

The State of K-12 Education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky



Stephen L. Pruitt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education



January 2016

The State of K-12 Education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky

Stephen, L. Pruitt
Commissioner of Education



January 21, 2016

UPDATED TO REFLECT QUALITY COUNTS CHANGES





Thank you for your interest in K-12 public education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Kentucky kids can do ANYTHING! I believe that, but it's up to all of us, working together, to help them reach their true potential.

Three months ago I came to Kentucky to become the commissioner of education. I was drawn to the job, in part, because the state has an excellent reputation – one that is recognized nationwide – for improving K-12 public education. I felt called to help build on this legacy.

During my short time in the Commonwealth, I have seen firsthand the efforts underway on behalf of our children and the hard work that is going on every day in classrooms, schools and district offices, and local school board meetings across the state to provide ALL of our children with the best education possible. I have been impressed with the professionalism of our educators, their passion and their ongoing commitment to kids.

Also, I have had a chance to take stock on where we are with K-12 public education in Kentucky – to see where our strengths are, and there are many, as well as assess where we have room for improvement. I believe as a shareholder in our public education system, you have a right to know the facts on the state of K-12 public education in Kentucky. That is why I am issuing this report and plan to make this an annual event. While much of this information is available on the Kentucky Department of Education's website and through the online Kentucky School Report Card, at least once a year it is important to reflect on the data as a whole so that you can be proud of our progress and help support the changes that may be necessary to move our students ahead.

My goal is to build on our accomplishments of the past 25 years to provide each and every child with an excellent, world-class education that will lead them to success in their postsecondary endeavors, in the job market and in life.

With the reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as the Every Student Succeeds Act, we have a greater opportunity to chart our own course for the future of education than at any time in recent history. I recognize we also have some challenges to overcome. As we move forward we must work collaboratively and focus on equity, achievement and the integrity of our public education system. Without a doubt, we also must continue to have high expectations for all of our students.

We have some great opportunities ahead of us, to continue building on the foundation of public education in Kentucky. As we embrace these opportunities, we must stand up for what is right for Kentucky's kids and not take the easy way out. This will take courage, compromise and understanding.

For the sake of all the children of the Commonwealth, I hope you will join me in the task at hand. Remember, Kentucky kids can do ANYTHING!

Stephen L. Pruitt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

Kentucky as a National Model in Education

In recent years, Kentucky has increasingly served as a national model to other states in a variety of education policy and program areas. Through the catalyst of Senate Bill 1 (2009) and the strong state leadership of commissioners, Kentucky continues to garner national attention for its work in areas like high academic standards, communications, career readiness, teacher leadership, accountability and innovation.

Chris Minnich, Executive Director
Council of Chief State School Officers

K-12 Public Education Governance

The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 created an independent governance structure for public education. The governor appoints members of the Kentucky Board of Education, which is responsible for hiring a commissioner, who oversees the daily operations of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) that is dedicated to serving the districts that educate our children.

In April 2015, Kentucky Commissioner Terry Holliday announced his retirement. The board immediately embarked on the task of finding his successor. After educator and public input on the qualities the next commissioner should possess, the board undertook an extensive nationwide search and in early September, the board hired Stephen Pruitt to be the sixth commissioner of education in Kentucky. Pruitt is a former science teacher, Georgia Department of Education chief of staff and executive with a national not-for-profit, non-partisan education advocacy organization. He started work as commissioner in mid-October.

The Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) develops and adopts the regulations that govern Kentucky's public school districts and the actions of the KDE. This includes management of the Kentucky School for the Blind, the Kentucky School for the Deaf, interscholastic athletics, and community education programs and services. The board reviews the department's budget requests and makes recommendations to the governor and legislature.

The commissioner of education oversees the daily operations of the KDE and recommends and implements KBE policies.

The KDE provides support to locally operated public school districts focused on educating children in elementary, middle and high schools throughout the Commonwealth. Together, the KBE, the commissioner and KDE are responsible for setting local school district standards for student, program, and operational performance while respecting the local autonomy of each school district. Budget and policy priorities are tied to the strategic goals developed by the KBE and the KDE.



Kentucky Board of Education Members

(From left) Sarah Ford, At Large; Leo Calderon, At Large; Susan Edington, Supreme Court District 1; Grayson Boyd, Supreme Court District 7, Samuel D. Hinkle, Supreme Court District 6, Roger L. Marcum, Chair, Supreme Court District 3; David Karem, At Large; Nawanna Barton Privett, Supreme Court District 5; William Twyman, Supreme Court District 2; Mary Gwen Wheeler, Supreme Court District 4; Deborah L. Cook, At Large; Ex-officio Member, Robert King, President, Council on Postsecondary Education, not pictured

Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning is at the center of Kentucky public education. The instructional programs for Kentucky’s public schools emphasize the development of students’ abilities to acquire, apply and integrate knowledge, skills and understandings in real-life contexts and to problem solve, make decisions, and think critically and creatively. They assist students in connecting learning to the world beyond the classroom by exploring and investigating real issues and problems of communities, states, the nation, and the world.

Kentucky Academic Standards

Standards define what students are expected to learn –the minimum academic content every student should know at each grade level and before graduating from high school.



The standards should not be confused with curriculum. Curriculum defines how standards are taught – the methods and material used.

While the state is required to produce a Model Curriculum Framework for districts to follow, it is up to teachers and leaders in local districts to determine what textbooks and other instructional materials are used.

