

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (KDE) STAFF NOTE

Topic: Amendments to 704 KAR 8:060, Required academic standards for social studies

Date: August 2026

Action Requested: ☐Review ☐Action/Consent ☒Action/Discussion

Held In: ☒Full Board ☐State Schools ☐United We Learn

SYNOPSIS OF WHAT YOU WILL BE SHARING:

The issue before the board is to take action on the proposed amendments to 704 KAR 8:060, Required academic standards for social studies. KRS 158.6453(2) requires the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to implement a comprehensive process for reviewing Kentucky's academic standards and the alignment of corresponding assessments for possible revision or replacement every six years. This administrative regulation incorporates by reference the new Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Social Studies.

COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATION:

The Commissioner recommends the adoption of the required academic standards for social studies, as incorporated by reference in 704 KAR 8:060.

APPLICABLE STATUTE OR REGULATION:

KRS 156.070, 156.160, 158.141, 158.196, 158.645, 158.6451, 158.6453

BACKGROUND:

Existing Policy:

KRS 156.160(1) requires the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) to establish courses of study for the different grades and kinds of common schools, with the courses of study to comply with the expected goals, outcomes, and assessment strategies developed under KRS 158.645, 158.6451 and 158.6453. KRS 158.6453(2) requires KDE to implement a comprehensive process for reviewing Kentucky's academic standards and the alignment of corresponding assessments for possible revision or replacement every six years.

This administrative regulation incorporates by reference the KAS for Social Studies, which contains the general courses of study and academic content standards of social studies for use in Kentucky's common schools.

Summary of Issue:

Per KRS 158.6453(2), the KDE is required to implement a process for reviewing and revising Kentucky's academic standards every six years. To conform to these statutory requirements, the KDE Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) implemented the standards review process for social studies which resulted in a new material incorporated by reference.

Curriculum and content decisions require local schools and districts to implement the social studies standards provided in the document incorporated by reference. Therefore, upon approval by the KBE and completion of the regulatory process, amendments to 704 KAR 8:060 will adopt into law the new standards for social studies as authorized in KRS 158.6453(2).

Budget Impact:

A total of \$262,456.00 was spent to complete the review and revision required under KRS 158.6453 for the KAS for Social Studies. In addition to the costs accrued thus far, additional staff time will be needed to support schools and districts in the implementation of the newly revised standards.

Groups Consulted and a Brief Summary of Responses:

Public Comment Surveys

KRS 158.6453(2)(g)1. requires the KDE to implement "an open and transparent process that allows all Kentuckians an opportunity to participate."

The KDE issued two public comment surveys that resulted in over 700 total responses from a broad range of stakeholder groups, including teachers, retired educators, administrators, parents/guardians, postsecondary educators, business/community members and students.

Interim Joint Committee on Education (IJCE)

Per KRS 158.6453(2)(g)4., "[t]he commissioner shall subsequently present the recommendations and the public feedback to the Interim Joint Committee on Education."

The KDE presented to the IJCE on June 2, 2026, and provided members with information on the stakeholder feedback received and the subsequent changes to the social studies standards that were recommended as a result.

In response to this presentation, members discussed the role and purpose of standards versus curriculum and the importance of integrating Kentucky's history into the academic standards, which are woven throughout for grades K-12. Members complimented the KDE on their successful efforts and no recommendations related to the standards review process were received.

Standards and Assessment Process Review Committee (SAPRC)

Per KRS 158.6453(2)(g)6., "the standards and assessments process review committee shall either concur that stakeholders have had adequate opportunity to provide input on standards and the corresponding alignment of state assessments or find the input process deficient." Statute requires the commissioner to "provide a report to the standards and assessments process review committee summarizing the process conducted under this subsection and the resulting recommendations," (2)(g)5. The purpose of the committee is to review the KDE's adherence to facilitating the prescribed standards review process outlined in KRS 158.6453. Statute specifies that the "review of the committee shall be limited to the procedural aspects of the review process undertaken prior to its consideration," (2)(f)3. In preparation of the convening of the SAPRC on July 21, 2026, the KDE completed a detailed report and shared a comprehensive collection of evidence to aid the committee in its determination of the sufficiency or deficiency of the input process. The results of this convening will be shared with the KBE at its August 2026 meeting.

LSAC The regulation will go before the Local Superintendents Advisory Council (LSAC) on July 28, 2026. A summary of the feedback received by the council will be provided to the KBE prior to its August 2026 meeting.

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Commissioner of Education

GOALS/PRIORITIES: Indicate all applicable options.

☐ Foster Educational Innovation Through Vibrant Learning Experiences
☐ Advance Educational Excellence Through Continuous Professional Improvement
☐ Cultivate Collaborative Partnerships
☐ Legislation
☐ Commissioner's Management