Catalpa School serves preschool through 5th grade, but it will have the ability to grow to grades 6-8. Developed by Auburndale and Byck Elementary teachers, Catalpa combines the traditions of Waldorf education with core academic standards. Art, music, drama, movement, and nature experiences will promote student creativity and critical thinking.”

“With more than 70%, staff voted to locate the Louisville Reach Academy at Atkinson Elementary School. The Catalpa School will be located at Maupin Elementary which was one of the 30 schools identified in the District of Innovation application as a watch school.”

“Planning groups for each school began meeting in September 2014 and will continue through summer 2015. Implementation for both school designs will be 2015-16 school year. Implementation of all the components of the school design will depend of securing additional funding for each school.”

“The district will assess the effectiveness of the school designs utilizing data including K-PREP scores, district proficiency assessment scores, retention rates, non-academic factors (i.e.

discipline, attendance, satisfaction, climate), and other data sources central to the main tenets of the school design.”

“District staff have commented on the process for developing a new school of innovation. The open process was designed to allow for the maximum input from the community and those with ideas of what a new school should look like. Several district staff believe that the process was too cumbersome and too long.”

“The first new school which came out of this process was the Catalpa School based on a Waldorf school model. The school will open in the Fall of 2015. The Catalpa School, a new school of innovation, is an elementary school and not one of the priority schools noted earlier in this document. The Catalpa school will be located at Maupin Elementary, which was a school listed on a watch list – but not classified as a priority school and not specifically included in the innovation application. Specific waivers were requested for this school and presented to the KBE and have been incorporated into the districts innovation plan. “

“The Louisville Reach Academy is also being located in a school which was not on the original innovation plan list. This school, and the Catalpa School, become part of the innovation plan beginning in 2015-16, as both schools were referenced in the original plan as new schools of innovation.”

Strategy 4 - Creating a system of support for each student to be successful.

The district reported as follows:

“We developed Louisville Linked to build upon existing partnerships between JCPS and local service providers to formalize and coordinate a community-wide response to education. Louisville Linked connects children and families with community-based services that support stability, address identified socio-economic barriers and promote resiliency.”

“Initially 200 different businesses and organizations were vetted, and any organization or business can be considered for Louisville Linked by completing an online form. From July through September 2013, Assistant Superintendents, Principals, FRYSC Coordinators, Counselors, Social Workers, Career Counselors, Home School Coordinators, and School Nurses were trained on using the Louisville Linked system. A community training was held in early November 2013. The first full roll-out of Louisville Linked in the district was in October 2013. A second roll-out occurred in February 2014. Several trainings were conducted between June and November 2014. We are tracking the links for students in priority schools”.

Louisville Linked is a comprehensive program that benefits students throughout the district. The district pulled data from the priority schools regarding the use of Louisville Linked to assist students in those schools.

Staff Recommendation:

KDE requests that the district provide progress data on students in the priority schools, and other schools which may be added to the innovation plan, relative to the use of Louisville Linked and also report any impact on the success of the schools.

Overall Findings:

Jefferson County is making progress on the implementation of its District of Innovation plan. The district strategic plan was incorporated into the District of Innovation plan, which the district applies to all schools in the Jefferson County Public Schools. The waivers in the District of Innovation plan (with the exception of the global graduation requirement waiver) do not extend to schools not explicitly listed in the plan and thus the plan should be amended to include the additional schools where appropriate. For the 2015-16 school year, the district needs to clarify which schools are included in the plan and provide a list of those schools by the beginning of the school year. Additional schools may be added to the plan this year and others may be dropped if they are no longer priority schools. There also needs to be a stronger connection between strategies and programs initiated under the plan and the 18 priority schools listed in the original application. A method of measuring outcomes in these schools as they relate specifically to the innovation plan should be designed and implemented. The district is progressing well in its implementation of the School of Innovation and was granted waivers this past spring that will allow it to proceed with its design. The Louisville Linked program has proven to be successful – it should be interesting to track the interventions connected to the 18 priority schools and the impact on student learning and growth. Additional schools which might be added to the plan are: The Phoenix School of Discovery, Liberty High School, and the Jefferson County Public Schools eSchool. The district will review and revise their innovation plan in late summer/early fall and will present an amended version to KBE sometime in the fall.

Additional information provided by the district in an appendix is available upon request.