

# **KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

## **STAFF NOTE**

### **Review Item:**

703 KAR 5:270, Kentucky's Accountability System (*First Reading*)

### **Rationale:**

To bring forward the proposed new state accountability system for consideration and feedback through a first reading of the regulation that defines the system. The regulation will be brought back to the board in August for final approval.

### **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. The changes for the new system were immediately implemented with the passage of Senate Bill 1 (SB1) in the 2017 Kentucky General Assembly and effectively end the Unbridled Learning system.

During the time of the Unbridled Learning 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 now 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 asked 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 innovations.

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.

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

The board started its deeper discussion of the proposed system during a work session on the afternoons of February 7 and April 11. The superintendent chairs of the work groups attended the KBE work session (February 7) to represent their groups and the work each contributed to the proposed system. KBE members reviewed the development process and had a rich discussion with these leaders. KBE directed staff to continue developing the system details.

Since the work sessions, 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 2017 Town Hall meetings and an online feedback tool. The Town Halls solicited 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 2017 meetings, the Commissioner connected the themes that emerged from the first series of Town Halls in 2016 to the development of the proposed accountability system.

The proposed system being shared for feedback recommends both measures for rating a school, as well as for reporting more information. It includes an overall rating determined by setting standards for 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 a stars classification system.

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

**Groups Consulted and Brief Summary of Responses:**

Important conversations are ongoing as the system takes on a more detailed shape. In addition to the Town Hall meetings, standing Commissioner’s advisory committees, the Regulatory Review and Consequential Review work groups continue to provide ongoing feedback on the system. The Local Superintendents Advisory Council (LSAC) will review the draft regulation and proposed system on May 30. The next convening of the Regulatory Review and Consequential Review work groups will occur on June 6. An ad-hoc committee will continue working on the details of the competency-based education and assessment pilot.

During the first reading of the draft regulation, the comments and feedback received thus far, as well as the proposed system will be discussed in detail with the Kentucky Board of Education.

**Contact Person:**

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



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**Commissioner of Education**

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