

**Kentucky Department of Education**  
**Districts of Innovation 2019-2020 Recommendations for Approval by the KBE**  
**August 6-7, 2019**

**Renewal Applicants:**

Owensboro Independent  
Owsley County

**Initial Applicants:**

None

**The Districts of Innovation Review Team recommends, based upon the selection rubric, the following districts to be renewed as Districts of Innovation beginning with the 2019-2020 school year:**

**Owensboro Independent** (page 2)

**Owsley County** (page 6)

Attached are application summaries (taken directly from the application(s) submitted) and waiver recommendations for requests contained in each application. These recommendations are a result of the work of the Review Team, which evaluated the applications using the District of Innovation Scoring Rubric, and have been reviewed by KDE attorneys for compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. Please note that, while the overall application for each of the two districts are being recommended for approval, there are portions of each district's application that are being recommended for denial due to statutory restrictions contained in KRS 156.108 and KRS 160.107.

Upon approval by the Kentucky Board of Education, memoranda of understanding (MOU) will be entered into with each successful applicant detailing the statutory/regulatory waivers that are approved as well as other assurances required by law.

## *Owensboro Independent*

### **Summary of the District’s Application and “Big Ideas:”**

The Owensboro Public Schools (OPS) states that it has, throughout the district’s history, taken risks that have proven successful and have constantly determined what needs to change in order for transformation in student learning to occur. OPS also states that it has embraced innovation through several successful endeavors, and all are a result of risk taking. First, OPS believes it is a leader in programs for fine and performing arts. According to the district, as a result of visionary leadership, state of the art performing facilities exist along with thriving programs in theater, dance, voice, band, and orchestra. Second, the district asserts that it embarked on a Learning Innovation Plan in 2010 to revolutionize learning by introducing a ubiquitous digital learning tool. From the district’s perspective, this one-to-one learning initiative would not have been possible without the extraordinary planning and vision modeled by district leadership.

*Mission, Vision and Beliefs* (taken from the district’s application)

Mission: Engaging ALL students with innovative teaching and learning.

Vision: To enable students to succeed in life, college and the careers of tomorrow, equipped to think critically and creatively, solve problems, communicate and collaborate effectively, and participate fully in our democratic society.

OPS Values and Commitment to Innovative Teaching and Learning: The learning community of professional educators in OPS will be leaders of learning through commitments to the following:

- ★ Moral commitment to the learning of ALL students regardless of background;
- ★ Strong instructional practice;
- ★ Desire to work collaboratively;
- ★ Learning is the work, a strong commitment to continuous learning;
- ★ Culture and leadership matter; and,
- ★ Success for ALL students involves the entire community.

*District Goals* (taken from the district’s application)

**GOAL 1: TRADITION of Engaging the “Whole Child”**

The P-12 educational continuum including the following: Pre-K access and readiness, literacy, mathematics, the fine and performing arts, college, career and life readiness and a blended experience with postsecondary pathways in the last two years of high school.

**GOAL 2: INNOVATION in Teaching and Learning**

A Kentucky District of Innovation focused on the instructional core—emphasizing collaborative instructional practice of teachers and student engagement with an academically challenging curriculum.

### GOAL 3: EXCELLENCE

A learning community focused on continuous improvement and excellence for all students and staff members.

#### *Powerful Practice*

Demand a high level of expectations of ALL students:

- Literacy exiting primary;
- High school and postsecondary readiness; and,
- ALL students seek some form of postsecondary education.

Provide students with rich experiences in and out of the classroom:

- High quality fine arts program and
- Global view of the world.

Engage students, families and the community: All you really need is love!

Having just completed its first five year term as a District of Innovation, the district believes innovation is embedded in its DNA. Goal two of the district strategy above is dedicated to innovation. During the first term as a District of Innovation, the district offered faculty the opportunity to apply for innovation grants so that innovation was focused district-wide on the instructional core to develop a teaching corps that is collaborative and focusing on continuous learning. If approved to continue operating as a District of Innovation, the district plans to expand innovation to the teaching ranks by developing an innovative teacher career ladder model with a differential salary schedule and job descriptions.

