



# KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## NEWS RELEASE

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**MEDIA CONTACT:** Rebecca Blessing

**Office:** (502) 564-2000, ext. 4604 | **Cell:** (502) 330-5063 | **E-mail:** [rebecca.blessing@education.ky.gov](mailto:rebecca.blessing@education.ky.gov)

## **GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR DISTRICTS THAT RAISED ATTENDANCE AGE**

(Frankfort, KY) – The check will be in the mail soon for 53 Kentucky school districts that have raised the compulsory school age from 16 to 18 in the past year.

The Kentucky Department of Education is making \$10,000 grants available to the school districts to create programs to identify, intervene and prevent students from dropping out of school and plan for implementation of the new policy in the 2015-16 school year, which is the first year that the policy can be fully implemented. The department made similar grants last year to the first group of districts to raise the dropout age. No application or additional paperwork is necessary. The department will start sending out the grant money later this week.

In 2013, at the urging of Governor Steve Beshear and First Lady Jane Beshear, the General Assembly overwhelmingly approved Senate Bill 97, also known as the Graduate Kentucky bill, which cleared the way for districts to raise the compulsory school age from 16 to 18. Under the statute, once 96 districts, 55 percent of the 173 school districts in the state, approved the change, the rest would have to follow suit. This requirement was met just two weeks after the law took effect and as a result, starting in 2017-18, all Kentucky districts will be required to keep students in school until they turn 18 or graduate, if before the student's 18th birthday.

"I would encourage the remaining 24 districts that have not yet taken action to raise the compulsory school age to 18, to do so immediately," said Commissioner Terry Holliday. "It is vital that districts plan for implementation of this new policy and waiting will only put them at a disadvantage and deprive students who do drop out in the meantime of the opportunity to get the help they need to become college/career-ready."

Holliday said the department will seek to provide the same \$10,000 planning grants to the remaining districts.

Under the terms of the grant, 75 percent of the money must go toward programs targeting at-risk elementary and middle school students; the remainder may be used for dropout prevention at the high school level.

(more)

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“Even though the policy really has an impact at the high school level, if we can identify students in the lower grades who are at risk for dropping out of school later on and provide them support, we will have a much better chance of them staying in school and graduating college/career-ready,” said Holliday

Among the 96 districts that received a grant a year ago, the majority used the money for digital/virtual curriculum, alternative education programs and support, individual student intervention and response to intervention and toward a dedicated staff person to be responsible for dropout prevention and intervention.

“We’ve seen districts take a hard look at their data such as kindergarten readiness, the number of students not on grade level, and behavior and attendance numbers to determine the real need for dropout prevention services in their districts,” said Office of Next-Generation Schools and Districts Associate Commissioner Kelly Foster. “The key is to have programs across the school continuum that can address issues before they become so severe that a student feels they have no choice but to leave school.”

Kentucky school districts will have an opportunity to delve deeper into the strategies of dropout prevention as the state hosts the [26th Annual National Dropout Prevention Network Conference](#), November 2-5 in Louisville. This year’s theme, ON TRACK FOR SUCCESS: Each Student College- and Career-Ready, will challenge conference participants to look for new and effective methods to motivate students in at-risk situations to successfully graduate from high school and be college- and career- ready.

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*Please see the attached map for the districts that have passed a policy raising the compulsory school age to 18 and those who qualified for first (shown in blue) and second round (shown in yellow) planning grants.*

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