

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Action/Discussion Item:

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

Commissioner's Recommendation:

The Commissioner recommends approval of the regulation 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.

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 discussion occurred during the August 2 KBE Retreat.

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 seven indicators—Proficiency, Separate Academic Indicator for Science and Social Studies, 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 and confirm the weighting of the indicators in the overall start rating.

As a result of discussion with the Kentucky Board of Education at its August 2 regular meeting, several changes have been made to the regulation. The changes appear in **red font** in the draft regulation provided for the third reading and are highlighted below:

General

1. Grammatical and capitalization changes were made for consistency.
2. Kentucky Revised Statutes that relate to the regulation and the statutory authority were added in the heading. In addition, the necessity, function, and conformity statement was added.
3. The word “district” was replaced with “LEA (Local Education Agency)”.

Section 1. Definitions.

4. New definitions for the following were added:
 - Federal Student Group Designation
 - Graduation Rate
 - Practical Significance
 - Proficiency Indicator
 - Separate Academic Indicator for Science and Social Studies
5. Definitions were updated for the following:
 - Career Counselor or Career Coach
 - English Learners
 - Essential Skills

Section 2. Kentucky’s accountability system that is used to classify schools and LEAs...

6. Industry certificate was changed to industry certification under high school in the transition readiness section.
7. Under transition readiness, another “or” was added to the selection of becoming “military ready.” To become military ready, it now reads:
 - Scoring at or above the department-approved benchmark of the Armed Forces Quality Test (AFQT) on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB); and
 - Enlisting in a branch of military service; or
 - Completing two (2) certificates of training and is enrolled in the third credit within a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program.

Section 3. Classification of schools and districts in the state accountability system.

8. Federal student group designation was added to the elementary, middle, and high school overall ratings.

Section 4. Calculations for reporting categories.

9. The proficiency indicator and separate academic indicator for science and social studies were rearranged to improve readability.
10. Language was added to clarify weighting and awarding points for proficiency indicator and separate academic indicator for science and social studies.
11. Narrative language on awarding point for percent of students was deleted. It repeated information held in the table.
12. One-tailed T test was replaced with statistical analysis.
13. Five (5) percentage point was replaced with sufficient percentage.
14. The achievement gap closure indicator is comprised of: 1.) all students included in their demographic group; and 2) no student counting more than one (1) time per student demographic group was removed.
15. The EL Growth Value Table was added along with a description that Kentucky may modify the value table and its use to reflect factors that may impact EL progress toward proficiency.
16. Under transition readiness percentage, credit for students obtaining an industry-recognized certification, licensure, or credential was added.
17. In the high school overall rating chart, “Low” under other academic indicator transition readiness was changed to “High” in the 5 stars row.
18. In the elementary, middle, and high school overall rating charts, the column title “Federal Designation” was changed to “Federal Student Group Designation.”
19. “Gap Issue School” and “Gap Issue District” labels were changed to “federal student group designation.”
20. Added language for identifying the bottom 5% and 10% of schools using the indicators of proficiency, separate academic indicator for science and social studies, and growth at elementary and middle schools and proficiency, separate academic indicator for science and social studies, and transition readiness for high schools.

Section 5. Public Reporting Requirements.

No changes other than capitalization and formatting.

In addition to the regulation, the most current version of the proposed measures for the Opportunity and Access indicator is provided for the KBE’s information. Changes to the proposed measures were discussed on August 2 and are shown in **red font** in the measures document. The measures now include a work ethic certification description. When data can be collected for the proposed measures, KBE will be asked to review and approve the measures in a separate action.

A new set of long-term goals have been generated and shared with the KBE. On August 2, members expressed concern that the end goal for academic achievement was too low for some student groups. The original goals were generated using a Gap to Group methodology that used the highest performing White student group as the reference group and generated goals to reduce the gap by 50% between the reference group and other groups by the year 2030.

The long-term goals shared for August 23 use a Gap to Proficiency methodology. Instead of using a reference group, the baseline for each student group and all students are compared to the goal of 100% proficiency. This links the goals to the standard of proficiency and creates goals that are more ambitious than those previously reviewed.

Goals for each content area will be generated and progress toward these goals will be reported annually. Only the goals for the combined content areas impact the achievement gap closure indicator.

Goals for science at all grade levels and social studies at the high school level will be created in the future. However, they have not been generated at this time. In science, new items and a new item format were field tested on new standards during the spring of 2017. No performance level data was available to create goals in science. Similarly, a new social studies test at the high school level will be created. Until a new assessment is created and performance levels are available, there is no appropriate data upon which to base goals for high school social studies. As revised standards and aligned new assessments enter Kentucky's system, long-term goals will likely need to be adjusted or regenerated.

Graduation rate goals compare to the goal of 95% (4 year) and the goal of 96% (5 year) and reduce the difference by 50% for each student group and all students. Goals for English language proficiency are compared to a 100% goal that indicate every English learner student either made enough progress to meet proficiency within that year, or made enough progress to be on track to meet proficiency within five years.

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

Groups Consulted and Brief Summary of Responses:

Multiple groups were consulted in July and feedback was shared at the August 2 KBE meeting. No additional consultation has occurred before the third reading of the regulation.

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Commissioner of Education

Date:

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