



Kentucky's Accountability System

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Being aware of the landscape of ongoing shareholder engagement and future activities for the Board

Tasks for the Board

Seeking the Kentucky Board of Education's comments and direction on,

- Individual student growth, including possibility of growth at high school.
- Chronic absenteeism
- The Board's values on the relative priority for weighting of each indicator
 - Considerations:
 - Federal boundaries
 - Increased number of indicators
 - Writing removed from State Assessment Results indicator
 - Impact of chronic absenteeism on student success and engagement

Background & Overview of System Updates

Accountability Changes in Kentucky



The Kentucky Department of Education has a rich history of wide-reaching, transparent constituent engagement to inform department activities.

Recent initiatives focused on redesigning accountability have generated interest in changing indicators within Kentucky's ESSA accountability system.

This effort centers on gathering input on incorporating student growth into school accountability.

What's Required (1/2)

State and Federal Law impose requirements that impact the design of Kentucky's accountability system.

- What must be measured:
 - Achievement
 - Growth or another academic indicator
 - Progress in English language proficiency
 - Graduation Rate
 - Measure(s) of school quality and student success (SQSS)

What's Required (2/2)

State and Federal Law impose requirements that impact the design of Kentucky's accountability system.

- What **ratings and identifications** result from system outcomes:
 - Comprehensive Support and Improvement
 - Targeted Support and Improvement
 - Additional Targeted Support and Improvement
- What **weighting** must be applied to system indicators:
 - SQSS must be weighted less than the other indicators in aggregate

Kentucky's Approach: What's Measured

- **Academic Achievement:** State Assessment Results in Reading and Mathematics
- **Growth or Another Academic Indicator:** State Assessment Results in Science, Social Studies & Writing
- **English Learner Progress**
- **Measures of School Quality and Student Success**
 - Quality of School Climate and Safety
 - Postsecondary Readiness (high school)
- **Graduation Rate** (high school)

Kentucky's Approach: Overall Ratings & Identifications

In addition to indicator ratings, overall scores receive a color rating. Lastly, per federal statute, overall scores result in schoolwide identifications:

- **Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI)** = overall performance in the bottom 5% statewide
- **Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI)** = student group outcomes that are consistently underperforming
- **Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)** = student group outcomes below the CSI threshold

Kentucky Context: KUWL Council

Kentucky United We Learn (KUWL) is a vision for education in the Commonwealth that is grounded in three “big ideas.”

1. Vibrant learning experiences for every student
2. Innovation in schools
3. Collaboration with communities

This vision aligns with the Kentucky Portrait of a Learner.

The work is guided by the **KUWL Council**. Over the last few years, the Council has helped to develop a reimagined vision for assessment and accountability in Kentucky.

KUWL Council Moonshot: To Build a Prosperous Kentucky, we will launch an accountability system that is meaningful and useful to all our learners.

Key Components of HB 257

- The bill promotes community ownership for outcomes and excellence in teaching and learning by supporting local accountability efforts and requiring the state to align with the Commonwealth's accountability system.
- Local accountability systems: not required; adopting districts receive a \$15k cost offset
 - Reinforce deep, vibrant learning experiences for students
 - Promote community collaboration
 - Support successful transitions to post-high school success
- The bill represents a significant step forward in Kentucky education policy.

Kentucky Context: State Accountability Changes

- ELIMINATED Change component of each indicator
- NEW individual student academic growth indicator
- Quality of school climate and safety survey → absenteeism
- State assessment results in science, social studies, and writing → State assessment results in science and social studies
- NEW Targeted Quality Measures are required starting in 2030, and will be reported, as available, before then.
 - Percent of teachers in a school who have achieved \geq Rank II status or higher or National Board Certification
 - Percent of grade 8 students earning at least one high school credit
 - Percent of HS graduates completing the FAFSA (or a parent opt-out)

HB 257: Implementation Timeline

Accountability Reporting

- The 2025–2026 school year will remain unchanged for testing and accountability; Fall 2026 public reporting will include current components (i.e., Change, QSCS Survey)
- Testing and accountability changes will take effect for the 2026–2027 school year.