Also during the first term as a District of Innovation, OPS developed two separate operations within the district as a “split screen” model with an innovation sector along with a traditional school sector. While continuing to improve existing schools in the traditional space, the innovation sector is designed to explore fundamentally new and better ways to accomplish learning. The innovation sector includes initiatives such as the Early Learning Academy, Owensboro Innovation Academy, Bluegrass Scholars Program, Early College Academy and other innovative high school diploma programs serving alternative, innovation and traditional secondary students. For the upcoming term as a District of Innovation, the district will focus on continuing the split screen at the middle school level through the iMiddle program.

#### **New Waivers Requested in the District of Innovation Application:**

1. The district requests waiver of the single salary schedule per 702 KAR 3:070, Section 1 based on the district’s implementation of a new teacher career ladder model that is based on the Singapore teacher model. In that model, there is a well-developed career ladder for teachers, offering teachers different routes for advancement and leadership. The career ladders provide strong incentives for teachers to continue their professional learning. There are three main routes for career advancement: (1) The teaching track, (2) the leadership track, and (3) the specialist track. In the teaching track, teachers work their

way up to Senior Teacher, Lead Teacher and Master Teacher before becoming a Principal Master Teacher at the highest level of the teacher ladder.

**KDE STAFF RECOMMENDS APPROVAL.**

*Staff Comments: The rationale for providing incentive to teachers to stay in the classroom is strong. Currently, the only real way for teacher's to climb a "career ladder" is to move into administration.*

**Waivers Previously APPROVED by the Kentucky Board of Education (June 2014). The district has requested that these waivers continue under their renewal status:**

1. The district requests waiver of funding structures to allow the continuation and expansion of a stand-alone career technical institute that offers both high school as well as college credits and is eligible for all the funding available separately to area technology centers, high schools, and schools offering dual enrollment courses. The district cited KRS 157.069(2) in this waiver request.

**KDE STAFF RECOMMENDS APPROVAL to the extent permitted under KRS 156.108 and KRS 160.107 and consistent with terms to be established in the memorandum of understanding with the district. This approval extends only to the creation of a new locally operated secondary area technology center as defined in KRS 157.069; however, no additional funds will be available for new locally operated programs unless additional funds are appropriated by the state legislature for this purpose. The approval of this waiver does not create additional funds for this center unless appropriated by the Kentucky General Assembly.**

2. The district requests waiver of traditional certified job classifications to create new certified job classifications for Owensboro Innovation Academy and Owensboro Innovation Middle which "move beyond the current role of teachers due to the unique structure with blending of technical college and high school programming, as well as the emphasis on project-based learning and collaborative learning environments. Although Kentucky certification will be required, New Tech teacher requirements are different and will be based on the need for instruction in three phases of implementation in Life Science, STEM, Construction Trade, and Business Academies." The district cited KRS 157.390(6) in support of this waiver request.

**KDE STAFF RECOMMENDS APPROVAL to the extent permitted under KRS 156.108 and KRS 160.107 and consistent with terms to be established in the memorandum of understanding with the district. This waiver is approved to the extent that the proposal, pursuant to KRS 160.107, is to "employ teachers on extended employment contracts or extra duty contracts and compensate them on a salary schedule other than the single salary schedule..." KRS 156.108 and KRS 160.107 do not grant the Kentucky Board of Education waiver authority over EPSB statutes and regulations.**

3. The district requests waiver of the minimum school term to create flexibility for the

school calendar to be year round, with various configurations of days and hours and minimum time worked to be equivalent to 175 six-hour instructional days. The district cited KRS 158.070 in this waiver request.

**KDE STAFF RECOMMENDS APPROVAL to the extent permitted under KRS 156.108 and KRS 160.107 and consistent with terms to be established in the memorandum of understanding with the district.**

### **Additional Request Regarding School Classification**

1. The current school designation structure (e.g. A1, A5, etc.) hinders an innovative school representing multiple school districts in terms of Kentucky Accountability issues as well as tracking students in courses and similar. Currently, students are assigned a primary enrollment in Infinite Campus according to the district affiliation and then assigned a secondary enrollment at Owensboro Innovation Academy (OIA). Therefore, OIA cannot track attendance in Infinite Campus very well. The model we need to create does not exist currently in the school designations. We propose an additional designation that allows for students from multiple districts to attend under one roof, and it be its own independent school. OPS will maintain MOUs with partnering school districts. This will streamline attendance, course tracking, accountability issues, and allow for complete data collection in Infinite Campus on the progress of the school.

