

Districts of Innovation Report – Jefferson County

Cohort I - 2nd Monitoring Year
2015-16 School Year

Background

The 2015-16 school year was the third year of implementation for the first cohort of Districts of Innovation (DOI), and the second year for the second cohort. The Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) monitoring visit took place on April 18th and 19th.

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 DOI. Part 3 was tailored to the individual innovation plan of each district.

Monitoring was discussed with participating districts during the 2013 DOI retreat and again at the fall 2014 retreat. Additional discussions pertaining to monitoring were held individually between the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), Division of Innovation staff and each DOI leadership team. Districts were asked for input regarding additional measures they felt would provide evidence of the effects of the innovation plan.

Both Cohort I and Cohort II districts were asked to provide updated reports to the KDE staff by October 31, 2015 using the 3 rubrics.

Executive Summary:

Innovations such as JCPS Forward, iMentor, Louisville Linked, etc. might be framed as “innovation umbrellas” which apply to all schools and serve as supports to individualized projects at the school level. The district successfully completed an open competition to design a new school of innovation which resulted in two schools of innovation being opened in the fall of 2015.

All Districts of Innovation were notified in July 2015 that the deadline for submitting amendments to their innovation plans for the 2015-16 school year was September 30, 2015. JCPS did not submit requests for change. Meetings with JCPS superintendent and DOI contact Jonathan Lowe included discussions about revisions to the plan. As JCPS was revising its strategic plan, it was given additional time to modify the innovation plan and indicate changes for 2015-16 and beyond. At the end of 2015, this information was still not forthcoming. A meeting was held in March 2016 with Jonathan Lowe to go over the draft monitoring rubric and to once again request the amendments to the plan.

District leadership indicated that they would be reviewing the entire innovation plan early in the 2015-16 school year and would present the amended plan to KDE in the fall of 2015. A revised plan had, as of the date of the monitoring visit, not been received by KDE. However, an updated report was provided in early April prior to the monitoring visit. KDE has continuously offered to work with the district in revising the overall plan. Communication between the district and KDE is expected to improve. As stated in last year’s report, creating a strong innovative afterschool

program that looks different from the regular school day is also seen as a solid approach for all schools.

The Academy at Shawnee did not seem to have a direct connection to the district innovation plan, although they are implementing various initiatives that fall under the main strategies. All Priority schools which will be individually listed in the revised district innovation plan should have descriptions of the unique pioneering strategies and educational designs they are utilizing.

The district has many opportunities to expand and enhance their original innovation plan and continue to explore new ways to meet the needs of all students.

Topic: Incorporation

The district has developed a new strategic plan called Vision 2020 which will serve as the basis for the revised innovation plan. This district-wide strategic plan is part of the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan (CDIP) and will be mapped in more detail as Vision 2020 is implemented. KDE expects that the strategic plan and specific innovation projects will be incorporated into the approved DOI plan and the CDIP and Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (CSIP) of participating schools, pursuant to 701 KAR 5:140 (4)(1). The district reported that Priority schools and the district have previously included several strategies identified in the DOI application into the CSIPs and CDIP.

Topic: Leadership Team

The District established a leadership team pursuant to 701 KAR 5:140. Meetings now occur on a regular basis with appropriate representatives as needed. District provided minutes of school of innovation cross-functional team.”

Staff Comments:

The leadership team should also work with the Priority schools to ensure that they have documented the innovation components specific to their school and include these in the innovation plan.

Topic: Student data reporting per 701 KAR 5:140

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.

Required documentation of student progress toward graduation and college and career readiness was provided through the School Report Card and other data sources including 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.

Topic: Certified and Classified Staff

Pursuant to 701 KAR 5:140(4) (d), the district provided a list of certified teachers participating in the innovation plan and their roles and responsibilities.

Documentation of certified and classified staff operating in a non-traditional school environment was provided. 701 KAR 5:140 (4)(e).

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). In 2015, the district provided information from the Infinite Campus (IC) Intervention Tab. Measurable outcomes specific to the DOI plan were not included. As this was the first year the extended learning opportunities were offered for the 18 Priority schools, outcomes were not available at the time of report. In 2016, KDE was informed that not all Priority schools offered extended learning and the afterschool programs were not mandatory. KDE staff recommendation from the 2015 report suggested that the district provide a report which includes the outcomes being used to determine the effectiveness of the extended learning opportunity programs.