Kentucky's New Approach: What Will Be Measured

- **Academic Achievement:** **SAME** State Assessment Results in Reading and Mathematics
- **Growth or Another Academic Indicator:** **NEW** Student Growth
- **English Learner Progress:** **UPDATE** indicator design
- **Measures of School Quality and Student Success**
 - **REMOVE:** Quality of School Climate and Safety
 - **NEW:** Chronic Absenteeism
 - **NEW (as SQSS indicator):** State Assessment Results in Science & Social Studies (no writing)
 - **SAME:** Postsecondary Readiness (high school)
- **Graduation Rate** (high school) - **SAME**

Kentucky's New Approach: What's Measured

- **Academic Achievement:** **SAME** State Assessment Results in Reading and Mathematics
- **Growth or Another Academic Indicator:** **NEW** Student Growth
- **English Learner Progress:** **UPDATE** indicator design
- **Measures of School Quality and Student Success**
 - **REMOVE:** Quality of School Climate and Safety
 - **NEW:** Chronic Absenteeism
 - **CHANGE:** State Assessment Results in Science & Social Studies (no writing; now part of SQSS)
 - **SAME:** Postsecondary Readiness (high school)
- **Graduation Rate** (high school) - **SAME**



Later

Kentucky Context: Let's Discuss

There are some significant changes in the bill, including the removal of the quality of school climate and safety survey (replaced with absenteeism) and writing assessment results, and the removal of the change component from each indicator. Additionally, a new indicator of individual student growth.

Do you have any other questions about the implications of HB 257?

- *Absenteeism*
- ~~*Writing*~~
- *Individual Student Growth*



Accountability Changes: Process Overview



Advisory Group Engagement

Multiple advisory groups have or will provide input through initial and subsequent meetings, including:

Accountability Thought Partners - in-person meeting in April and remote meeting in May

Note that another advisory group is meeting to discuss the Progress in Attaining English Language Proficiency indicator

Kentucky Directors of Pupil Personnel - in May

KTAC – (Kentucky Technical Advisory Committee) beginning in late May, with additional meetings as implementation work continues

Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children - in June

SCAAC and LSAC – beginning in spring/summer, with follow-up meetings as needed

Commissioner's Advisory Committees – meeting on various dates throughout the development process

Accountability Thought Partners

Eight educational leaders, including district superintendents, curriculum directors, assessment coordinators, and others.

Two key goals:

1. Articulate design priorities
2. Provide feedback on promising growth model approaches for Kentucky.

Facilitated by staff from the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (the Center).

Accountability Thought Partners Meetings

Meeting #1: April 17 (in-person)

- Build shared understanding of Kentucky's accountability context
- Explore the landscape of growth model options
- Identify priority users for growth data and acceptable trade-offs for model selection criteria (e.g., a simpler model may be easier to understand but less useful for an educational leader because it's less comprehensive)

Meeting #2: May 11 (remote)

- Examine two growth models that align with feedback from Meeting #1
 - Value tables: assign point values based on transitions between performance levels across years
 - Student growth percentiles: describe how much a student grew relative to academic peers

Student Academic Growth: Options for Kentucky



Why Include Growth in Accountability?



Reflect School Contributions

More fully captures how schools contribute to student learning beyond proficiency snapshots.



Recognize Progress

Acknowledges academic progress over time, especially for students who begin **below proficiency**.



Inform Improvement

Grounds technical decisions in the state's vision for accountability and using data to drive school improvement.