### **KDE STAFF DOES NOT MAKE A RECOMMENDATION.**

*Staff Comments: No legal waiver was requested by the district; however, KDE Staff believes all requests regarding school classification should go to the interagency group that makes "A" designations for further consideration, including how changes to the school classification structure might impact, for example, accountability as well as compliance with other federal and state laws.*

## *Owsley County*

### **Summary of the District’s Application and “Big Ideas:”**

Owsley County’s original District of Innovation plan was developed around the tenets of personalizing educational plans for all students. According to the district, every student in grades 7-12 works with staff mentors to develop a personalized education plan (PEP). Each PEP is developed by assessing the needs, wants and specific barriers of each student. A student’s curriculum and pedagogies are developed to address each individualized plan. The district believes these plans breakdown traditional educational methodologies and promote the growth of students utilizing innovative approaches.

Owsley County’s original innovation plan began with skill development at Owsley County Elementary School. The district states that, as early as kindergarten, students develop 21st century skills, including the usage of Blackboard, career education and exploration, and other innovative technological approaches. The district also states that these skills prepare students for non-traditional approaches to learning. Beginning in 6th grade, students utilize the ILP as a first step in developing a PEP.

According to the district, Owsley’s renewal application re-imagines schooling for all students in order to graduate next generation learners. To do this, the district believes it must adapt all its approaches to schooling, since the old system will not produce the kinds of outcomes we are envisioning. The district states that technology plays a key role in the school plan for reasons enumerated above, having to do with removing barriers and expanding both horizons and opportunities.

#### *Competency Based Credit* (taken from the district’s application)

- a. Students will receive credit based on competency;
- b. Allow students to “test-out” of courses;
- c. Credits can be assigned based on work performance; and,
- d. Individual student plan will allow flexibility in course scheduling and credit requirements.

#### *Expanded Learning Opportunities* (taken from the district’s application)

- a. Distance learning opportunities;
- b. GOOGLE Classroom LMS;
- c. Off-site opportunities with local colleges and universities as well as agencies such as Lee County Area Technology Center;
- d. Work related opportunities (e.g. work study, apprenticeships, etc.);

- e. 24/7 learning (e.g. Learning at home, summer opportunities, etc.); and,
- f. Explicit instruction in college knowledge skills such as critical thinking, problem formulation, time management and goal setting that mirror 21st century skills.

*Multiple Assessments/Pathways to Graduation* (taken from the district's application)

- a. Early College program;
- b. Distance Learning opportunities;
- c. Google Classroom LMS;
- d. Off-site opportunities that include field studies in students' area of career interest; and,
- e. Work related opportunities (e.g. work study, apprenticeships, etc.).

*Innovative Learning Environment* (taken from the district's application)

- a. High School and Elementary School of Innovation organized around project-based learning, with balance of formal instruction and independent group project work in open, dedicated spaces on campus but outside the classroom that promote student research and collaboration; flexible use of time; teacher support for projects on as-needed basis; and, student products juried by other students, educators and community members.
- b. Hybrid High School organized around a combination of online and face-to-face instruction with students setting the pace of learning and with peer collaboration extended through use of social media;
- c. Virtual School: organized around work mostly outside of school in internships, field studies or college coursework that typically falls outside the traditional school day, with faculty support for students connecting school to work.
- d. In all three settings, emphasis on student voice and choice, building on students' desire to engage in generating solutions to problems in the larger community, and opening the physical space of the school to alternate settings.

### **New Waivers Requested in the District of Innovation Application:**

1. The district requests waiver of 702 KAR 3:270 related to the SEEK funding formula. The district requests a waiver of the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) calculation that requires home schooled students to be removed from the calculation. The district is requesting this waiver so they can provide instructional services to home school students. This waiver would allow for home school students residing in the local district to use the district's instructional resources, such as curricula, technology and online learning systems in the delivery of home school instruction.