Senate Bill 1 (2009) mandated new academic standards in all content areas that were

- focused on the critical knowledge, skills, and capacities needed for success in the global economy;
- fewer but more in-depth to facilitate mastery learning;
- based on evidence-based research;
- internationally comparable; and
- aligned from elementary to high school to postsecondary education so that students can be successful at each education level.

The Kentucky Academic Standards help ensure that all students throughout Kentucky, regardless of family income or where they go to school, are provided with the same opportunity to learn at high levels.

English/Language Arts and Mathematics Standards

In an historic joint meeting, the Kentucky Board of Education, Council on Postsecondary Education and Education Professional Standards Board adopted new standards in English/ language arts and mathematics in 2010 and implemented them in classrooms across the state. Students were first tested on the standards in the 2011-12 school year.

In the years following implementation of Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS), I have witnessed a profound change in my students' capabilities.

Both comprehensive and rigorous, the standards advance analytical thinking at each grade level, enabling my students to tackle increasingly complex learning tasks. Moreover, they enjoy mastering challenging concepts, and take pride in the deeper learning of which they are capable.

In my small, rural district, KAS integration means my students will not only be college and/or career ready, but also possess the skills to be competitive beyond Kentucky in a global job market.

Sabrina Tackett, Language Arts Teacher
Jenkins Independent Schools

Because Kentucky's math standards may not correspond to the way they were taught, many parents have understandable frustration in trying to decipher the thinking behind them.

These standards are about developing ways of thinking alongside ways of doing. The two work hand-in-hand.

Sahar Zadeh, Student
Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, Fayette Co.

The English/language arts and mathematics standards are designed to promote creative problem solving and critical thinking over rote memorization, and prepare students with the collaboration, creativity and communication skills that the 21st century workplace demands.

Kentucky has essentially the same English/language arts and mathematics standards as the majority of the top 10 performing states in the country.

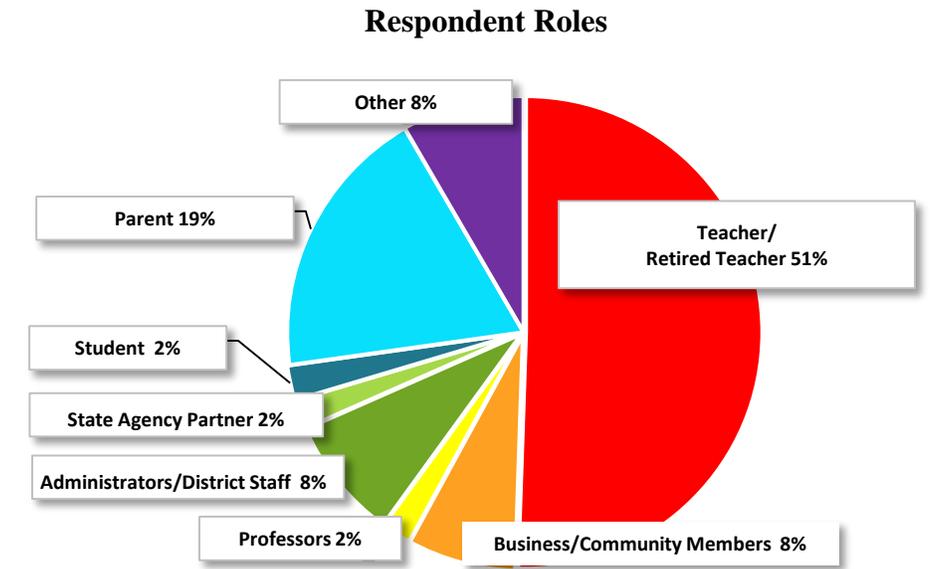


The business community is still solidly behind these standards because we understand how critical it is that our schools and students meet these challenging demands. They will help Kentucky achieve its goals for economic growth and workforce quality.

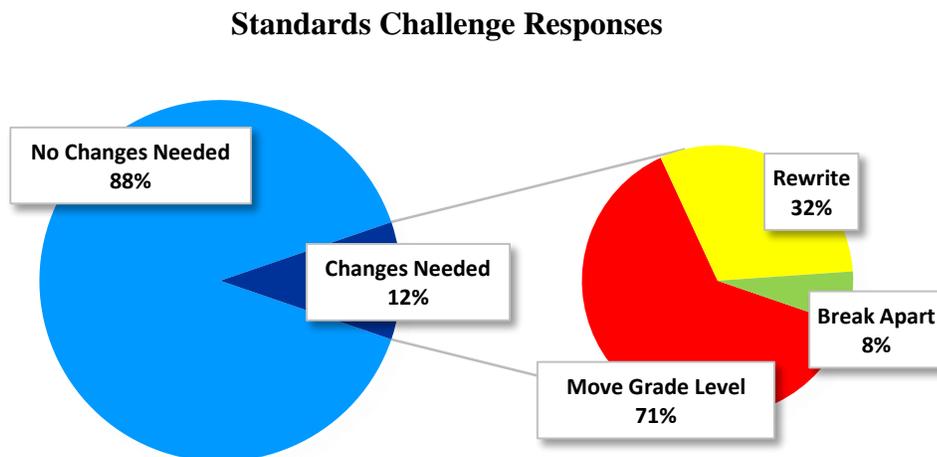
Trey Grayson, President and CEO
Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

During the 2014-15 school year, as part of its regular five to seven year review of the standards taught in Kentucky classrooms, the Kentucky Department of Education sought public input on the state's English/language arts and mathematics standards through the online Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) Challenge.

