

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Action/Discussion Item:

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

Commissioner's Recommendation:

The Commissioner recommends approval of 703 KAR 5:270 to establish Kentucky's accountability system, in order to promote all students receiving a strong educational experience in Kentucky's public schools.

Rationale:

To ask the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) to establish a state accountability system that is grounded in Kentucky values and includes indicators that work together to provide a more complete picture of school performance and the educational experiences all students and student groups receive. The Kentucky Board of Education approval will allow the regulation to be filed with the Legislative Research Commission and posted for public comment. Any public comments received will be brought forward in a statement of consideration to the Kentucky Board of Education. The regulation will provide the assessment and accountability portion of Kentucky's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan.

Action Question:

Should the KBE approve 703 KAR 5:270, 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. The changes immediately implemented with the passage of Senate Bill 1 (SB1) in the 2017 Kentucky General Assembly effectively ends the Unbridled Learning system.

Under Unbridled Learning, 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: In December 2015, the federal education law, known as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), became final and throughout the country, states began to revise their assessment and accountability systems to align with the new requirements. Commissioner Pruitt started Kentucky's revision process by hosting town hall meetings in the spring of 2016 to hear what Kentuckians valued about our schools. Feedback included: keep our children at the heart of the system; a well-rounded education including both tested and non-tested content areas is **necessary** and important; providing both opportunity and access for students is critical; emphasizing teaching is needed; and collaboration, not competition needs to be the focus.

The feedback received helped to guide and inform work groups from July through December 2016 that developed recommendations for the new system. In February and April 2017, the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) in study sessions heard from superintendents who led the work groups and reviewed the details of the recommendations. Kentucky lawmakers provided a further structure for the new system with the passage of Senate Bill 1 in the 2017 General Assembly. During a second round of Town Halls in spring 2017, Commissioner Pruitt introduced the key components of the new system and a dashboard design for future reporting. Reactions at the Town Halls and in an online survey were positive overall. In June, the KBE conducted its first review of the full system and draft regulation. The second reading of the accountability regulation and action by the KBE is scheduled for August 2017.

The proposed accountability system is designed to promote and hold schools and districts accountable for student achievement and significantly reduce the achievement gap. Indicators of the accountability system work together to report a complete picture for Kentucky schools and of the education students receive. The system emphasizes several important concepts that promote a strong educational experience for all of Kentucky's students. These concepts include:

- Intentional reduction of **achievement gaps**;
- readiness for the next step in education or life with the indicators of **proficiency, transition readiness and graduation rates**;
- **growth** that focuses on growth of all students with incentives for improving lower levels of performance;
- **support** to schools with **very low-performing student groups**; and
- **opportunity and access** for students to experience rich curriculum, equitable access, school quality and support for the whole child more broadly than just through tests and tested content areas. *These opportunity and access measures are tied strongly to equity because they help ensure that all students have robust experiences that are the precursors ("leading indicators") of growth and high achievement.*

The proposed system includes an overall star rating determined by setting standards for school performance on six indicators—Proficiency, Growth, Achievement Gap Closure, Transition Readiness, Graduation Rate and Opportunity and Access. Schools and districts would receive an overall rating using one to five stars. Each indicator will have a score and level of indicator performance that is reported on a gauge or dial of a School Report Card dashboard. Standard setting will determine the specific scores that are considered low to high performance for each indicator.

Since the June KBE meeting, staff have continued to develop the data measures, definition of terms used in the system, calculations for the indicators and to review alignment of the proposed system with state and federal law. On July 7, new drafts of an overview document and regulation were released to the Kentucky Board of Education and members of advisory and work groups to prepare for future discussions. Monday, July 10, these materials were shared in the Commissioner’s Monday message to superintendents.

Several changes from the first reading are included in the most recent drafts. The changes are highlighted below:

1. In the Growth indicator, the division of the performance level of Proficient into a low and high level has been removed. The proposal still includes a low and high category with Novice and Apprentice. This more precise category allows reporting and recognizing student growth toward the target of Proficient.
2. Achievement Gap Closure continues to have two measures, Gap to Group (examines performance of groups to groups—with a reference group for racial/ethnic student groups being the highest performing student group in the school) and Gap to Proficiency. For clarity and consistency of terms, Gap to Proficiency was previously called Gap to Goal. A test of statistical significance is applied to evaluate differences in group performance.
3. The Transition Readiness indicator has been streamlined at high school to improve alignment with Senate Bill 1. The focus remains on personalized student options to demonstrate readiness. The critical inclusion of graduation rate, essential skills and attendance continues with reporting in other system indicators. At elementary and middle school, the use of a composite score as a measure of transition readiness is proposed.
4. Graduation Rate is now a separate indicator in the system at the high school level.
5. Opportunity and access measures and metrics have been further defined. Essential skills are now included in the rich curriculum category at middle school with introduction and at high school with student demonstration. The focus on attendance is reported with chronic absentee data in the school quality category.
6. Long-term goals for all students and student groups in achievement, graduation rate and progress toward English proficiency are publicly reported

measures of system progress. The inclusion of achievement (proficiency and growth), progress of English learners, graduation rate and the reduction of gap are embedded throughout the system indicators and do directly influence the star rating. These specific measures are included in the regulation.

7. Language references have been added to emphasize that students in the alternate assessment program are fully included in the accountability system.
8. The chart displaying the indicators for the overall star rating has been revised to clarify the inclusion of indicators and the supplemental label.

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

Groups Consulted and Brief Summary of Responses:

During the week of July 10, several important committees will provide feedback on the proposed system including the School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council (SCAAC), the National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability (NTAPAA), Regulatory Review Work Group and Consequential Review Work Group. Local Superintendents Advisory Council (LSAC) will review the draft regulation and proposed system on July 25. A summary of feedback and recommendations will be shared during the August KBE meeting.

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Commissioner of Education

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