

# **KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

## **STAFF NOTE**

### **Review Item:**

Kentucky's Equitable Access to Effective Educators Plan

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

Elementary and Secondary Education Act, KRS 156.557, 704 KAR 3:370

### **History/Background:**

***Existing Policy.*** National data shows that poor and minority children are being taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers. As a result, the United States Education Department (USED) required states to develop equity plans and use evidence-based strategies. Kentucky's plan can be found on the board's online materials system.

A review of Kentucky's data revealed teacher turnover, particularly new teachers, in high poverty and/or high minority and low-achieving schools as a barrier to achieving equitable access to effective educators. After a root-cause analysis was conducted, strategies to address high teacher turnover rates were developed. The strategies include:

- Strengthening educator preparation;
- Providing guidance and support to districts regarding recruitment, hiring and placement of staff;
- Utilizing effectiveness data to target professional learning support for educators;
- Developing retention strategies such as development of educator career pathways and leadership support for teachers.

The USED and the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) are not requiring the movement of staff between schools as a strategy to ensure equitable access. Rather, the focus is on supporting the use of data to match teacher strengths with student needs and providing targeted professional learning supports to ensure continuous improvement.

The plan also requires measures to evaluate progress and a mechanism for public reporting. Kentucky developed five measures of progress which will be included in the district and school report cards in the fall of 2015. The measures include the following:

- Working Conditions – School; District; State - TELL Survey results will demonstrate the percentage rate responses of Agree/Strongly Agree for questions that address Managing Student Conduct, Community Engagement and Support and School Leadership;
- Overall Effectiveness of School Teachers and Leaders – School; District; State – Percentage of Effective Educators;

Overall Student Growth of Teachers and Leaders – School; District; State – Overall percentage of teachers and leaders that receive an Expected or High growth rating;

Percentage of New and Kentucky Internship Program (KTIP) teachers – School; District; State – Number of new teachers to a building or teachers in the KTIP;

Percentage of Teacher Turnover - School; District; State – Percentage of teachers that leave a building, district, state or the teaching profession.

To support districts and schools, the KDE will facilitate face-to-face professional learning experiences and provide technical support to guide district efforts to refine their processes and procedures to ensure equitable access for students to effective teachers and leaders. Districts will then identify their specific needs and plan strategies to address those needs through Comprehensive School and District Improvement Plans (CSIPs/CDIPs). An overview of plan components, including a review of the Equity Tab in the district and school report cards, will be provided through multiple sessions at the Continuous Improvement Summit. In-depth trainings will occur at regional sessions in October. Announcements regarding specific dates and locations of trainings will be provided through the Commissioner's weekly messages.

### ***Input from stakeholders and summary of feedback***

Stakeholder feedback from advisory councils and civil rights groups was utilized in the development of the plan that was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) on June 1, 2015. While several root causes were identified by stakeholder groups, most all cited the following:

Lack of preparedness of teachers to meet the diverse learning needs of students;

New teachers and inexperienced teachers often being assigned to work with the most challenging students;

Working conditions that would improve the culture of the school not correctly or adequately being addressed.

Input regarding potential strategies also was suggested. This input included:

Ensure student teachers have experience working in high poverty, high minority and low-achieving schools;

Develop policies, procedures and guidance for selection, hiring and placement;  
Utilize data from the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Survey to improve working conditions as a potential solutions.

The measures of progress also were shared with stakeholders. While there was agreement with the measures, the use of TELL data received the most positive feedback.

On July 9, 2015, KDE staff participated in a call with the USED regarding the Equitable Access to Effective Educators plan that was submitted to USED. The USED stated Kentucky had submitted a solid plan and no further action was required. If Kentucky decides to make additional revisions, based on the ongoing feedback, those revisions will be submitted to USED. If no changes are made to the plan, USED shall be notified that no further revisions will be made. Public comments are being collected through July 15, 2015.

**Impact on Getting to Proficiency:**

The Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) has put in place a system that focuses on educators being effective professionals. The system provides data to drive discussions about strengths and improvement areas. This data, along with many other sources, should be driving decisions in districts and school around the areas mentioned above in order to have a truly cohesive human resource management strategy.

If PGES is implemented with fidelity, schools and districts will have access to data to inform the professional learning needs of teachers. Identifying these needs will allow teachers and leaders to focus individual professional learning opportunities that influence practice in the classroom and impact all students.

The PGES data also will assist districts with identification of teachers who possess the attributes and desire to become teacher leaders. The district may utilize these teacher leaders to build staff capacity. It also will allow districts to better align teacher strengths with student needs in order to support continuous improvement.

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**Commissioner of Education**

**Date:**

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