During the challenge, about 4,000 people weighed in on the standards.



Overall, 88 percent of the respondents did not indicate any changes were needed. About 12 percent of respondents said they would like to see some sort of change in one or more of the standards.



Content teachers from K-12, postsecondary educators, and education shareholders are reviewing all of the feedback in order to propose revisions to the standards that will improve their overall quality and appropriateness. Among the changes being considered are adding calculus as well as cursive writing. Proposed changes will be shared publicly for feedback before going to the Kentucky Board of Education. Any changes in the standards would not be implemented until the 2016-17 school year or later.

Science Standards

The Kentucky Board of Education adopted the new science standards in 2013 and teachers started using them for instruction in the 2014-15 school year.

The science standards integrate core ideas, key practices and concepts that apply to many areas of science. For example, the disciplinary core ideas of science and engineering are integrated rather than taught separately. The standards reflect the interconnected nature of science as it is practiced and experienced by scientists.



Arts Standards

In June 2015, the Kentucky Board of Education approved new arts standards. The standards are built upon four artistic processes – creating; performing, presenting and producing; responding; and connecting – and 11 overarching anchor standards in five disciplines: dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts. The standards include discipline-specific performance standards.

The standards are expected to be fully implemented in Kentucky schools in the 2016-17 school year.

Social Studies Standards

A new set of social studies standards is currently under review. The Social Studies Standards for the Next Generation were created through a collaborative process with Kentucky educators.

The standards respond to the demands of global competencies and 21st century learning and address the knowledge, skills and competencies all Kentucky's K-12 students should have to be prepared for college, career and civic engagement.



Advanced Coursework

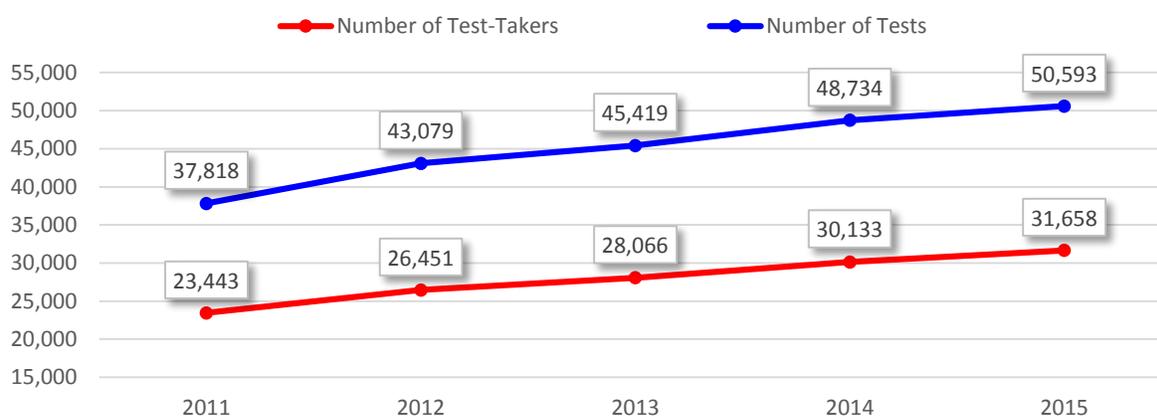
Advanced Placement (AP)

In recent years, Kentucky educators have worked diligently to expand access to, and participation in rigorous coursework such as Advanced Placement (AP) classes. The Advanced Placement program gives students the opportunity to pursue college-level coursework while still in high school.

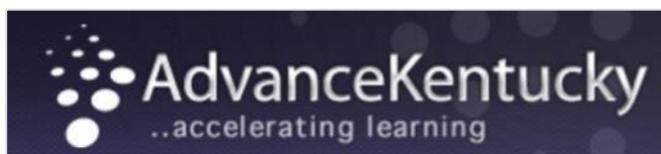
There are more than 30 Advanced Placement courses, ranging from high-level math and science to fine arts, each of which connects directly to a wide variety of college majors and careers. The Advanced Placement program gives high school students the opportunity to earn college credit if they score well on a standardized end-of-course exam. Although it varies from school to school, most colleges require a minimum qualifying score of 3 on an AP exam to earn college credit for the course.

According to data from the College Board, in the past five years, the number of Kentucky public high school students taking AP examinations is up 35 percent. *(See also AP student results under the K-12 Public Education Performance section of this report.)*

Advanced Placement in Kentucky



For the past eight years, AdvanceKentucky, a statewide math and science initiative, has had a



significant impact on the growth of Advanced Placement in the state, especially among those who are traditionally underserved and under-represented in AP courses.

A new cohort of schools has joined the AdvanceKentucky program each year since its inception in 2008-09. A total of 101 Kentucky high schools in 74 districts have participated; more than 3,500 pre-AP math, science and English teachers statewide have taken advantage of AdvanceKentucky's summer training program.

According to data from AdvanceKentucky, a typical school started with a baseline of around 20 AP math, science, and English qualifying scores of 3 or higher prior to application and on average increased that number 139 percent in just one year and 250 percent over the standard three-year period. Schools in the program up to six years increased the number of qualifying scores 475 percent.

Career and Technical Education

Career and technical education (CTE) is an essential component of high school in Kentucky. For many students, it represents as much as a third of their high school experience. CTE incorporates



academics, career exploration, career preparation, and leadership development to meet student needs.