The district has since moved to alternative extended learning opportunities including Edgenuity and iMentor/Chronus. According to information provided by the district in April of 2016, iMentor offers one-on-one online and in-person mentoring relationships, and offers programmatic staff support, curricula, and technology tools for school-wide implementation. JCPS states it is actively engaged with iMentor and the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Kentuckiana to determine feasibility for implementation in a JCPS school as a pilot. Because iMentor recommends school-wide implementation, and because of the target student audience, if JCPS moves forward, implementation would be expected to occur in a Priority school.

Staff Comments:

KDE recommends that the district continues its exploration of iMentor and Chronus and provides a report for the 2016-17 school year as to the number of students served by the program and expected and measurable outcomes.

The district still needs to clarify how it is categorizing extended learning and summer learning programs for Priority schools. This was discussed both in 2015 and 2016. District staff stated that extended learning programs were not mandatory and not consistent in each school, making it difficult to track outcomes or categorize the programs. The district should be more deliberate in designing and implementing afterschool and extended learning opportunities.

Waiver Requests

Waiver of persistently low-achieving school options to add a 5th option to create a school of innovation at a priority school under 704 KAR 3:390.

“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 completion and of the School Design Contest, and selection of two models proposed in the contest, the district is implementing new school concepts.

The two schools of innovation selected in the competition were launched in the fall of 2015 at Maupin Elementary and Atkinson Elementary. The Waldorf model, implemented at Maupin was initially planned as a whole-school conversion. However, it was determined that a reset was necessary to focus on the Kindergarten and 1st Grade for full implementation so students would grow into the model as they progressed through the grades. Some aspects of the model are being implemented in the other grades. The Reach Academy at Atkinson was originally planned for Klondike Elementary but moved to Atkinson as it was perceived that there was more capacity to implement it at Atkinson and more staff support. The authors of the winning plan transferred to Atkinson from Klondike.

Staff Comments:

The school of innovation competition engaged and energized the community and provided a unique vehicle for community input into the education system. Participants in the innovation competition reported that it was an empowering process. After the first year of implementation there remain several issues to be addressed. Staff buy-in, consistency between classes in same grade level and agreement of instructional methods is still lacking at Maupin. There appears to be a conflict between literacy vs. play. The original idea behind the school of innovation established at Maupin did not originally include converting an existing school and student population into the Waldorf Model. According to conversations with school staff the atmosphere is more relaxed after the reset which occurred in the fall of 2015. Monitoring team members expressed concern that there is conflict among faculty, no parent feedback, and new teachers coming and going mid-year. The reset and plans moving forward for Maupin should be

documented and included in the DOI plan along with expected outcomes and measurable objectives.

Atkinson appears to be moving ahead with implementation of the Reach Academy though much of the “wrap-around” model revolves around projects and procedures that have been implemented across the state in a variety of schools and thus lack true innovation processes. Staff recommends that Atkinson be provided additional freedom to experiment with new ideas and empower staff to explore additional innovative strategies to meet the needs of the school population. The school shows promise in developing innovative practices to meet the needs of the whole child. The onsite health clinic being established in the school provides an extraordinary wrap around service for an especially stressed population.

Waiver of timeline and grade levels for coverage of content standard established in 704 KAR 3:303

The district requested additional waivers for the two schools of innovation which were approved by the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) in April 2015. One waiver permits a deviation from the grade-level timeline for instruction of the content standards in 704 KAR 3:303 to follow a curriculum timeline created by the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education in conjunction with the Alice Birney School in Sacramento, California.

Staff Comments

This timeline has been further modified based on the experiences within the school as implementation takes hold. Additional modifications may be necessary as the model is expanded to other grades.

Waiver of 702 KAR 7:140, Section 5. Activities of the Student Attendance Day

Under this waiver request, within the standard JCPS school day of 9:00 AM to 3:45 PM, kindergarten students will have 30 minutes of rest time in the mornings, and 30 minutes of snack/rest time in the afternoon.

