



# KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## NEWS RELEASE

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## **PAPER AND PENCIL TESTS REPLACE ONLINE END-OF-COURSE TESTING**

(Frankfort, KY) – After conflicting reports from test vendor ACT about the ability of its technology system to handle online QualityCore® end-of-course testing, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is moving to paper and pencil tests for the remainder of this school year.

Earlier in the week, about 25 districts reported slow connections and sometimes dropped connections from the ACT Vantage testing system that is used to administer the online end-of-course (EOC) exams to high school students taking English II, Algebra II, Biology and U.S. History. The issues were sporadic and also affected students testing in Alabama and Ohio.

On Wednesday, the department temporarily suspended online testing. By Thursday, ACT had assured the department that capacity issues with its Vantage testing system had been addressed and testing could resume without problems on Monday.

However, late Friday afternoon ACT sent this statement to KDE: “QualityCore® computer-based testing has been temporarily suspended due to technical issues impacting the system. There will be no computer-based testing on Monday, May 6, 2013. ACT is making every possible effort to resolve the unforeseen issues to resume testing on Tuesday, May 7.” The statement concluded, “ACT regrets any inconvenience caused by this system-wide technical problem. Our goal is to ensure students have the best testing experience possible and we remain committed to providing reliable and accurate data.”

(more)

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KDE Office of Assessment and Accountability Associate Commissioner Ken Draut said, “While ACT is attempting to re-open the online system as soon as possible, KDE believes stabilization of the end-of-course assessment program is now the priority. So, we are going with paper and pencil tests, which many of our districts had already planned to use.”

Over the weekend, the department sent an e-mail to district assessment coordinators (DACs) notifying them of the move to paper and pencil tests. Test materials will arrive in district offices by May 13. However, ACT is prioritizing the shipments based on each district’s last instructional day and some districts may receive test materials earlier.

“Our goal is to for all students to be tested before the end of the school year and we believe we will be able to accomplish that,” Draut said.

About 60 percent of districts had planned to test at least some students online. The decision on the format of test administration is usually left up to the schools.

“KDE recognizes the continued frustration the EOC online testing system has caused for participating schools,” Draut said. “Moving to paper and pencil tests should minimize further disruption to test schedules and test results.”

Last year and up until Monday, the department had not experienced any problems with online end-of-course testing. The exams are used at the high school level for accountability; KDE recommends the results count at least 20 percent of a student’s final grade in the course.

Since paper/pencil tests slow down return of results to schools, local grading may be affected. “Due to the circumstances, any KDE requirements for using the EOC as part of the final grade are optional,” Draut said. “Many districts will be able to still use the EOC for the final grade, however, districts have 100 percent flexibility on how to deal with local grading,” he said.

KDE will work with districts to complete EOC testing and on any potential impacts to accountability.

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