



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

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ACT TECHNICAL GLITCH HALTS END-OF-COURSE TESTING

(Frankfort, KY) – Today, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), Office of Assessment and Accountability (OAA), asked schools that are administering computer-based ACT QualityCore® end-of-course examinations to suspend online testing through at least tomorrow due to technology problems at ACT, Inc., the test vendor.

According to KDE Associate Commissioner Ken Draut, about 25 districts are involved. “Districts reported slow connections and sometimes dropped connections from the ACT Vantage testing system which is used to administer the online tests. The issues were sporadic, sometimes effecting several students and sometimes an entire class,” he said.

Draut said KDE received several calls reporting problems on Monday at which time the department notified ACT. The test vendor reported that it had fixed the issue prior to Tuesday’s testing. The issues have continued and the number of calls from districts experiencing problems has grown throughout the week, Draut said.

According to ACT, Kentucky is one of two states currently experiencing issues with the Vantage online testing system. ACT, Inc. indicated that its system is overloaded which is impacting the authentication/test upload process. ACT, Inc. issued the following statement, “ACT is making every possible effort to resolve the unforeseen issues at the earliest possible time. ACT regrets any inconvenience caused by this system-wide technical problem.”

KDE reports its technology network, the Kentucky Education Network (KEN), is functioning properly with activity at or just above normal level and was not an issue.

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Senate Bill 1 (2009) allowed for an end-of-course (EOC) assessment program at the high school level; EOC tests are mandatory for students taking English II, Algebra II, Biology and U.S. History. The tests are used at the high school level for accountability and KDE recommends the results count at least 20 percent of a student's final grade in the course. About 60 percent of districts in Kentucky administer the EOC tests online. The rest administer a paper-and-pencil version.

“We will be advising districts that are impacted on how to proceed once we have more definitive information to share,” said Draut. “Certainly we will work with them on flexibility of the testing window and any accountability issues that result from this situation.”

Draut said online end-of-course testing will not resume until KDE receives assurances from ACT, Inc. that the issues have been taken care of and will not reoccur.

ACT, Inc. was awarded the end-of-course testing contract in 2011. The tests were first administered in the 2011-12 school year. This is the first time Kentucky has experienced problems with online administration of the ACT QualityCore® end-of-course exams.

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