Staff Comments:

Both of the new schools appear to be on track and progressing; however, Maupin remains a concern. There was discussion by the monitoring team as to the degree of actual innovation occurring in each of these schools, most notably at Atkinson which is providing wrap-around services that are not unique in the district or state. Although Atkinson’s plan included extensive use of technology, the only example of innovative uses of technology with students was creating photo stories. Because the team did not see instruction in classrooms it was difficult to tell if innovative strategies for learning are being implemented. Students gave the example of their most memorable project for the year as a poster/report. These were displayed but demonstrated fact-finding, not engaged thinking. The burgeoning health clinic was viewed as a positive

innovation for the REACH initiative. The school is working toward providing more innovative approaches in its attempt to address whole child issues that have an impact on academic achievement. Students and faculty were supportive of the practices being implemented in the school. Strong relationships between students and staff were notable. A follow-up visit in the fall is recommended.

Waiver of 703 KAR 5:240 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. The district continues to explore options for alternative programs to achieve better educational outcomes for students. Should the district implement the Big Picture Learning or similar model this waiver may still be applicable so will remain in the plan.

Staff Comments:

KDE recommends that, if this waiver is to be applied, the appropriate schools must be included in the approved DOI plan.

Waiver of KRS 158.070 and 702 KAR 7:140, setting the school year and school day requirements,

“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 the possibilities this waiver presents.

Staff Comments:

KDE recommends that the district explore the possibilities this waiver presents for re-imagining the schedules for alternative programs.

Waiver of KRS 158.070's restriction on the minimum term required of a teacher.

The district requested this waiver 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 Comments:

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. Each school added to the district plan and using this waiver would include this in their school-level innovation plan and CSIP.

Waiver of compulsory attendance requirements and Supporting Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funding requirements

The district cited KRS 159.010 and 702 KAR 7:125 in this waiver request, but KDE staff determined that the KRS 159.010 compulsory attendance requirement, which the 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 programs such as Liberty High and Phoenix School of Discovery are redesigned, as well as with Jefferson County High School.”

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

Staff Comments:

KDE recommends that, if this waiver is to be applied, the appropriate schools must be included in the approved DOI plan. In a follow-up meeting, the district indicated it would likely request that these schools be added to the innovation plan.

Waiver of graduation requirements under 704 KAR 3:305

The district requested a waiver specific to graduation requirements but with the requirement that the alternative under the waiver meet the requirements of KRS 156.108 and 160.107. The district did not specify what it planned to do. The district cited KRS 156.160 and 704 KAR 3:305 in this waiver request.

This waiver request was further clarified when JCPS 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 DOI 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.

The district has not utilized this waiver though it continues to explore its use.

Staff Comments:

Application of this waiver in other DOI districts has proven to be beneficial to several students who otherwise may not have completed high school or transitioned successfully into a career or college opportunity.

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). This waiver was denied and, after an initial meeting with Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) once the DOI designation was awarded, JCPS decided not to pursue this waiver. The EPSB indicated that there was sufficient flexibility within current regulations and policies for the district to implement strategies outlined in the DOI application. This waiver will likely be removed from any subsequent versions of the innovation plan.

Staff Comments:

This waiver should be removed from the revised innovation plan being submitted in 2016.

Miscellaneous Plan Components

The district innovation plan included four main strategies which apply to the entire district. These strategies were reported on as follows:

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

The district provided the following information in April of 2016.

“JCPS has actively pursued a variety of means to improve professional practice of educators through professional collaboration, although the mechanisms being deployed are in some instances different than what was originally envisioned.”

The district also reported a strong network of Professional Learning Communities in each school and the addition of goal clarity coaches in each school. It is still unclear how these measures specifically apply to schools listed in the innovation plan.

JCPS created the position of “teacherpreneur,” a person who spends half of his or her time in the classroom and half-time building the infrastructure for teacher-led online professional learning, JCPS Voice. This innovation affects all schools, not just those included in the DOI plan.