An Important Framing

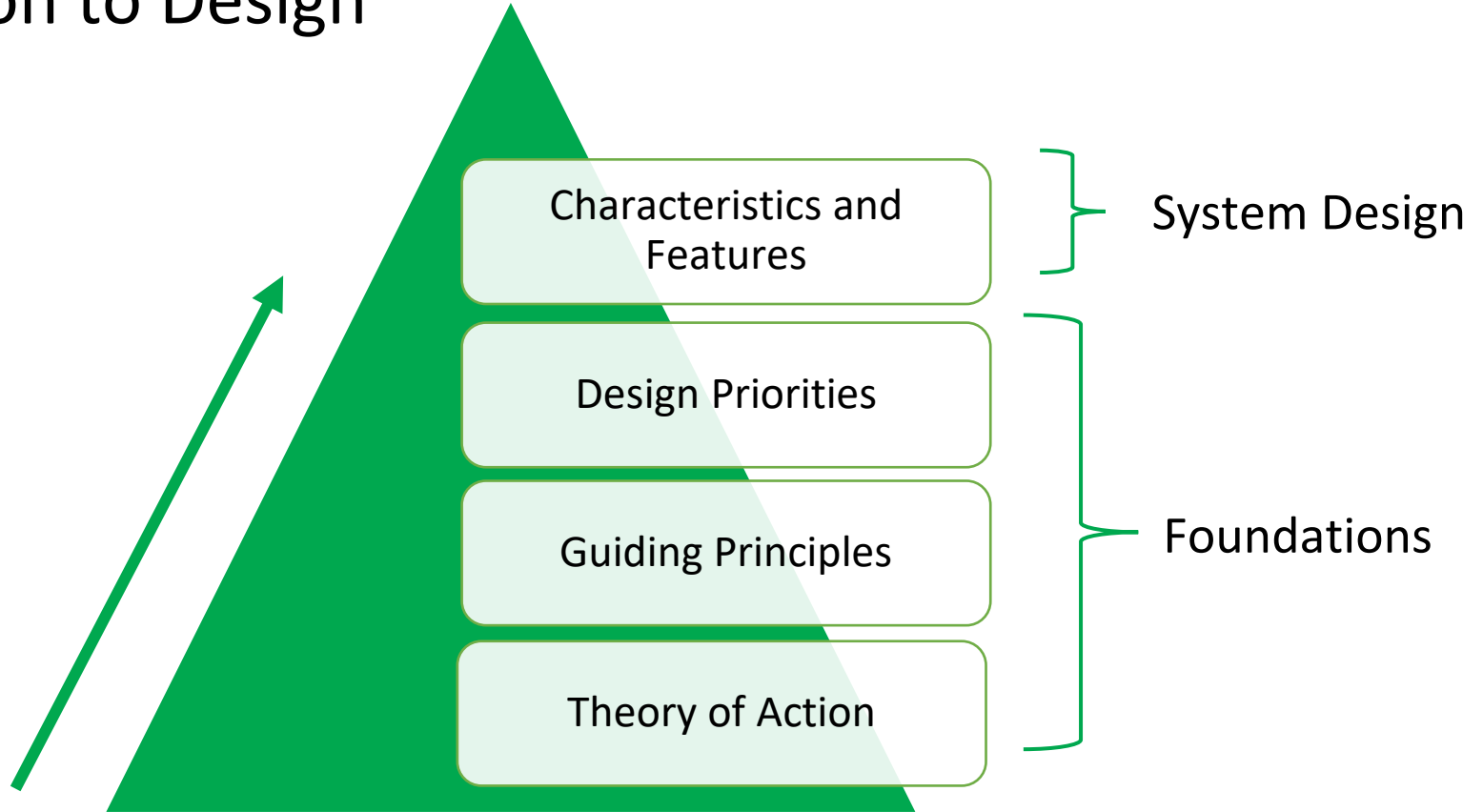
There is no single “right” growth model.

Decisions - often both technical and policy in nature - should be *grounded in* the Commonwealth’s and its shareholders’ vision and priorities for educational accountability.

The decisions should be *informed by*

- What information is produced
- Who it is most useful for
- What inferences users can draw from the data
- Known constraints (e.g., policy, capacity)

Moving From Vision to Design



What's Required?

Schools that are not high schools:

- Student growth, measured by approved (peer-reviewed) state assessments
and/or
- Another valid and reliable statewide academic indicator that allows for meaningful differentiation

High Schools (at the State's discretion):

- May include student growth measured by approved (peer-reviewed) state assessments

An Important Distinction



Growth vs. Change

Change

Year-to-year differences in performance for the **same grade level**.
Example: Did grade 4 math proficiency rates improve from 2024 to 2025?

Growth

Follows the **same cohort of students** over time. Example: Did grade 5 results in 2025 reflect adequate progress from grade 4 in 2024?

Four Views of School Performance

Achievement (in relation to standards)	<i>Status</i> What performance is required on the selected assessment(s)? For example: percent proficient or mean scale score.	<i>Improvement</i> Is the performance of successive group increasing from year to year? For example: change in percent proficient, also termed “trend.”
Effectiveness (in relation to past performance)	<i>Growth</i> Are students making expected progress as they move from one point in time to another. For example, gain score or growth percentile.	<i>Acceleration</i> Is the school or group becoming more effective or improving more rapidly? For example: comparison of growth rates for schools or groups?

