

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Action/Discussion Item:

Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Program Review Audit Process

Commissioner's Recommendation:

The Commissioner recommends that the proposed Program Review audit process be approved and implemented during the 2016-17 school year.

Rationale:

To approve recommendations for changes to the Program Review and its process that are the result of recommendations from the Program Review Audit Teams, feedback from the Program Review audits conducted between 2015 and 2016 and suggestions from members of the Program Review Task Force in an effort to provide solutions to the issues elevated by schools and districts.

The proposed changes include increasing the number of schools to be audited, providing a more concise audit team report to schools, focusing the school report on best next steps for program improvement, adding a phone/skype meeting with the school leadership prior to the site visit and eliminating site visits for the K-3 Program Review.

It should be noted that the proposed changes are only for the 2016-17 school year. Decisions regarding program reviews beyond the current school year will be part of the discussion related to the design of the new accountability system that is currently underway to satisfy the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 158.6453, 158.6455, 703 KAR 5:230

Action Question:

Should the Kentucky Board of Education approve the revisions to the Program Review audit process for the 2016-17 school year?

History/Background:

Existing Policy: SB 1 (2009) requires the Kentucky Board of Education to establish 1) criteria to use in the program review and audit process; and 2) procedures recommended for local district and Kentucky Department of Education program reviews and audits. The KBE approved the criteria at the August 2016 board meeting.

KRS 158.6453 provides the following definitions related to program reviews and audits:

A Program Review is a systematic method of analyzing components of an instructional program, including instructional practices, aligned and enacted curriculum, student work samples, formative and summative assessments, professional learning and support services, and administrative support and monitoring.

A Program Audit means a form of program review that is a systematic method of analyzing components of an instructional program, and areas for improvement that is conducted as a result of a program review that indicates a more in-depth process of analysis and assistance is needed.

Further, KRS 158.6453 (4)(c) states that both state and local program reviews and audits shall provide annual feedback to each school relating to selected programs and serve as indicators of the quality of educational experiences available to students. Program reviews and audits *shall provide recommendations for improving program components in order to better teach and assess students within these programs.*

KRS 158.6453 (7) describes the work of the schools, districts and state in the overall process for arts and humanities, practical living/career studies, and writing. The Kentucky Department of Education is charged with ensuring that all schools and districts understand how the results of the program reviews and audits are included in the accountability system and are to provide assistance to schools to “*improve the quality of the programs.*”

Summary: In response to statutory requirements, an audit process was piloted in the spring of the 2014-15 school year to inform the Kentucky Department of Education’s future audit process. The audit pilot provided insight about necessary refinements needed for providing actionable information to schools across the state to *improve the quality of programs.*

In the spring of 2015, schools were selected based on a number of demographic and achievement indicators to pilot the audit process. Eight schools were selected, two in each of four program reviews (Practical Living/Career Studies, Arts and Humanities, Writing and K-3).

During the 2015-16 school year, 24 schools were randomly selected. Six schools in each of the following four program review areas were audited: Practical Living/Career Studies, Arts and Humanities, Writing and K-3. Those selected represented an overall balance of elementary and secondary schools.

The chart below outlines the process used during the 2014-16 school years. The revised process for auditing schools for the purpose of providing actionable feedback and recommendations *to improve the quality of their programs* is included below in the center column, with rationale for the changes located in the far right column.

2014-15 and 2015-16 Process	Proposed 2016-17 Process	Process Revision Rationale based on Audit Team/Audited Schools' Feedback
Schools were chosen randomly for the audit and subsequently notified.	Schools will be chosen randomly for the audit and subsequently notified.	All schools agreed that random selection was a fair and appropriate way to choose schools based on the purpose of providing feedback for improving the quality of programs while also calibrating ratings.
Audit teams notified schools which four-six <u>characteristics*</u> would be reviewed.	Audit teams will notify schools which two <u>demonstrators**</u> will be reviewed.	Schools felt that a close examination of only a sample of the characteristics was appropriate for the audit and representative of the overall program area.
Schools selected four additional <u>characteristics</u> that best exemplified the strengths of their programs.	Schools will select one additional <u>demonstrator</u> that best exemplifies the strengths of their programs.	Schools valued the ability to select their “best” areas of the program to highlight.
Schools were asked to submit evidence for all <u>characteristics</u> to be reviewed (three-five pieces per characteristic).	Schools will be asked to submit evidence for all <u>demonstrators</u> to be reviewed (three-five pieces per demonstrator).	Schools found the requirement to submit a few quality pieces of evidence more time efficient.
Audit teams examined evidence to determine which <u>characteristics</u> required additional information/evidence in order to verify schools' ratings.	Audit teams will examine evidence to determine which <u>demonstrators</u> require additional information/evidence in order to verify schools' ratings.	Auditors seek clear and complete information in order to calibrate ratings and provide accurate feedback to schools.
Teachers and parents were <u>sent a survey link</u> and invited to respond to programmatic questions.	<u>Survey data will be omitted.</u>	Schools reported that surveys were not useful data and they had trouble getting responses to surveys. Auditors found it difficult to use the survey data when few people responded.
	An <u>online/phone pre-site visit meeting</u> will be conducted to clarify evidence and inquire about demonstrators. Based on that meeting, teams will work to <u>refine site visit questions</u> , write new questions, etc.	Auditors can be more effective and efficient during the site visit when they have relevant and clear information to review ahead of time.
School visits consisted of: principal interview, teacher interviews, student interviews, SBDM interview, school tour, viewing of additional evidence	School visits will consist of: principal interview, teacher interviews, student interviews, SBDM interview, school tour, viewing of additional evidence	Schools indicated that, overall, they were satisfied with the process. A mandatory faculty meeting, however, was sometimes problematic.

(if needed), summary meeting with principal to outline rough draft of findings and a <u>faculty meeting</u> at the end of the day to debrief.	(if needed), summary meeting with principal to outline rough draft of findings and a <u>meeting at the end of the day with volunteer groups.</u>	
Report was submitted to school <u>by email</u> detailing calibration of school vs audit team ratings and feedback for improvement.	Report will be submitted to school via some <u>face-to-face delivery</u> – in person, SKYPE, etc.	Several principals indicated they would have preferred a face-to-face report so that questions could be asked and a conversation on improvement could occur.
<p>**Demonstrators describe over-arching strengths of each of the four Program Review standards: curriculum and instruction, formative and summative assessment, professional learning and leadership. The demonstrators comprise the focus of a quality program and are supported by more specific <i>characteristics</i>.</p> <p>*Characteristics are the specific actions or conditions that are evidence of attainment of the demonstrator.</p>		

Budget Impact: Travel and expenses related to the training and audits associated with Program Reviews were paid through KDE general funds and will continue to be paid for in the future.

Groups Consulted and Brief Summary of Responses:

Staff has consulted the Program Review audit team members and various consultants in the Division of Program Standards as well as principals of schools who have participated in the audit process and members of the Program Review Task Force. Staff will be consulting the Local Superintendents Advisory Council (LSAC) prior to the October state board meeting. The revisions are supported by feedback from the Program Review audit team members and Program Review Task Force members. A letter from LSAC expressing its recommendation should be received prior to the October meeting.

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Commissioner of Education

Date:

October 2016