



# KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## NEWS RELEASE

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## **BOARD OF EDUCATION MOVES TO CLOSE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS**

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Today the Kentucky Board of Education renewed its commitment to educating ALL students and emphasized closing achievement gaps as one of its top priorities.

“This is not only about compliance but is an ethical imperative about reaching each child,” Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Chief of Staff Tommy Floyd told the board. “By focusing on the individual needs of students we will not only reduce achievement gaps, but also improve achievement for all students.”

Department staff laid out the framework for a plan that refines the department’s approach to support schools and districts to meet the needs of all students and reduce novice student performance. Also, the board approved adjustments to the Unbridled Learning College- and Career-Readiness for All Accountability Model that would eliminate the masking of achievement gaps and provide incentives to schools to move all students to higher performance levels.

The board approved changes to the accountability model that would, among other things:

- establish a novice reduction goal where schools and districts would earn points based on the percentage of the annual goal met in reading and mathematics in the following categories: African American, Hispanic, American Indian or Native American; limited English proficiency; students in poverty; students with disabilities that have an Individual Education Program; and the non-duplicated gap group
- give credit to schools for moving students up one or more performance categories (novice, apprentice, proficient, distinguished) or keeping students at the proficient or distinguished levels
- weigh achievement, gap and growth equally (33.3 percent each) at the elementary level
- establish a graduation rate goal of 98 percent by 2024 and individual yearly goals for how far a district’s or school’s rate has to progress to meet the 98 percent graduation rate
- apply the Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) only to the Next-Generation Learners component
- increase the minimum graduation rate from 70 percent to 80 percent to identify new Priority Schools or for a school to exit priority status
- add the requirement for Schools of Distinction that they not be identified as a Focus School
- clarify that a Priority School is a school that has an overall score in the bottom five percent of overall scores by level for all schools that have failed to meet the AMO for the last three consecutive years
- remove the Third Standard Deviation method for identifying Focus Schools and instead use a method based on the lowest five percent for each individual student group
- assign scores to the district for students in an alternative program who have never attended a regular school in the district

On a related issue, the board received an update on the state’s work on the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) to improve educational results and outcomes for students with disabilities (SWD). Currently there are about 97,000 students in the state who qualify for an Individual Education Plan in at least one of 14 disability categories.

(more)

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The majority of these students are not proficient in reading and math, and while nearly 70 percent of students with a disability graduated from high school in 2014, only 22 percent were ready for college and careers. More than 2,700 of these students were not.

The SSIP enables the department to provide more targeted support to districts and would charge educational cooperatives to use Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds to develop plans to accelerate learning and close achievement gaps for students with disabilities.

Also, the board approved a resolution in support of Kentucky Rising, an initiative that unifies efforts statewide to ensure Kentucky students and the state's workforce are globally ready and can meet job requirements of the 21st century. *(Text of the resolution may be found at the end of this release.)* The Council on Postsecondary Education and the Education Professional Standards Board will consider the resolution at meetings later this month.

In other action, the board approved:

- the Final Order placing Caverna Independent under state assistance
- the Statement of Consideration for 702 KAR 3:320, Finance Officer Certification
- district facility plans for Carroll County, Covington Independent, Greenup County, Hart County and Powell County school districts
- a waiver of 702 KAR 4:180, Section 304 by the Fayette County School District which would allow the district to build a larger high school than allowed under current regulation in order to accommodate interdisciplinary smaller learning communities. The high school is scheduled to open in 2017.
- the 2014-15 updated tax rate for Muhlenberg County
- the Carl D. Perkins Career & Technical Education Act of 2006 Kentucky State Plan for FY16
- Kentucky Tech System Policies and Procedures, Chapter 7 (state-operated area technology centers)

The board also heard the first reading of updates to:

- 704 KAR 3:370, the regulation governing the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System. The changes would add other professionals to the system and reflect that a teacher with exemplary professional practice and low student growth will now earn the performance category of developing, not accomplished.
- 704 KAR 5:070, Common kindergarten entry screener, which would require districts to provide data to the state within two weeks of administering the screener and no later than October 15, so that district, regional and state results would be available sooner
- 702 KAR 7:065, Designation of Agent to Manage Middle and High School Interscholastic Athletics and Revisions in Kentucky High School Athletic Association Bylaws

In other business, the Council for Better Education presented a study to the board titled Adequacy for Excellence in Kentucky that looks at multiple aspects of the Kentucky school finance system. Also, the board received updates on the Kentucky Education North Star Project to boost productivity and efficiency in Kentucky school districts in an effort to reallocate more funds to the classroom; the board's legislative agenda and the [AdvanceKentucky](#) initiative.

The next regular Kentucky Board of Education meeting is scheduled for April 1 in Frankfort.

(more)

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**RESOLUTION ON KENTUCKY RISING SUPPORTED BY THE  
KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION, COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND EDUCATION  
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BOARD  
COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY**

- Whereas, The Kentucky Board of Education, Council on Postsecondary Education and Education Professional Standards Board have successfully planned and implemented a unified college- and career-readiness plan that has resulted in improvement of the college- and career- readiness rate of high school graduates from 34 percent to 62 percent; and*
- Whereas, The challenge of education is to prepare students for the world into which they are graduating, whether it be to enter and succeed in college, the workforce or the military, as well as to participate actively in civic life; and*
- Whereas, Citizenship is not just about making informed choices in local, state and national elections, but in having the knowledge, understanding, tools, and propensity to effectively engage in global commerce, issues and interests; and*
- Whereas, A strong, integrated system of education enhances not only individual opportunity, but the economic viability of local communities and the quality of life of their residents; and*
- Whereas, Fully 21 percent of jobs in the state are tied to international trade. Kentucky exports have reached \$25.3 billion and now travel to 198 countries. Exports make up 13 percent of the state’s gross domestic product (GDP), and in 2013, Kentucky had the second highest growth in exports nationally;*
- Whereas, 410 foreign-owned companies are operating and investing in Kentucky and Kentucky markets are diversifying to include not only automobiles and the legacy industry of bourbon distilling, but also hair and skin care companies, foods, and pharmaceuticals; and*
- Whereas, The Kentucky Board of Education shares a common goal to establish Kentucky as a world leader in the high, value-added international trade of goods and services with broadly shared prosperity for its residents.*

*NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Kentucky Board of Education commits to the development and implementation of a unified strategic plan titled Kentucky Rising, the purpose of which is to create a Kentucky workforce and citizenry that will be globally aware and globally competent, and considered among the world’s best trained and best educated.*

*Done in the city of Frankfort, this fourth day of  
February, in the year Two Thousand and Fifteen*

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*Roger Marcum, Kentucky Board of Education Chair*

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*Terry Holliday, Kentucky Department of Education Commissioner*

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