

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

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

Rationale:

To update the board on the progress of Novice Reduction efforts.

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

702 KAR 3:250; 703 KAR 3:205; 703 KAR 3:230; 703 KAR 5:140; 703 KAR 5:190; 703 KAR 5:225; 703 KAR 5:260; 704 KAR 3:095; 704 KAR 3:303; 704 KAR 3:305; 704 KAR 3:390; 704 KAR 3:410; 704 KAR 3:420; 704 KAR 3:440; 704 KAR 3:480; 704 KAR 5:070; 704 KAR 3:530; and 704 KAR 3:540

KRS 157.226; KRS 157.318; KRS 158.070; KRS 158.305; KRS 158.649; KRS 158.6543; KRS 158.6451; KRS 158.6453; KRS 158.6455; KRS 158.6459; KRS 158.782; KRS 158.792; KRS 158.803; KRS 158.842; KRS 158.844; KRS 158.847; KRS 158.848; KRS 160.346; KRS 164.0207; and KRS 164.525

Title I Part A; Title I Part B; Title I Part C; Title I Part D; Title II Part A; Title II Part B; Title II Part C; Title III, Title IV; Title V; and Title IX

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.

Summary: At the December 2014 meeting, *The Education Trust* staff was invited by then Commissioner Dr. Terry Holliday to present before the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE). The presenters shared data from Kentucky highlighting that achievement gaps existed 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.
- Data for students receiving free/reduced-price meals presents similar trends to

- those of African American students in comparison to white students.
- The same patterns for proficiency rates appear in college- and career-readiness rates.

Recognizing a moral and ethical responsibility given the significance of these findings and implications for students in the Commonwealth, the KDE implemented the Novice Reduction Plan to close the achievement gap.

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 is the work of the entire agency and was to 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. The following eight core processes were identified that informed 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, 2015. These changes were 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 were created for six of the eight key core work processes. They 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 2015 KBE meeting, KDE staff gave an update on the website being created that would be the core of a comprehensive plan to support the identified improvement strategies for schools and districts.

(<http://education.ky.gov/school/stratclsgap/Pages/default.aspx>)

During the October 2015 KBE meeting, KDE staff reported that the department had hired a Novice Reduction 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, 2015. The following districts are currently participating in the Novice Reduction pilot:

- Fayette County Schools
- Estill County Schools
- Silver Grove Independent Schools
- Frankfort Independent Schools
- Carroll County Schools
- Somerset Independent Schools
- Casey County Schools
- Lincoln County Schools
- Lancaster Elementary Schools
- North Middle School (Henderson County)
- Russell Middle School
- Menifee County Schools
- Breathitt County Schools

KDE Novice Reduction staff have met over 3,400 educators through face-to-face meetings across the Commonwealth since the start of the program. Novice Reduction staff has worked to refine the approach and deployment of Novice Reduction, ensuring proper training, common language, and next steps for Novice Reduction efforts.

As an ongoing effort, Novice Reduction staff have worked to identify and promote, via webpages, resources and information gathered by KDE partners. In December 2015, visits were made to Hub Schools so as to locate evidence of sound Novice Reduction practices and to obtain feedback regarding the effectiveness of the webpage resources. Additional improvements were made to the webpages through feedback by content experts, Hub School leaders, and Novice Reduction staff. Work on the webpages is ongoing as maintaining current information and continuously improving the quality of the webpages is a high priority.

In its second year of action, Novice Reduction staff have tirelessly worked toward further expansion of resources and practices. Staff have presented at the Continuous Improvement Summit, in districts, and through multiple regional partnerships. Demand

from the field for workshops and training exceeds the six-person staff's ability to provide it. For fall 2016, 30 workshops will be completed by November 2016, each filled to capacity. This is in addition to workshops held separately for several larger districts. Connections with college and universities regarding teacher preparation as well as principal and superintendent leadership preparation are continuing to blossom, helping deliver the message of the moral and ethical imperative of reducing the number of novice performers throughout the Commonwealth.

Looking forward, Novice Reduction staff plan to continue reaching out to all corners of the Commonwealth through roadshows and work within volunteer districts. There is a renewed vision for the work, focusing more on intentionality in overall school improvement in an effort to reach deeper and to strengthen systems all the way to the teacher level.

Practitioners will appear at the board meeting to provide testimony regarding Novice Reduction's impact on their practice. Results of this initiative also will be shared.

Budget Impact: Allocation is required for six staff members at \$100,000 per person for a total of \$600,000 in state funds.

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Commissioner of Education

Date:

October 2016