



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Office of the Governor

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**More than 100 Districts Adopt ‘Graduate Kentucky’ Attendance
Age Standard; Votes Still Coming In**

*Governor and Education Commissioner urge remaining districts to adopt policy to keep
students in school until 18th birthdays or graduation*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 17, 2013) – More than half of all Kentucky school districts raced to adopt the new “Graduate Kentucky” standard keeping students in school through age 18 or until they earn a high school diploma, and today Governor Steve Beshear and Education Commissioner Terry Holliday recommended that remaining school districts should still adopt the policy proactively.

Senate Bill 97 (SB 97), known as the “Graduate Kentucky” bill, passed this year and phases in an increase in the compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 18, amending the school attendance law created in 1934. So far, 105 school districts have approved the policy change.

“School districts should still move forward and adopt the ‘Graduate Kentucky’ attendance standard, and begin the work toward keeping students in school right away,” said Gov. Beshear. “There is no reason to delay putting in place this common-sense expectation of our students – particularly when this attendance age will become a statewide standard by the 2017-18 school year.”

June 25 was the first day to approve the new compulsory attendance age. Leaders launched “Blitz to 96” – an effort to get 96 school districts (55 percent of all districts) to approve a policy raising the compulsory school age from 16 to 18, because once that number approved the change, the remaining school districts would be obligated to adopt and implement the policy

within four years. The first 96 districts to approve the change earned \$10,000 grants from the Kentucky Department of Education to plan for full implementation in the 2015-16 school year.

“We are still getting reports every day that more districts have taken the bold step of adopting the ‘Graduate Kentucky’ age policy, and those actions show us that there was a real desire by our schools and communities to implement this action quickly,” said First Lady Jane Beshear.

“We hope that all of our local boards of education realize what a profound impact this policy will have on their communities and the lives of at-risk students and not wait,” said Commissioner Holliday. “The Kentucky Department of Education is committed to support districts implementing strategies and programs that will ensure the additional time students spend in school will be productive and ensure they graduate college/career-ready.”

The first districts to adopt the policy in the “Blitz to 96” will be invited to Frankfort for a special news conference with the Governor and Commissioner to recognize them for their swift action.

Research shows that high school graduates live longer, are less likely to be teen parents, and are more likely to raise healthier, better-educated children. High school graduates are also less likely to commit crimes, rely on government healthcare or use other public services.

More information about Graduate Kentucky, a list of districts which have approved the policy and resources available to school districts is available at www.graduate.ky.gov.

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