There are 53 state-operated career and technical centers under the guidance of the Office of Career and Technical Education within the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). Another 42 centers are locally operated.

In the 2014-15 school year, more than 22,000 seniors in the state were enrolled in a career and technical pathway. Each career

pathway includes a coherent, articulated sequence of rigorous academic and career/technical courses including dual credit opportunities, leading to postsecondary degrees and industry recognized certifications and/or licensures. Career pathways are developed, implemented and maintained in partnership with secondary and postsecondary institutions, business and employers and are designed to lead to rewarding careers.

In recent years, the KDE has been working with the Council of Chief State School Officers on a career-readiness initiative to increase both the rigor and relevance of career and technical programs in order to support the growing demands of employers in the state. The effort focuses on ways to increase employer engagement, expand work-based learning opportunities and enhance the college and career accountability model that prepares students for the next level and life-long learning.

KDE has convened a statewide CTE Task Force comprised of business and industry leaders for each program area to determine the industry certificates and credentials needed after high school. Later this year, the groups will convene to determine the skills and competencies needed within each program area for career success.

Efforts to increase worked-based learning opportunities for secondary students include a partnership with the Kentucky Labor Department on the initiative known as the Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky (TRACK). TRACK is the only statewide apprenticeship program in the nation that recognizes student pathways at the K-12 level that lead into postsecondary apprenticeship programs. Employers identify the competencies needed for pathway completion and postsecondary credit.



Innovation

The Division of Innovation and Partner Engagement serves as the research and development arm of the Kentucky Department of Education and is charged with “incubating” innovative programs and ideas with the hope that these new approaches to learning can be scaled up in the future.



Innovation is not about finding the next popular program that comes out of a box or using new catchphrases.

Innovation in learning also is not about modifying the existing teaching system, it is about creating a new system that includes:

- moving from a “one-size-fits-all” instructional program to personalized learning;
- focusing on the 21st-century skills of collaboration, teamwork, problem-formulation, creativity and the ability to “learn how to learn”;
- creating systems where students are partners in designing and owning their learning; and
- ensuring that a student can learn anywhere he/she can access the instructional material and at any time 24 hours a day/7 days a week and 365 days a year.

Non-Traditional Instruction Program

In in the 2015-16 school year, when bad weather hits Kentucky, students in some school districts will continue learning. The Kentucky Department of Education approved waivers that allow 44 districts across the state to use virtual or other nontraditional means of instruction when school is cancelled because of weather or another emergency. In most cases, students will participate in lessons online.



In the spring, districts approved for waivers will submit documentation of student and faculty participation and measurements of student learning for the missed days. The KDE then will determine the number of regular attendance days granted to the district under the provisions of the waiver.

The program is being replicated internationally.

Districts of Innovation

KRS 156.108 and 160.107 (House Bill 37, enacted 2012) provide Kentucky public school districts the opportunity to apply to the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) to be exempt from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions, as well as waiving local board policy, in an effort to improve the learning of students. By “re-thinking” what a school might look like, districts are able to redesign student learning in an effort to engage and motivate more students and increase the numbers of those who are college- and career-ready. Currently seven districts have been named Districts of Innovation.

The District of Innovation designation has helped the Owensboro Public Schools chart a course for making our already very good district even better by focusing on innovation around the instructional core. It has helped us add significant connections to postsecondary education, and the business community has created a sharper vision of what college- and career-readiness really means for our students and our community.

Nicholas Brake, Superintendent
Owensboro Independent Schools

Innovation Lab Network (ILN)

Kentucky is a member of a 12-state consortium known as the Innovation Lab Network facilitated by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The states take action to identify, test, and implement student-centered approaches to learning that will transform the public education system. The goal of the ILN is to spur system-level change by scaling locally led innovation to widespread implementation, both within and across states, with a constant focus on student outcomes.



Within Kentucky, 31 districts participate in the state network. Participation in Districts of Innovation or Non-Traditional Instruction is not required to participate in the Kentucky ILN.

There are many schools in Kentucky that are taking the lead in innovating learning and the learning environment for the Commonwealth's children.

The Owensboro Innovation Academy, which opened in the fall of 2015, is a collaboration between Owensboro Independent and Daviess County schools. It is a new high school with a project-based curriculum focused on science, technology, engineering and math. Students follow one of three career pathways – engineering, computer science or biomedical – which were selected based on the needs of area employers.

Kentucky also opened up its first regional career collaborative in the fall of 2015. Operated by the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative, the iLEAD Academy is located in Carrollton but is open to students from Carroll, Gallatin, Henry, Owen and Trimble counties.

Using interest surveys, freshmen work with iLEAD teachers and community mentors to develop individualized career pathways. Students narrow that focus throughout high school and select a senior project to hone skills and produce an electronic portfolio demonstrating their capabilities. iLEAD juniors and seniors have Fridays open to work as interns or apprentices, job shadow, visit colleges and work on intensive projects designed with regional employers. They also will be college students at Jefferson Community and Technical College's Carrollton Campus. iLEAD focuses on preparing students for careers in the Golden Triangle's highest growth sectors – advanced manufacturing, engineering and technology.

Education Technology

Technology supports teaching and learning in Kentucky's public school districts, the mission of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), the vision of the Kentucky Board of Education and the Digital Readiness initiative. The department's goal is to ensure that basic and equitable anytime, anywhere, always-on access to instructional and administrative education technology services is provided to students, teachers, administrators, parents and the general public.

