

Dr. Stephen L. Pruitt
Commissioner of Education's Report
Kentucky Board of Education Meeting
December 9, 2015

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Reauthorization

The Every Student Succeeds Act legislation to reauthorize ESEA and replace No Child Left Behind is moving forward. Kevin Brown and I attended a Council of Chief State School Officers meeting on November 20-21 and this was a major topic of conversation there. You can check out an *Education Week* article by Alyson Klein titled ["ESEA Reauthorization: The Every Student Succeeds Act Explained"](https://www.edweek.org/technology/article.aspx?hpid=hp-top_story_tech&hpid=hp-top_story_tech) for a summary. The full bill language can be found at the following link: <https://www.congress.gov/bills/114/congress/senate/bills/1177/text>. We are hopeful the bill will be signed by the end of the year.

Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) and Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) Update

It should first be noted that I made it clear at our first all-KDE meeting that KSB and KSD are a priority for us at KDE. We are their "central office" and we will act as such with me as their superintendent.

As specific follow-up to the conversations at the October board meeting relative to questions raised about KSB and KSD, I have met with Kentucky Department of Education staff to educate myself about the schools and their services and also have met with the school principals, Will Begley and Deborah Phillips, as well as Walter T. Hulett, the KSB/KSD Supervisor. We discussed the services offered by the schools, accomplishments the schools have achieved, challenges the schools face and improvements they would like to pursue. I plan to have regular staff meetings with the school leadership to make sure I know what is occurring at these schools and to make sure these students are receiving the best education we can offer.

After the October board meeting, we followed up with each parent that spoke at the meeting individually in writing and made sure they were aware of the dispute resolution process that is available to them free of charge via federal law. I also am having staff members look into the allegations that were raised and will follow up at a later meeting on any recommendations that result from what I learn as staff report back to me. Additionally, I have directed staff to conduct a "review of practice" at each school so that we can determine next steps in support of the two schools. Over the next few months, KDE staff and I will work with KSB and KSD leadership and teachers to establish our new working protocols.

Update on Arts Pathways

You have seen the articles in the *Fast Five on Friday* publication regarding questions raised by school districts on the arts pathways as related to the career-readiness designation in the accountability system. I will emphasize again that the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) recognizes the value of arts education in contributing to a well-rounded education that results in essential knowledge and skills for the 21st century.

KDE has already moved forward with the arts as a key component in our work. New standards for the arts have been adopted in Kentucky. All schools are required to provide all students with

access and opportunity to engage in strong arts programs in grades K-12 that are built on the minimum standards included in Kentucky's Academic Standards.

Within the Kentucky Career Clusters, Arts, A/V Technology & Communications is one of 16 clusters identified to help schools organize instruction and student experiences from entry to professional levels. Career ready pathway completion/certification must hold to the following criteria:

1. Recognized, endorsed, or required by industry;
2. Written and verified by national or state industry;
3. Curriculum and certification are aligned with state and/or national standards; and
4. Certification must be an end of program assessment related to the student's identified career pathway achieved through a sequence of courses.

It appears there seems to be some confusion regarding the use of the term pathways and the career readiness designation. The Kentucky Department of Education has completed a pilot of the new "arts" career-readiness designation. KDE continues to support students taking arts courses and pathways (meaning a series of courses focused on the same area) as we have in the past. However, the career readiness designation pilot did not meet the criteria for an industry certification as outlined above. This does not mean that the arts courses are not worthy; it simply means that they do not meet the criteria for being a career ready pathway at this time. The pilot has informed us about areas we need to grow but did not get Kentucky where the state needs to be at this time as far as generating more options that meet the criteria listed above. Based on what was learned in the pilot, the Kentucky Department of Education is continuing to study this issue and will consider other options to pursue the career readiness designation in the arts as well as other areas that will allow for an honest discourse with our students as they consider their plans after graduation.

Attached is a graphic that helps to explain the arts pathways issue.

Update on Kentucky's New Science Test

In spring 2015, Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) began working with WestEd, an assessment company, on conceptualizing the design of a new science assessment system. WestEd was awarded a contract to be a thinking partner with Kentucky regarding a new science assessment design based on the Next Generation Science Standards. In the role of thinking partner, WestEd may not bid on the development of the operational science assessment in the future. Work and products from this contract will be used in creating a Request for Proposals (RFP) to secure a vendor for the new science assessment and to inform Kentuckians about the new assessment.

WestEd has facilitated work with science specialists and assessment staff at KDE and individuals representing classroom teachers, school and district leaders, and university faculty. A prototype for a summative assessment and an example of a through course task for formative assessment purposes are nearing completion. The summative prototype consists of a group of clustered or connected items to measure two performance expectations (referred to as science standards in Kentucky's Academic Standards). The through course assessment is intended for implementation

in the classroom setting to allow for performance and skill based application of the intended science practices, concepts, and ideas. The next step is to try the prototypes out with a small number of Kentucky students in an experience similar to a “cognitive laboratory” where students explicitly describe their thinking and process for completing the assessment. Additional edits to the prototype items may happen after the try-out. Assessment guidance documents on aligning tasks and clusters of items to the standards and an overall assessment system design are nearing completion as well.

Regulation Review

I know that over the years several of you have inquired as to how all of the board’s regulations work together and are organized. I have directed KDE staff to review all 148 KBE regulations to determine if any of those regulations are no longer needed, are outdated or need to be combined for clarity and understanding by our districts and the general public. This means I may be bringing a recommendation to you as early as the February meeting to repeal several regulations. Staff are already engaged in this review and it should prove helpful in making sure we have the appropriate regulatory framework in place to implement state and federal requirements, as well as the KBE’s strategic priorities.