

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Update on persistently low-achieving schools and school districts in consequences, Year 5

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 160.346, 703 KAR 5:190 and 703 KAR 5:180

History/Background:

Existing Policy. As mandated by state and federal statutes and regulations, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) must annually identify low-achieving schools that are eligible for federal School Improvement Grant funding. Kentucky's definitions, processes and options for improvement are based on the language contained in KRS 160.346 (attached), which was amended by House Bill 176 (HB 176) during the 2010 Regular Session and signed into law by Gov. Steve Beshear in January 2010.

Persistently Low-Achieving Schools

Schools identified as low-achieving per HB 176 (KRS 160.346) shall engage in one of four intervention options as follows:

- 1) External management option** – Requires that the day-to-day management of the school be transferred to an education management organization that may be a for-profit or nonprofit organization that has been selected by a local board of education from a list of management organizations.
- 2) Restaffing option** – Requires the replacement of the principal and the existing school-based decision making council unless audit reports recommended otherwise; screening of existing faculty and staff with the retention of no more than 50 percent of the faculty and staff at the school; development and implementation of a plan of action that uses research-based school improvement initiatives designed to turn around student performance.
- 3) School closure option** – Requires the closure of an existing school and the transfer of its students to other schools within the district that are meeting their accountability measures and reassignment of the school's faculty and staff to available positions within the district.
- 4) Transformation option** – Includes replacing the school principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation option and replacing the school council members unless audit reports recommended otherwise and instituting an extensive set of specified strategies designed to turn around the identified school.

In compliance with federal requirements for School Improvement Grants, twelve Kentucky public schools were recently identified as “persistently low-achieving” (PLA), based on criteria in state and federal statutes and regulations.

The twelve schools identified are:

DISTRICT	SCHOOL	TITLE I FUNDED
Carter County	East Carter County High	N
Christian County	Christian County High	N
Greenup County	Greenup County High	N
Jefferson County	Iroquois High	Y
Jefferson County	Doss High	Y
Jefferson County	Fairdale High	Y
Jefferson County	Waggener Traditional High	Y
Jefferson County	Southern High	Y
Jefferson County	Frost Middle School	Y
Jefferson County	Seneca High	N
Martin County	Sheldon Clark High	N
Newport Independent	Newport High School	N

These schools are eligible for federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding in the 2011-12 school year and are receiving assistance to enable them to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as defined under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Adequate Yearly progress (AYP) is the term used in NCLB to refer to the minimum improvement required of each school and district over the course of one year. It is measured at the school and district levels by:

- measuring growth in the percentage of students scoring proficient or above in reading and mathematics
- assessing improvement on the "other academic indicator"
- testing at least 95 percent of enrolled students and student populations of sufficient size

NCLB mandates testing in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and at least once in high school. Schools and districts are held accountable for the progress of student groups on these tests and on rates of participation in testing. Schools also are held accountable for the other academic indicator, and for this data set:

- Elementary and middle schools must increase the percentage of proficient plus distinguished scores in combined science, social studies and writing on-demand compared the to prior year; or perform at or above the state average percentage of proficient plus distinguished scores in combined science, social studies and writing on-demand; or decrease the percentage of novice scores in combined reading, mathematics, science, social studies and writing on-demand compared to the prior year.
- High schools must meet or exceed the yearly graduation rate goals.

Financial assistance for PLAs comes from federal SIG 1003(g) funds. Under Section 1003(g) of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), SIG funds are designed to improve student achievement in Title I schools identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring, as well as schools that are eligible for, but don't receive, Title I funding and who have been identified as persistently low-achieving. The goal of the program is to enable those schools to make AYP and exit improvement status.