According to information submitted by JCPS, with support from the National Center for Teaching Quality (NCTQ), JCPS Voice has created a pilot initiative wherein 10 teachers have been trained to lead online Virtual Learning Communities (VLC), creating professional learning opportunities for teachers to interact within and across grade levels, schools, and content areas. The project includes synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities, webinars, discussion forums, and learning opportunities with national experts. JCPS pays for training and stipends for VLC teacher-leaders. JCPS VOICE is being folded into an umbrella structure, JCPS Forward that strives to bring together and organize teacher leadership professional development initiatives in the district, many of which have a technology component. Neither of these strategies is specific to teachers in the schools listed in the innovation plan.

Staff Comments:

KDE requests that the district provide data that demonstrates the effect of this strategy specifically on the schools included in the DOI plan.

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

The district reports that fully implementing this strategy proved to be the most challenging. After multiple attempts to complete the development of the tools identified in the application, the district decided to move on to another tool because it could not make sufficient progress with the company developing those tools.

JCPS has been exploring alternative means to move forward with this strategy. The district has implemented Edgenuity, an online video course curriculum to offer uninterrupted instruction to students in transition and credit recovery. The district has also identified a model to use as a mentoring program called iMentor, a nationally recognized model. The program offers one-on-one online and in-person mentoring relationships and offers programmatic staff support, curricula, and technology tools for school-wide implementation. The district states “JCPS is actively engaged with iMentor and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kentuckiana to determine feasibility for implementation in a JCPS school as a pilot. Because iMentor recommends school-wide implementation, and because of the target student audience, if JCPS moves forward, implementation would be expected to occur in a Priority school.”

Strategy 3 - Creating Schools of Innovation.

The district provided the following information:

“This strategy of using a community-wide design competition to create and develop innovative ideas to create Schools of Innovation has been fully implemented. The competition was held, and two plans were adopted. The final implementation plans approved by the board included revisions to the original proposals, and implementation began during the 2015-16 school year. Both schools are envisioned as K-8 schools, but implementation for middle schools will be incorporated on a graduated basis after full elementary implementation.”

Atkinson Elementary has implemented the Reach Academy:

- Create a school where the physical, social, emotional, and academic need of all children are met, removing barriers to learning and improved academic achievement.
- Provide access to a challenging curriculum in a safe and caring environment.
- Expand learning opportunities through extended day and summer programming, extensive use of technology, and offering targeted intervention and enrichment.
- Establish the school as a hub of services for students and families through community partnerships.

Maupin Elementary has implemented the Waldorf-inspired Catalpa Model:

- Create a collaboration of educators and community members to provide an approach to education that blends the Waldorf Tradition with Kentucky Core Academic Standards.
- Use a holistic approach to education to meet the academic needs of each unique child through a balance of art, music, drama, movement, and experiences in nature.
- Build each child’s capacity to think creatively and critically, to understand and manage emotions, and work in a focused and willing manner.
- Meet academic standards in a developmentally appropriate way to foster higher academic achievement in middle and high school and a love of learning throughout life.

Based on early assessment of student progress during the 2015-16 school year, school and district leadership modified the implementation of the model at Maupin beginning in December, 2015:

- Full Catalpa/Waldorf-inspired implementation in grades K-2;
- Modified implementation in grades 3-5, with a more traditional instructional approach;
- Full Catalpa/Waldorf-inspired implementation will be added in a graduated fashion moving forward, one grade per year, with middle school grades being added after full elementary implementation; and
- Significant additional district resources deployed to assist in implementation.

Maupin Elementary, is included on the watch list but is 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 district’s innovation plan.

The Louisville Reach Academy was also located in a school which was not on the original innovation plan list. This school, and the Waldorf inspired model at Maupin, became part of the innovation plan beginning in 2015-16, as both schools were referenced in the original plan as new schools of innovation.

Staff Comments:

See comments throughout this document referencing Maupin and Atkinson.

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

The district reported as follows:

“JCPS has implemented Louisville Linked, a system to build upon relationships between JCPS and schools to link students to services they need to overcome barriers to learning and build resiliency. School-level staff, including Family Resource Youth Services Coordinators and Counselors, have access to information regarding programs and services targeted to the specific needs of individual students, through access to the Metro United Way 211 System, and through direct contacts with community service providers. During the 2015-16 school to date, over 50,000 links have been made for JCPS students.”