From Dale Carlson (2002): <https://www.nciea.org/library/focusing-state-educational-accountability-systems-4-methods-of-judging-quality-and-progress/>

Growth Models Answer Different Questions

This table provides a high-level overview of common growth models and what primary question each model can help address.

Model	Primary Question
Gain Score	What is the magnitude of progress on a vertical scale?
Growth-to-Standard	Is the student's progress "on-track"?
Categorical Models (e.g., Value Tables)	Has the student transitioned from one performance level to another?
Normative Models (e.g., Growth Percentiles)	How does the student's growth compare to that of their academic peers?
Regression-Based (Value-added)	Controlling for selected factors, has the student grown more or less than expected?

Trade-Offs of Different Growth Models

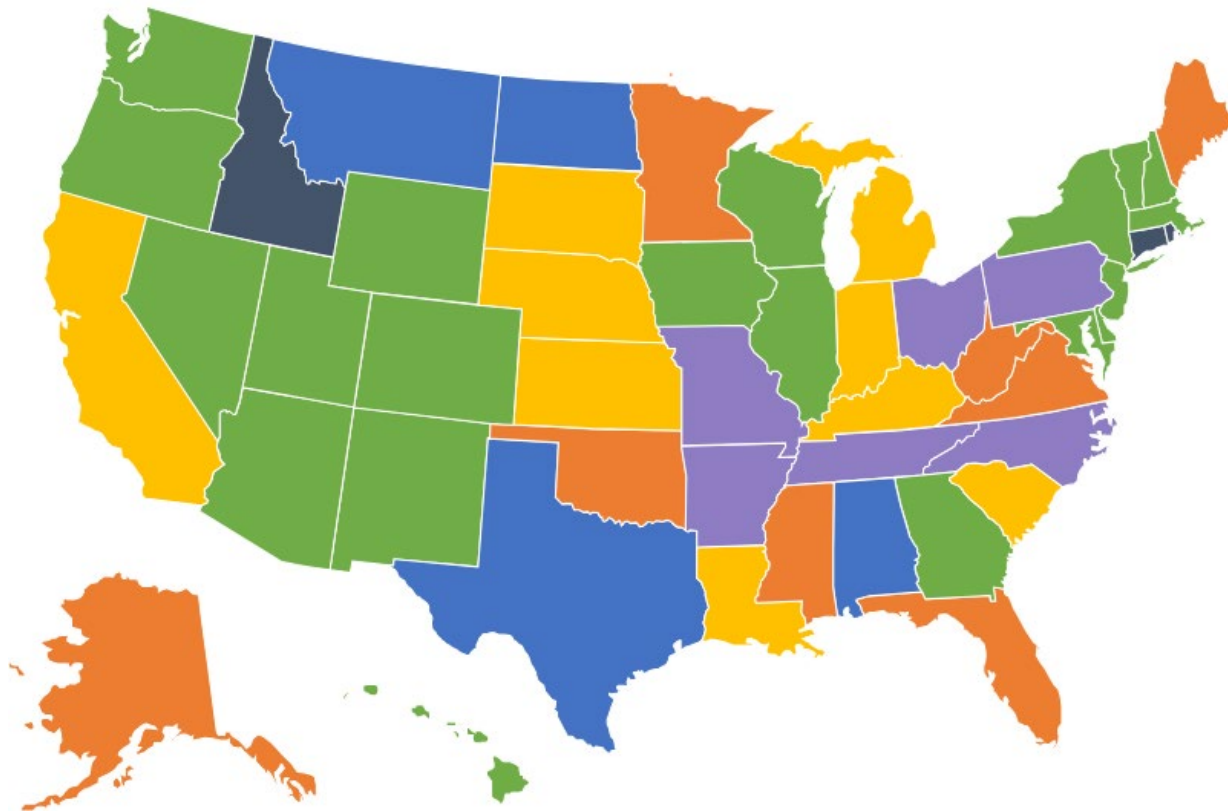
Approach	Pros	Cons
Value Table (Categorical)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Simple to calculate● Easy to explain● Meets growth description and prediction needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sensitivity limited to stepwise growth within or across levels● Typically highly related to proficiency (less differentiation than some other models)● Limited to answering questions about how students are moving across categories over time
Student Growth Percentiles (Normative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sensitive to growth within and across performance levels● Provides both normative and expected growth over time● Easier to aggregate and interpret than some models● Open source (transparent)● Produces both student and group information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● More complicated to calculate (typically needs external support, at least initially)● More complicated to communicate than value tables● Can potentially be used to approximate value-added type statements
Value Added Models (Regression)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sensitive to growth within and across performance levels● Communicates normative expectations over time● Some shareholders consider this model more fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Answers questions related to expected scores based on level of aggregation (e.g., grade or school)● Only group-level interpretations are available● Some shareholders think this model lowers expectations
Gain-Based Models	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Easy to calculate● Provides a growth to standard estimate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Requires a vertical scale● Is not an intuitive or accurate estimation

