

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Process for Developing a New Accountability System (February 7 Work Session)

Rationale:

Staff will update the board on the current work to improve Kentucky's accountability system. The draft proposal from the Accountability Steering Committee will be discussed at a work session on February 7.

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 158.6453; KRS 158.6455; 703 KAR 5:200; 703 KAR 5:225; 703 KAR 5:230

History/Background:

Existing Policy: Kentucky's current accountability system, Unbridled Learning: College/Career Readiness for All, meets both state and federal requirements as defined in law and in the waiver agreement from the No Child Left Behind Act. Unbridled Learning incorporates multiple measures into a single overall score.

Under the current system, Kentucky has experienced steady improvement in the rate of students graduating ready for the next step of college or career. Amid this positive outcome, concerns have been voiced about the complexity of the system and unintended consequences. The phase-in of components over time has required the management of frequent changes at the state and local levels.

Summary: With the passage in December 2015 of the new elementary and secondary education act, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the federal waiver process ended and states have the opportunity to revise their accountability systems to meet new requirements. To begin the conversation about revisions, it was critical to hear from Kentuckians. The first step was a series of eleven Town Hall meetings across Kentucky. The Town Halls ask parents, educators, elected officials, community members and students about the things they value in our schools. Commissioner Pruitt's goal is to collaborate with all shareholders across the state to produce a system that is fair, reliable, valid and simpler—a system that celebrates the good things that happen in our schools and districts and one that holds all accountable for providing a quality education for all students.

After the initial information gathering and discussion with the Kentucky Board of Education, Commissioner Pruitt asked many Kentuckians to join work groups to draft an accountability design.

The development of an accountability system is complex and challenging work. Five work groups (assessment, college- and career-readiness, educational innovations, opportunity and access, and school improvement) developed and sent their recommendations to the Systems Integration (SI) Work Group to be merged into a whole system. The timeline was adjusted in November to give the SI Work Group additional time to develop a complete system with detail, particularly the critical elements for student opportunity and access, and educational innovation.

Systems Integration recommended a proposed accountability system in late 2016 and in early 2017, it was reviewed and discussed by three work groups: Regulatory Review (January 6), Consequential Review (January 6) and the Accountability Steering Committee (January 9 and 10).

The proposed system has students at its center. It includes:

- personalized options for students to be transition ready with content knowledge and critical essential skills;
- a focus on the instructional core with student proficiency and growth;
- opportunities and access measures that go beyond tested subjects to allow for a well-rounded education and a broader picture of school performance;
- data requirements that shine a light on closing the achievement gap; and
- an innovation pilot for a competency-based model.

The proposed system recommends both measures for rating a school and for reporting greater information. An overall rating will be determined by student and school performance on five indicators—Proficiency, Growth, Achievement Gap Closure, Transition Readiness and Opportunity and Access. Schools and districts would receive an overall rating described by one of six labels (i.e., Outstanding, Excellent, Good, Fair, Concern or Intervention).

As the work groups discussed the proposed system at the January meetings, there was strong agreement on the indicators proposed and the overall accountability.

Consequential Review suggested changes that were presented to the Accountability Steering Committee. While the indicator of opportunity and access has received support in concept, the specific measures and whether the measures should be included in the rating of a school or in reporting only has been a point of discussion and has received mixed feedback.

The board will have an opportunity for a deeper discussion of the proposed system during a work session on the evening of February 7. The KBE discussion will be shared with the Accountability Steering Committee and used to shape the final the recommendations for the proposed system.

Commissioner Pruitt has said from the beginning of this process, the work is too important not to take the time needed to do it right. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) appreciates that the U.S. Department of Education (USED) has adjusted the timeline for implementation of ESSA. Kentucky will take advantage of the extra time in the development of its next accountability system. Our consolidated plan is due to USED on September 18, 2017.

Budget Impact: As a new accountability system is designed, the budget impact will be developed.

Contact Person:

Rhonda L. Sims
Associate Commissioner
Office of Assessment and Accountability
(502) 564-2256
Rhonda.Sims@education.ky.gov



Commissioner of Education

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