Digital readiness data show that:

- 89 percent of Kentucky parents believe their child's school encourages technology use for teaching and learning;
- 92 percent of Kentucky parents believe technology use in class can enhance student learning; and
- 93 percent of Kentucky teachers believe technology enhances student learning.



In 2015, KDE completed its commitment to the General Assembly to increase Internet speed in every school district in Kentucky thanks to an increase in education technology funding in the 2014 legislative session. **Kentucky is the first state in the nation in which all districts now have bandwidth speeds of at least 100 Kbps (kilobits per second) per student.** That's about 10 times faster than speeds of just three years ago and is nearly double the speed that was available to an entire school district in 1995, when Kentucky became the first state in the nation to provide high-speed Internet services to every school district.

In addition, a new Internet content management system currently in place in 161 of the state's 173 districts allows schools to maximize their 100 kb per student. Upgraded firewall protection is in place to guard against cyberattacks in all 173 districts. KDE's Kentucky Education Technology System (KETS) also is supporting local districts in other ways, including maximizing state funds through the use of a federal E-rate program that significantly increased the KETS offers of assistance sent to districts.



In the 2015-16 school year, Kentucky K-12's first Microsoft IT Academy, soon to be renamed the Imagine Academy, for students and adults was launched. In just six months, it has seen tremendous growth, with an unprecedented 91 percent of Kentucky high schools and area technology centers actively participating.

The Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS) has been an invaluable resource in the implementation of Senate Bill 1 (2009). Created in 2011, CIITS is a 24-hour resource for teachers that supports highly effective teaching and learning in the classroom.



Through CIITS, teachers can access the Kentucky Academic Standards, as well as hundreds of high-quality instructional resources. Teachers can create assessments for learning using a vast standards-aligned bank of questions or create their own questions built as passages, multiple choice or open response. Students take the learning checks online, on paper or using a clicker system, and teachers receive instant feedback. Also, CIITS is the technology platform for the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES).

My favorite thing about CIITS is the immediate feedback to students and the teacher that it can provide. Instantly, I can figure out where my students are in their learning and what next steps need to be taken.

CIITS is an integral part of my planning and the best tool I've ever used to help give me immediate and usable data on my students.

Jason Loreaux, 4th grade teacher
Sixth District Elementary (Covington Independent)

CIITS has an average of 1.6 million logins per month, and data from a recent 60-day period showed that 39,132 unique Kentucky teachers used CIITS. Using CIITS, teachers have created 304,000 formative tests and about 646,000 lesson plans. An average of 23,000 Kentucky students also log into CIITS each week.

Teachers are convinced that their schools and their students are making gains in the area of education technology. Results were higher on all 10 questions related to the topic on the 2015 Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Kentucky Survey than when the survey was last given in 2013. The two biggest jumps were seen in the speed and reliability of Internet service and in teachers having sufficient training to fully utilize technology. Additionally, 96 percent of school leadership reported using data to improve student learning; and 95 percent of teachers believe parents are provided with useful information about student learning.



Kentucky was recognized nationally last year by the Data Quality Campaign as a top-three state in use of data. Data transparency and availability for parents and students through KDE's Open House, the online School Report Card, eTranscripts and the Infinite Campus (student information system) Parent Portal also regularly get high marks.

Data security continues to be a high priority for KDE technology personnel. The requirements of a new regulation and the identification of disciplinary action for those who put data at risk may make this topic more important to district employees and students and help create a heightened culture for data security.

Education Workforce

Effective Teachers and Leaders

The most important factor in the achievement of our students is the effectiveness of the teachers and school leaders who serve them. In the 2014-15 school year, Kentucky public schools employed 41,588 teachers who earned an average annual salary of \$51,143.

The success of public education is directly related to the quality of the teachers and leaders in our schools and districts. Though hiring is done at the local level, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has taken a number of steps to recruit, train and retain effective teachers and leaders, many of them through partnerships and collaborations with other groups and institutions. A recent study produced for the Institute of Education Sciences by the Regional Educational Laboratory – Appalachia, showed that Kentucky’s teaching population has remained relatively stable in recent years. Over a four-year period from 2008-12, almost 86 percent of Kentucky teachers stayed in the same school from one year to the next.

Scholarships and/or student loan assistance may be available for teachers who fill areas of critical shortage, which currently include career and technical education, English, English as a second language, exceptional children, mathematics, science, social studies and world languages.

Students also can be assured of equitable access to effective educators as a result of Kentucky’s teacher equity plan that targets gaps in teacher experience, teacher turnover and the proportion of National Board Certified Teachers in each school.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification

National Board Certification provides numerous benefits to teachers, students and schools. It was designed to develop, retain and recognize accomplished teachers and to generate ongoing improvement in schools nationwide. Board certification is available in 25 certificate areas, from pre-K through 12th grade and consists of four components: written assessment of content knowledge, reflection on student work samples, video and analysis of teaching practice, and documented impact and accomplishments as a teaching professional.



In Kentucky, the Network to Transform Teaching (KyNT3) is committed to transform teaching by working to:

- increase the number of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) in Kentucky, and
- innovate and improve teacher leadership opportunities for existing National Board certified teachers.

