

# **KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

## **STAFF NOTE**

### **Review Item:**

Update on Kentucky's Plan to Close Achievement Gaps Through Novice Reduction

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

See Attachment A.

### **History/Background:**

***Existing Policy.*** KRS 158.649 requires the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and each local board of education to address achievement gaps between the various groups of students including gender, students with disabilities, students without English proficiency, minority students, and students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch. An attachment is included citing the statutory and regulatory authority for closing gaps.

At the December 2014 meeting, the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) heard a presentation from *The Education Trust* staff. The presenters shared data from Kentucky highlighting that the achievement gaps exist as follows:

- The average math proficiency rates of African American students at schools earning a Distinguished rating are about equal to the math proficiency rates of white students in Needs Improvement Schools.
- Results for African American students in Distinguished schools are about the same as the results for white students in Needs Improvement Schools.
- The same patterns for proficiency rates appear in college- and career-readiness rates.

At the February 2015 meeting, the KBE heard a report from the KDE on how the novice reduction plan is designed to close achievement gaps. This will be the work of the entire agency and address goals set as part of the commissioner's evaluation.

Associate Commissioners Amanda Ellis and Kelly Foster indicated that the work not only must focus on assessment and accountability but also on the curriculum and instruction issues that are leading some students to achieve and others to not achieve. They identified the following eight core processes that will inform how the work is delivered to practitioners:

- Design and deliver curriculum;
- Design and deliver instruction;
- Design and deliver assessment literacy;
- Review, analyze and use data results;
- Design, align and deliver support processes;
- Establish learning culture/environment;
- Align community support partners; and
- Monitor legal requirements.

Changes to 703 KAR 5:200, Next Generation Learners; 703 KAR 5:225, School and District Accountability, Recognition, Support and Consequences; and 703 KAR 5:240, Accountability Administrative Procedures and Guidelines were approved by the Kentucky Board of Education on February 4. These changes are designed to eliminate the masking of achievement gaps and provide incentives to move all students to higher performance levels. The revisions were proposed after analysis of three years of implementation data of the Unbridled Learning System and are focused on making it fairer, more reliable and more valid.

Teams have been created for six of the eight key core work processes. Teams met in February, March, April, and May for large group professional learning opportunities followed by individual team coaching sessions with Susan Allred, Amanda Ellis, and Kelly Foster. Each team completed a linkage chart, identifying leaders, strategic goals, stakeholder focus, processes, and methods for measuring results. During coaching sessions, teams completed priority matrices to prioritize the strategic goals from the linkage charts. Once goals were prioritized, each team completed a Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle for carrying out the improvement.

During the all-KDE meeting on May 18, 2015, team leaders shared how each key core work process is crucial to the reduction of novice performance in Kentucky.

At the June KBE meeting, KDE staff gave an update on the website being created that will be the core of a comprehensive plan to support the identified improvement strategies for schools and districts.

Currently, KDE has hired the Novice Reduction (NR) Coordinator and five regional Novice Reduction Coaches. The NR staff have received training and made contact with districts to implement strategies for closing the achievement gaps. The Novice Reduction strategies were introduced to districts through the Kentucky Continuous Improvement Summit in September, and the interactive website for Novice Reduction was launched October 1<sup>st</sup>. The KDE is currently piloting the Novice Reduction work with the following districts:

- Fayette
- Lawrence
- Jenkins
- Christian
- Silver Grove
- Menifee

Our NR staff is in the process of working with cooperatives and key partners to share the work and intended outcomes of the Novice Reduction initiative.

### **Impact on Getting to Proficiency:**

Ensuring that all groups of students are proficient and prepared for success as well as are college- and career-ready is essential for the successful future of the Commonwealth.

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**Interim Commissioner of Education**

**Date:**

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