The 12 schools identified as PLAs for 2010-11 have received leadership assessments based on specific indicators found in the Standards and Indicators for School Improvement to determine the capacity of the principal, school council and district leadership. The leadership assessments were conducted from November 2010 – February 2011. Reports from these leadership assessments are posted at the following web address:

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/School+Improvement/Leadership+Assessment/Leadership+Assessment+Reports+2010-2011.htm> . Items considered during the leadership assessments included classroom observations, stakeholder interviews, portfolios of school records, and a working conditions survey.

Each PLA school has been assigned Educational Recovery staff to assist them in improving instruction. At the end of each SIG funding term, KDE will determine if the schools have met their goals and are making progress toward improvement to continue funding for each year of the three years in the grant period. In addition, the schools are required to provide quarterly reporting to assist in assessing their progress.

Additional status information will be provided at the August 3-4, 2011 Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) meeting.

Corrective Action-Year 5 School Districts Targeted for Assistance

In addition to identifying persistently low-achieving schools, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is required to identify school districts that meet the criteria, under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), for the “corrective action-year 5” category. These districts have not made AYP for eight or more years and will receive assistance to help them achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Thirteen Kentucky school districts were identified in the “corrective action-year 5” category of consequences under NCLB. The 13 are:

- Adair County
- Bourbon County
- Bullitt County
- Campbell County
- Carter County
- Clark County
- Covington Independent

- Fayette County
- Grayson County
- Hardin County
- Jefferson County
- Knox County
- Simpson County

Each Kentucky school and district has a specific number of NCLB goals to meet in order to make AYP. Among the 13 districts in the “corrective action-year 5” category, the number of goals to reach to achieve AYP ranges from 13 to 25, as seen in the chart below.

DISTRICT	GOALS	GOALS MET IN 2010	% OF GOALS MET IN 2010	COMBINED % OF PROFICIENT/DISTINGUISHED IN READING/MATH
Adair County	13	11	84.6%	68%
Bourbon County	13	12	92.3%	71%
Bullitt County	13	11	84.6%	69%
Campbell County	13	10	76.9%	77%
Carter County	13	11	84.6%	65%
Clark County	16	14	87.5% %	76%
Covington Independent	16	6	37.5%	51%
Fayette County	25	20	80%	76%
Grayson County	13	12	92/3%	71%
Hardin County	22	20	90.9%	66%
Jefferson County	25	13	52%	58%
Knox County	13	12	92.3%	63%
Simpson County	16	14	87.5%	69%

The number of goals varies depending on the sizes of student populations in each district. Student population data is reportable only if it meets a minimum group size of 10 students per grade where NCLB-required assessments are administered and 60 students in those grades combined, or the population makes up at least 15 percent of the total student enrollment in accountability grades.

The maximum number of goals is 25. For these school districts, the number of goals to meet ranges from 4 to 25, with only four of the state's most diverse school districts required to meet all 25 goals to make AYP.

As mandated by NCLB, schools and districts that are funded by the federal Title I program will be subject to federal consequences if they do not make AYP in the same content area in any student group for two or more consecutive years. Consequences required by NCLB for “corrective action-year 5” mean the 13 districts must take the following actions:

- develop a corrective action plan approved by KDE

- defer programmatic funds and develop a budget for deferred funds that will be used to implement activities in the corrective action plan, to be approved by KDE
- set aside 10 percent of the district’s Title I Part A allocation for high-quality professional development to help teachers close achievement gaps

KDE provided technical assistance to all 13 districts as they developed their corrective action plans and deferred programmatic funds budgets, but focused their direct assistance on the five districts whose combined percentages of students scoring at proficient and distinguished levels in reading and mathematics were the lowest of all districts in the “corrective action-year 5” category. These five districts have received district-level leadership assessments and targeted assistance from KDE and are working in partnership with Educational Recovery Directors and other KDE staff to implement corrective action plans. The five are Carter County, Covington Independent, Hardin County, Jefferson County and Knox County.

Additional status information will be provided at the August 3-4, 2011 Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) meeting.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

Persistently low-achieving schools and districts in “corrective action-year 5” status must receive focused intervention and assistance in order to reach proficiency.

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