KRS 161.131 has set the goal of having one National Board Certified Teacher in every Kentucky school by 2020. The state’s number of National Board Certified Teachers continues to rise.. With 3,273 NBCTs, **Kentucky ranks 7th in the nation in the percentage of its teachers who hold National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification.**

Professional Growth and Effectiveness System



Improving the profession of teaching and improving the effectiveness of teachers goes hand in hand with improving student achievement. The Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) was created with the idea that every student should be taught by an effective teacher and every school should be led by an effective principal. The goal is to create a fair and equitable system to measure teacher and leader effectiveness and act as a catalyst for professional growth.

PGES provides a common language and understanding of effective teaching statewide that didn't exist before. Prior to PGES implementation, Kentucky had 173 different systems to evaluate teachers – one for each district. The focus was not on growing teachers' professional practice, but rather on compliance. Evidence of effective teaching to support evaluations varied widely from school to school and district to district.

Teacher evaluations now are based on four areas of practice outlined in Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*, which Kentucky adopted:

- planning and preparation;
- classroom environment;
- instruction;
- professional responsibilities.

Evidence comes from observation, peer observation, self-reflection, professional growth, student growth and a student voice survey.

About one-third of the certified educators in the state are evaluated each year.

The majority of teachers and leaders evaluated in 2014-15, the first year of statewide implementation of the PGES, were rated exemplary or accomplished. About 16,700 teachers and about 1,400 principals and assistant principals received summative rating in 2014-15.

Professional Growth and Effectiveness System Overall Summative Ratings for 2014-15

Rating	Teachers	Leaders
Exemplary	28 percent	26 percent
Accomplished	65.5 percent	63 percent
Developing	6.3 percent	11 percent
Ineffective	>1 percent	0 percent

The Kentucky Board of Education made a decision to not include the PGES results in the state accountability model for 2015-16 due to concerns expressed by constituent groups, problems with the PGES technology platform and the data itself, which could artificially inflate accountability scores and discourage the professional growth the system was meant to promote.

Separate but similar Professional Growth and Effectiveness Systems are in place for principals and superintendents.

Through PGES, teachers have the opportunity to not only improve our teaching, but also our profession. We need to take advantage of this time and offer our professional expertise to move our profession into the 21st century.

Sherri McPherson, English/Language Arts teacher
Lafayette High School, Fayette County

Teacher Voice

Teacher engagement and empowerment is crucial to achieving student success in the state. So, the state and its education partners have actively worked to ensure teachers have opportunities for involvement in reform efforts and to provide feedback.



In 2011, Kentucky implemented the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Kentucky Survey to allow teachers to express their opinions on key working conditions such as facilities, resources, leadership, professional development and time. The survey provides educators with data, tools and direct support to facilitate school improvement.

In 2015, a record 89.3 percent – almost 45,000 – of eligible school-based certified educators responded to the anonymous, biennial survey. The results showed that Kentucky educators were more positive about teaching and learning conditions in their schools than they were in 2013, when the survey was last given.

Teachers also have been given a voice through the Hope Street Group (HSG), a national nonprofit organization that provides fellowship opportunities for Kentucky teachers to create communication pathways between policy makers and classroom practitioners. Teacher voice is elevated by connecting teachers with local, state and national policymakers. Also, the Hope Street Group utilizes teacher leaders to communicate directly with other teachers. Through HSG, teachers statewide have provided feedback that has impacted critical education policies, including PGES and the Kentucky Academic Standards.

Each year, the Kentucky Education Association (KEA) hosts the Let's TALK conference, where every learning session is led by teachers and is for teachers. KEA also organizes legislative learning days for Kentucky teachers.

The Fund for Transforming Education in Kentucky coordinates initiatives such as Next Generation Instructional Design (NGID) to provide opportunities for teachers to be active creators of instruction, rather than passive consumers of canned curriculum.

These partners have all worked together to develop a Kentucky Teacher Leadership Framework to provide definitions for what teacher leadership can look like in all its forms. In addition, Kentucky is working to develop career pathways for teachers to provide leadership opportunities that do not require a teacher to completely leave the classroom.

Also, individual teachers have taken opportunities to exemplify teaching as not just a job or even a career, but a profession by working on teacher-driven initiatives to engage teachers around the state in opportunities to share their voice and expertise. Recently, at the invitation of the commissioner, 2016 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Ashley Lamb-Sinclair took a sabbatical from the classroom and joined the Kentucky Department of Education to provide insight on projects, advocate for teachers and craft projects that she believes will encourage her colleagues to become masters of their own fates.



Lamb-Sinclair

Teachers also serve on numerous statewide advisory committees and provide a voice for the profession when changes are considered that would impact classrooms.

Assessments

With the passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990, Kentucky chose to have an all-inclusive assessment and accountability system by having all Kentucky public school students participate in annual testing with the results of those assessments included in the state’s accountability system for schools and districts.



Kentucky tests students on various subjects beginning in grade 3. Results are used to assess learning, as a basis to modify instruction in the classroom, ensure that all schools and districts are serving all students and that gaps in categories of students are identified, addressed and closed.

Kentucky’s statewide accountability system depends on and mandates the testing of every student. In 2015, Kentucky saw a 99.7 percent participation rate statewide for assessments. All students are expected to make a good faith effort to complete the state assessments to the best of their ability.