How Are Other States Measuring Growth?

Growth Model	Number of States
Student Growth Percentile	20
Value-Added	6
Value Table	8
Gain Score	4
Growth-to-Standard	3
Other or Combined Models	10

National Landscape of Growth Models

-  Gain Score
-  Growth Percentiles
-  Growth-to-Standard
-  Other or Combination
-  Value-Added
-  Value Table



Past Growth Measures in Kentucky

Previous approaches to growth:

- Prior to 2019: Norm (or comparison) based method based on Student Growth Percentiles (SGP). Student growth defined in relation to proficiency (predictive model) - catch up, keep up, move up.
- 2019: Value table, categorical
- 2020-2021: Pandemic pause
- 2022-2025: No growth measure (change instead)

Issues with predictive growth:

- Difficult to understand
- Projections did not always match observed growth
- Deemed too tied to proficiency

Identifying Priorities for a Kentucky Growth Model

Identifying Priority Users of Growth Data

Accountability Thought Partners prioritized growth information for school and district leaders to:

- Inform school improvement planning, district conversations, public communications
- Identify professional development needs
- Celebrate successes
- Target resources

They also prioritized use by classroom educators to:

- Target interventions
- Inform instructional planning
- Talk about student progress with parents/guardians

Priority Users Check-In

Growth information can provide an important perspective about school quality and inform decisions about student or group supports - *depending on the model*.

What questions or comments do you have about the priority users and uses identified by the Accountability Thought Partners?



A Non-Exhaustive Set of Criteria

1. Relationship between growth and achievement
2. Fair and valid for all students and schools (types)
3. Use of background and demographic factors in growth models
4. Simplicity, complexity, & technical quality
5. Open source compared to proprietary
6. Scale (test) independence or dependence
7. Capacity and resources

Trade-Offs Summary



Highly Related to Achievement		×	Unrelated to Achievement
Includes background factors		×	Doesn't include background factors
Simple	×		Comprehensive
Open-source	×		Proprietary
Scale-dependent		×	Scale-independent

Model Trade-Offs Check-In

No single growth model can answer every question or fulfil every use case.

By determining which trade-offs are acceptable - or not - we can narrow the list of appropriate models for Kentucky's accountability system.

What questions or comments do you have about the acceptable trade-offs (selection criteria) identified by the Accountability Thought Partners?



Priorities and Selection Criteria Narrow Model Options

Student Growth Percentiles

- Describe how much a student grew relative to academic peers

Value Tables

- Assign point values based on traditions between performance categories.

Student Growth Percentiles

- Describe a student's growth compared to that of students with similar score histories, "academic peers," expressed as a percentile rank.
 - For example, a student earning an SGP of 80 performed as well as or better than 80 percent of her academic peers.
- There are varied ways to include these results in accountability. To common approaches are
 - Award points based on school mean SGP (MGP)
 - Compute the percent of students with a growth score that meets or exceeds an established target

Value Tables

- Conceptually simple, awarding points are based on progress from one performance level to another.
- To include in accountability
 - Add the total values for each student
 - Divide by the number of students.

Comparing the Options

Student Growth Percentiles

- Output may include student-level growth trajectories
- Relies on change in scaled scores, not performance levels

Value Tables

- Assigns points based on student-level progress; output focused on group level
- Based on changes in performance levels, with flexibility to divide categories and vary assigned points

Growth Model Option Check-In

Feedback from Advisory Group and other shareholder engagement will inform the Center's work to conduct impact analyses that will illustrate ways Kentucky may include growth models in its accountability system.

What questions or comments do you have about the two growth models we described?