#### **KDE STAFF RECOMMENDS DENIAL.**

*Staff Comments: According to the Office of Finance and Operations within the KDE, a waiver of this regulation is not necessary. If a student enrolled in the district becomes a home schooled student, the district can create a secondary enrollment and receive funding for services provided. However, the district cannot receive funding for students not previously enrolled in the district.*

2. The district requests waiver of 703 KAR 5:270 related to Kentucky's Accountability System, specifically the calculation for graduation rate. The district's rationale is that in the current calculation of the 4 year and 5 year graduation cohort, students who received an alternative diploma, through a special needs program, do not count towards graduation completion in a school. However, the student does count in the calculation of the total number of students in the cohort. By having this calculation, the district and school is punished by having this type of special needs students.

#### **KDE STAFF RECOMMENDS DENIAL.**

*Staff Comments: This is not a waivable request. Staff believes this request is not for a waiver of regulation but, instead, for the Office of Standards Assessment and Accountability to study a formula within the accountability system.*

### **Waivers Previously APPROVED by the Kentucky Board of Education (June 2014). The district has requested that these waivers continue under their renewal status:**

1. A. The district requests waiver of EPSB certification requirements to allow "pairing certified teachers with community, non-certified professionals in health, agriculture and business fields for example, and having flexibility of roles as teachers and community professionals plan and work together to deepen and expand learning for students."  
  
B. The district requests waiver to permit community and postsecondary internships where students are not working directly with teachers but are earning work/study credit; or other arrangements.

**A. KDE STAFF RECOMMENDS APPROVAL to the extent permitted under KRS 156.108 and KRS 160.107 and consistent with terms to be established in the memorandum of understanding with the district. KRS 161.046 allows certified adjunct instructors to assist in instruction as part-time adjunct instructors as long**



as the adjunct does “not fill a position that will result in the displacement of a qualified teacher with a regular certificate who is already employed in the district.” To the extent this is a request for utilization of adjunct certified instructors as allowed by EPSB under KRS 161.046, KDE recommends approval of this waiver request.

**B. KDE STAFF RECOMMENDS APPROVAL to the extent permitted under KRS 156.108 and KRS 160.107 and consistent with terms to be established in the memorandum of understanding with the district. Performance-based learning, resulting in attainment of credits toward high school graduation, is allowable under 704 KAR 3:305. To the extent the district is requesting a waiver to utilize internships in compliance with labor laws and the above regulation for students to engage in performance-based learning, KDE recommends approval of this waiver request.**

2. The district requests waiver of the student attendance requirement for eligibility for funds equivalent to those granted for attending students’ transportation and food service. The district is requesting “substitution funding to offset money lost for transportation and food service” for students receiving instruction through a virtual model for the days “the students are enrolled in the virtual course and for all students during virtual days.” The district would utilize these replacement funds “to improve infrastructures and to provide internet access to students at home. These funds should not be considered additional revenue, but are a substitution for lost transportation and food service money.”

**KDE STAFF RECOMMENDS APPROVAL IN PART AND DENIAL IN PART and to the extent permitted under KRS 156.108 and KRS 160.107 and consistent with terms to be established in the memorandum of understanding with the district. The Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funding formula includes funds for pupil transportation to and from school. KDE recommends this proposal be approved to the extent that, pursuant to KRS 160.107, it “modifies the formula under KRS 157.360(2) for distributing Support Education Excellence in Kentucky funds for students in average daily attendance in nontraditional programming time, including alternative programs and virtual programs. Funds granted to a district shall not exceed those that would have otherwise been distributed based on average daily attendance during regular instructional days.” (emphasis added) Food service funding is restricted funding governed by the federal statutes and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and cannot be utilized for purposes other than food service. KDE therefore recommends denial of this portion of the waiver request.**

3. The district requests waiver of 702 KAR 7:125 to allow in the inclusion of average daily attendance the time students are engaged in make-up activities “via virtual learning experiences or additional time at school.”

**KDE STAFF RECOMMENDS APPROVAL to the extent permitted under KRS 156.108 and KRS 160.107 and consistent with terms to be established in the memorandum of understanding with the district.**

### **Additional Request Regarding Future Waivers**

1. The district requested the ability in the future to present additional waiver requests to those listed above.

**KDE STAFF DOES NOT MAKE A RECOMMENDATION.**

*Staff Comments: No legal waiver was requested by the district; however, 701 KAR 5:140, Section 3(8) affords districts the ability to amend their approved innovation plan by following the procedure described in that portion of the regulation.*