Kentucky State-Level Assessments

Mandatory Tests (Used with all students)	Subjects	Grades
Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP)	Reading, Mathematics, Science ¹ , Social Studies	3-8
Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP)	Writing Language Mechanics	5, 6, 8, 10, 11 4,6,10 ³
High School Readiness Test ²	English, Reading, Mathematics, Science	8
College Readiness Test ²	English, Reading, Mathematics, Science	10
QualityCore End-of-Course Tests	English II, Algebra II, Biology, U.S. History	High School
ACT	English, Reading, Mathematics, Science	11
Alternate Assessment	Administered in all subjects to students with the most severe disability, roughly 1 percent of the student population	3-8, and High School

¹ Only the national norm-referenced portion of the K-PREP test in science is administered in order to meet federal requirements, since the test is not aligned with the current Kentucky Academic Standards in science.

² Previously, Kentucky administered the ACT Explore (8th grade) and ACT Plan (10th grade), however in the 2015-16 school year, KDE discontinued it since the vendor stopped supporting the tests and could not verify test exposure had not been compromised. The K-PREP test is being used to satisfy the regulatory requirements for these tests until a new test can be implemented.

³ACT Plan has been used for language mechanics.

Kentucky State-Level Supplemental Assessments

Supplemental Tests (Used only with designated students)	Subjects	Who Takes
Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to- State (ACCESS) for English Language Learners	Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening	English Language Learners only
ACT Compass ¹	Reading, Mathematics	Grade 12 students who do not meet ACT benchmarks in the designated subject
Kentucky Online Testing (KYOTE) (University of Kentucky)	Reading, Mathematics, Writing	Grade 12 students who do not meet ACT benchmarks in the designated subject
Advanced Placement (AP)	30 subject areas	High School students who complete AP courses
ACT WorkKeys	Reading, Mathematics	Career-enrolled students only who have completed three CTE courses
Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)	Reading, Mathematics, Mechanics, Electrical	Career-enrolled students only who have completed three CTE courses
National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)	Reading, Mathematics, Civics, U.S. History, Writing	Only students in sampled schools
Kentucky Occupational Skills Standards Assessment (KOSSA)	Broad spectrum ranging from Agriculture, Manufacturing to Engineering	Career-enrolled students only who have completed three CTE courses

¹ The vendor has announced it is discontinuing this test.

Time Required for Mandatory State Testing

Overall, mandatory statewide testing requires less than 1 percent of the instructional time available in a school year.

However, districts often administer their own tests, which increases the assessment burden on teachers and students. The department has partnered with school districts to review their benchmark and formative assessments and encourages districts to evaluate both the quality and quantity of local testing. The goal on a state and local level is to ensure there's a clear purpose for every assessment that is being administered to Kentucky's students.



Rigor and Reliability of State Assessments

Nationally, the rigor of state tests is often called into question. In 2015, Achieve and the Collaborative for Student Success released a new analysis of student proficiency scores that compares student performance on state tests and on NAEP. In many states there are wide discrepancies, with students almost always performing better on state tests.

According to the report, for the 2013-14 school year, Kentucky showed an 18-point discrepancy between state-reported proficiency scores and NAEP scores in 4th grade reading, and a 15-point discrepancy in 8th grade math – about half what it was before moving to K-PREP tests. In comparison, more than half the country had discrepancies in excess of 30 percentage points, with the differential in some states greater than 50 percentage points.

Online Testing

In 2015-16, online testing is available for end-of-course tests in high school and ACCESS for ELLs. The state does not currently have the capacity to provide all tests online, although this remains an ongoing area of study.

Future Tests

Work is underway on the design of a new science test. In spring 2015, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) began working with WestEd, an assessment company, on conceptualizing the design of a new science assessment system. WestEd may not bid on the development of the operational science assessment in the future. Work and products from this contract will be used in creating a Request for Proposals to secure a vendor for the new science assessment and to inform Kentuckians about the new assessment.

WestEd has facilitated work with science specialists and assessment staff at KDE and individuals representing classroom teachers, school and district leaders, and university faculty.

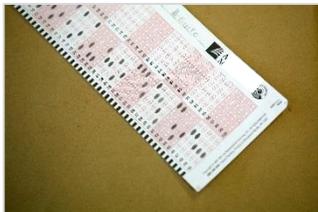
A prototype for a summative assessment and an example of a through course task for formative assessment purposes are nearing completion. The summative prototype consists of a group of clustered or connected items to measure two performance expectations (referred to as science standards in Kentucky's Academic Standards). The through course assessment is intended for implementation in the classroom setting to allow for performance and skill based application of the intended science practices, concepts and ideas.



The next step is to try the prototypes out with a small number of Kentucky students in an experience similar to a “cognitive laboratory,” where students explicitly describe their thinking and process for completing the assessment. Additional edits to the prototype items may happen after the tryout.

Assessment guidance documents on aligning tasks and clusters of items to the standards and an overall assessment system design are nearing completion as well.

Test Security and Data Quality



Test security activities are designed to ensure the security of assessments used in accountability determinations. The Office of Assessment and Accountability (OAA) at the Kentucky Department of Education provides training on the regulations that govern testing and communicates security expectations to certify proper test procedures were followed. Analysis of erasures and other post-testing data are monitored and may highlight needs for further investigation.

Since state-required assessments are the basis of accountability, consistent administration is a critical element for score validity. OAA works collaboratively with the District Assessment Coordinator advisory group and the School Curriculum Assessment and Accountability Council to identify needs and to develop supports and processes for successful test administrations.

