

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Action/Consent Item:

16 KAR 5:040. Request to Waive Student Teacher Days Due to District School Closures for a Student at the University of Kentucky

Staff Recommendation:

The Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) should approve the University of Kentucky's request to waive student teaching days for a student teacher impacted by district closures as well as by the death of the student's mother during the Spring 2026 term.

Rationale:

Approval of this waiver would recognize that impacted student teacher met the intent of the applicable regulation and allow this student teacher to timely proceed with program completion and licensure eligibility. Specifically, the impacted student teacher faced extraordinary and unavoidable circumstances during the Spring 2026 term, including the death of her mother in January 2026 and then approximately seven (7) days on which the district was closed due to inclement weather, that resulted in a minor shortfall in in-person student teaching days that could not be fully recovered within the placement timeframe without extending the university's academic term or altering district placements.

Action Question:

Should the EPSB approve the University of Kentucky's request to waive student teaching days for the listed student teacher, who was impacted by a death in her immediate family as well as district closures during the Spring 2026 term?

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 161.028, 16 KAR 5:040

History/Background:

Existing Policy: 16 KAR 5:040, Section 5(4) requires each education preparation provider (EPP) to "provide a full professional semester to include a period of student teaching for a minimum of seventy (70) full days, or its equivalent, in instructional settings that correspond to the grade levels and content areas of the student teacher's certification program."

Summary: District closures coupled with the death of an immediate family member prevented a student teacher attending the University of Kentucky from completing the required seventy (70) full days in instructional settings before the close of the Spring 2026 academic semester at the EPP. The death as well as the district closures related to inclement weather were out of the control of the student teacher and the EPP; however, efforts have been made to meet the intent of the

applicable regulation by including supplemental instruction while completing as many hours as possible during the Spring 2026 academic semester. Specifically, the University of Kentucky states that the student teacher completed “Google Meets” and was otherwise actively engaged during Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) virtual learning days utilized by the district. The student teacher returned to in-person instruction as soon as the district re-opened, even while still dealing with extreme grief and matters pertaining to her mother’s estate.

The University of Kentucky has submitted a Regulation Waiver Request on behalf of the student teacher and, therein, seeks a waiver for 1.5 missed “days in instructional settings” for the student teacher.

Budget Impact: There is no budgetary impact.

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