Identifying Priorities for Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic Absenteeism

- Chronic Absenteeism is a student missing ten percent (10%) or more of possible attended days.
 - Includes both excused and unexcused absences when determining chronic absenteeism status.
- Proposed inclusion in the School Quality and Student Success indicator category.
- More than 30 states currently include a Chronic Absenteeism Indicator within their accountability systems.
- In the 2024–25 school year, Kentucky’s chronic absenteeism rate was 25%, as reported on the Kentucky School Report Card.
 - Absenteeism rates will vary for schools and student groups.

Absenteeism Discussion

Chronic absenteeism is a widely used measure of student engagement, and there are known relationships between student attendance and outcomes.

What questions and comments do you have about the chronic absenteeism indicator that will be included in Kentucky's accountability system?



Identifying Priorities for Relative Weights of Indicators

Kentucky's Approach: Indicator Weights

Overall Scores are a weighted combination of Indicator Scores.

	State Assessment Results - Reading and Mathematics	State Assessment Results - Science, Social Studies, and Writing	English Learner Progress	Quality of School Climate and Safety	Postsecondary Readiness	Graduation Rate
Elementary	51	40	5	4	-	-
Midde	46	45	5	4	-	-
High	45	20	5	4	20	6

Indicator Changes Impact Indicator Weights

Advice Needed: How should weights be distributed?

	State Assessment Results - Reading and Mathematics	Student Academic Growth	English Learner Progress	State Assessment Results - Science, Social Studies	Chronic Absenteeism	Postsecondary Readiness	Graduation Rate
Elementary							
Middle							
High							

Let's start with two indicators: academic achievement and student growth. How should these indicators be weighted relative to one another?

You might say: achievement should always be weighted more than progress; they should be equally weighted; or something else.



Indicator Changes Impact Indicator Weights (2)

Advice Needed: How should weights be distributed now when indicators are updated?

	State Assessment Results - Reading and Mathematics	Student Academic Growth	English Learner Progress	State Assessment Results - Science, Social Studies	Chronic Absenteeism	Postsecondary Readiness	Graduation Rate
Elementary							
Middle							
High							

Now let's talk about SQSS.

1. How should weights shift within SQSS given the addition of a new component and the transition from the quality of school climate and safety survey with chronic absenteeism?



Indicator Changes Impact Indicator Weights (3)

Advice Needed: How should weights be distributed now when indicators are updated?

	State Assessment Results - Reading and Mathematics	Student Academic Growth	English Learner Progress	State Assessment Results - Science, Social Studies	Chronic Absenteeism	Postsecondary Readiness	Graduation Rate
Elementary				40	4		
Middle				45	4		
High				20	4	20	6

Now let's talk about SQSS.

1. How should weights shift within SQSS given the addition of a new component and the transition from the quality of school climate and safety survey with chronic absenteeism?



Other Weighting Discussion

	State Assessment Results - Reading and Mathematics	Student Academic Growth	English Learner Progress	State Assessment Results - Science, Social Studies	Chronic Absenteeism	Postsecondary Readiness	Graduation Rate
Elementary							
Middle							
High							

Weighting is a reflection of policy and practical priorities. This can be complicated by the fact that some schools or student groups will not have data for every indicator. That said, it's important to establish a clear weighting structure alongside business rules to address missing data.

What other weighting priorities should KDE consider? Do you have any questions or suggestions?



ESSA Flexibility for Students New to Country



What's Allowed: ESSA New to Country Testing Options

- **ESSA provides flexibilities for English learner students who have been in US schools for less than 12 months.**
- In both options, students take mathematics and English language proficiency (ELP) assessments every year.
- **Option 1: Exempt from ELA test in the first year**
- **Option 2: Also test ELA in first year**
 - Year 1: Results reported but not used in accountability
 - Year 2: Results reported and included in the individual student growth indicator
 - Year 3: Full inclusion in accountability calculations (Academic Achievement and Growth)

Kentucky is transitioning from Option 1 to Option 2.

Next Steps



Next Steps (2)

Continued Broad **Shareholder Consultation**

Model **Impact Analyses** (conducted by the Center)

KDE to draft **accountability regulation**:

- Board first reading in August
- Second reading in October
- Public comment period and statement of consideration follows the second reading

Thank you!

We appreciate your time and engagement.

Questions or comments?
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