

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Review of Draft Proposal for Kentucky's New Accountability System

Purpose:

To update the board regarding work to create Kentucky's accountability system.

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 ends 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 in the spring of 2016. 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 (KBE), 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.

The SI Work Group recommended a proposed accountability system in late 2016 and in early 2017 it was reviewed and discussed by three additional work groups: Regulatory Review (January 6), Consequential Review (January 6) and 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 instruction 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 using one of six descriptive labels (i.e., Outstanding, Excellent, Good, Fair, Concern or Intervention).

As the work groups discussed the proposed system at its January meetings, there was strong agreement on the indicators proposed and the overall accountability. Consequential Review suggested changes that were presented to Accountability Steering. 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 mixed feedback.

The board started its deeper discussion of the proposed system during a work session on the afternoon of February 7. The Superintendent Chairs of the work groups attended the KBE work session to represent their groups and the work each contributed to the proposed system. KBE members reviewed the development process and had rich discussion with these leaders. KBE directed staff to continue developing the system details.

Since the work session, staff have created an early version of a dashboard for reporting and also have examined data sources and calculations. The draft accountability proposal

has been released for feedback through Commissioner Pruitt's spring Town Hall meetings and an online feedback tool. The Town Halls solicit feedback on the preliminary dashboard and several of the proposed system components (i.e., Growth, Achievement Gap Closure, Transition Readiness and Opportunity and Access). At the meetings, the Commissioner connects the themes that emerged from the first series of Town Halls in 2016 to the development of the proposed accountability system.

Important conversations are ongoing as the system takes on a more detailed shape. In addition to the Town Halls, standing advisory committees, Consequential Review (March 27) and Accountability Steering (March 31) will provide ongoing feedback on the system. An ad-hoc group will meet on March 28 to start designing a competency-based education and assessment pilot. The KBE will have an additional work session on April 11 to take a deeper dive into the components of the proposed system that there was not time to address on February 7.

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. KDE appreciates that the U.S. Department of Education has adjusted the timeline for implementation of ESSA. Kentucky will take advantage of the extra time in the development of its next accountability system.

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

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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephen L. Pruitt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stephen" and last name "Pruitt" clearly legible.

Commissioner of Education

Date:

April 2017