The Louisville Linked Core Committee, composed of JCPS, Louisville Metro, Metro United Way, Seven Counties Services, and other community-based organizations, meets monthly to coordinate efforts. In addition, Louisville Linked Subcommittees were developed to address specific issues facing students in greater depth, including Trauma Informed Support, English as a Second Language, and Career Pathways.

Staff Comments:

Louisville Linked was the vision of the former Chief Academic Officer who resigned in the summer of 2015 leaving the program in limbo. Although a major part of Louisville Linked operations were tied to the Family Resource and Youth Service Centers (FRYSC), until a reorganization in the fall of 2015, FRYSCs were not recognized as being the engine behind

Louisville Linked. FRYSC directors from schools and the new Louisville Linked/FRYSC director indicated that the roll out of the program did not fully include those stakeholders it was intended to support. Other partners include Neighborhood Place and Metro United Way. The system covers all schools in the district and is viewed as a major resource to assist students in a variety of ways. It is an innovative project covering the entire district, but does not need voting buy-in from every school in order to be part of the innovation plan.

Noteworthy

JCPS Forward: This umbrella movement has created projects designed to support and engage teachers in re-defining their work and seeking to develop innovative practices. A monthly chat on Twitter is well attended, the first district-wide Ed Camp scheduled, and two teachers are working on a design to develop “urban-ready” teachers.

Louisville Linked: Now that this project has been revised and is under the direction of a district-wide director it provides a unique vehicle for addressing the needs of students and families that will only serve to help students achieve success in school.

Academy at Shawnee: This school is making a concerted effort to meet the needs of its student population through an aviation program, medical and mental health clinics within the school, strong mentoring program, and the UPS arts-based collaborative. The school has created partnerships with Ford Motor Company, National Air & Space Academy, and UPS for project-based learning.

Edgenuity: The use of Edgenuity in a transition center at each middle, high and alternative program to help transient students maintain grade level, as well as for credit recovery, is one method for leveling the playing field and addressing issues of equity. More can be done through this program and the use of other online resources.

Appendix

The monitoring team for Jefferson County was composed of the following:

David Cook, Director, Division of Innovation, KDE
Pat Trotter, District of Innovation Coordinator, KDE
Carmen Coleman, UK Center for Innovation in Education
John Fields, EPSB
Kathy Mansfield, Office of Next Generation Learners, KDE
Beth Peterson, Division of Innovation, KDE
Ashley Sinclair, Kentucky Teacher of the Year
Christina Weeter, Director, Division of Student Success, KDE
Nick Brake, Superintendent, Owensboro Independent, peer reviewer

Visits were made to the following schools:

Maupin Elementary
Atkinson Elementary
The Academy at Shawnee

Meetings were held with the following:

JCPS leadership team

Dr. Donna Hargens, Superintendent
Jonathan Lowe, Director of Strategy
Dr. Dena Dossett, Chief Data Management Officer
Dr. John Marshall, Chief Equity Officer
Allison Martin, Chief Communications Officer
Cordelia Hardin, Chief Finance Officer
Dr. Mike Raisor, Chief Operations Officer
Dr. Marco Munoz, Director for Priority Schools
Dr. Alicia Averette, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support Programs
Dr. Karen Branham, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
Mindy Eaves, Ombudsman
Dr. Debbie Powers, Education Recovery Director, KDE
Dr. Pam Royster, Specialist, College & Career Readiness
MeMe Ratliff, Teacher at Greenwood Elementary
Adrian Oldham, FRYSKY/Louisville Linked director
Runette Thomas, FRYSKY Stuart Middle School
Ellen Smith, FRYSKY Valley High School and prep
Annie Haigler, FRYSKY Phillis Wheatley Elementary

JCPS Board Members

Diane Porter, Vice-Chair
Dr. Lisa Wilner
Linda Duncan

JCTA Representatives

DeeAnn Flaherty

James Hughley
Laura Herder
Justin Elliott
Paul Barnwell

The monitoring team visited classrooms and talked informally with teacher and students.

The district will submit their revised innovation plan no later than July 31, 2016 and will sign a new Memorandum of Understanding no later than September 1, 2016.