Data quality is an on-going collaborative process between local districts and KDE to ensure accurate data and public reporting. OAA uses data in the state student information system and individual student test results to populate a secure Web-based application used for rosters, data cleanup, and quality control. Each year, public reporting has been increasingly accurate, with only a small number of requested data reviews following public reporting.

Program Reviews

A Program Review is a school self-evaluation of a specific instructional program, such as arts and humanities or writing, that is designed to improve programs. Program Reviews are required as a part of the state assessment and accountability system and currently count for 23 percent of a school's and district's overall accountability score.



The reviews are meant to improve the quality of programs, encourage the integration of the program skills schoolwide across all content areas, ensure equal access to learning opportunities for all students and allow students to demonstrate understanding beyond a paper-and-pencil test. Program Reviews are conducted in arts and humanities, practical living/career studies, writing, K-3 programs and global competencies/world languages programs, which is included in accountability for high schools in the 2015-16 school year and for elementary and middle schools in 2016-17.

Every year, school personnel must conduct a Program Review in at least one program area during which they evaluate instructional practices, aligned and enacted curriculum, student work samples, formative and summative assessments, professional development and support services, and administrative support and monitoring against standards of excellence. Through careful review, schools are able to identify strengths, weaknesses and potential areas of program growth. School leaders then use this information to plan for and implement program improvement.

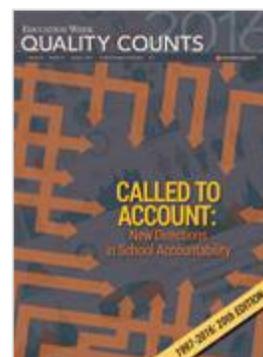
In December 2015, Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt named a task force to study Program Reviews and consider solutions to address challenges related to the Program Review process. Membership on the task force includes superintendents, principals, teachers and representatives from education shareholder groups in the state. The objectives of the task force are to identify and prioritize key challenges related to the Program Reviews and propose solutions that support the best instructional/learning experiences for all students in these areas.

K-12 Public Education Performance

For years, Kentucky ranked near the bottom of states in nearly every indicator of K-12 public education performance. But, that is the case no more. Instead, Kentucky is often cited nationally as an example for other states of improvement and ranks in the top ten in several key indicators.

Quality Counts

Buoyed by increased student achievement and a higher graduation rate, Kentucky moved up two places in the annual *Quality Counts* State-of-the-States Report Card produced by *Education Week*, a national publication that focuses on P-12 education.



The report tracks 39 indicators in three areas: chance for success, K-12 achievement and school finance. States earn points based on their performance on the indicators and are assigned grades and a ranking. Kentucky received an overall grade of C, the same as the nation, putting it in **27th place, up from 29th place last year**. Massachusetts ranked the highest with a B+. The lowest ranking state was Nevada, which earned a D.

	KENTUCKY		NATION		KENTUCKY'S RANK NATIONWIDE	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Chance for Success	C	C	C+	C+	35	35
K-12 Achievement	C-	C-	C-	C-	19	16
School Finance	C	C-	C	C	26	27
Overall Score	C	C	C	C	29	27

Before 2015, when the criteria changed for determining the overall score, Kentucky ranked as high as 10th in 2013. The 2010 ranking was 34th among all states.

Despite the state's current overall ranking in the middle of the pack, a closer look reveals Kentucky is still **among the top 10 states in certain areas**.



Kentucky's strongest showing is within the K-12 Achievement Index, based on its improvement over the past 12 years in 4th-grade scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The assessment, often referred to as the nation's report card, is given in every state to a random group of students. In 2016, Kentucky ranked

- **2nd in the nation with a 13-point gain in 4th grade math scores;**
- **5th in the nation with a 9-point gain in 4th grade reading scores ; and**
- **9th in the country on the 2015 NAEP reading assessment**

According to the report, **Kentucky ranked in the top 10 in the improvement of its graduation rate** between 2002 and 2012, putting the state in 6th place nationwide with a 12.2 percent gain.

In addition, the state saw a dramatic increase in the number of high scores on Advanced Placement (AP) tests.

One of the state’s biggest challenges in K-12 achievement is closing the achievement gap. Specifically, the 2016 *Quality Counts* report looked at the gap in performance between students who are eligible for free/reduced-price (F/R) meals – which is 60 percent of the student population in Kentucky – and those who are not. While a wide achievement gap between low-income students and their wealthier counterparts exists in every state in the nation, **the poverty gap is lower in Kentucky than in the majority of states.**

2015 COMBINED PROFICIENCY RATES REGIONAL COMPARISON

	F/R meal non-eligible	F/R meal eligible	Poverty Gap	Ranking
West Virginia	40.2	22.2	18	1
Kentucky	51.6	25.3	26.3	18
Indiana	54.8	27.9	26.9	21
Missouri	49.1	22.1	27	23
Tennessee	49.6	21.6	28.1	29
U.S.	51	20.9	30.1	n/a
Illinois	51.6	20.6	31	39
Ohio	54	21.8	32.2	41
Virginia	54.8	20.7	34.1	46
District of Columbia	56.6	13.3	43.4	51

This year, the state put in place a strategy to reduce the number of novice learners and raise achievement for all students, especially in math. (*See Improving Outcomes for All Students section of this report*).

Ironically, in Massachusetts, which ranked highest in overall performance in the rest of the report, ranked 48th in the nation when looking at the performance gap between students in poverty and their more affluent counterparts. It registers a gap of 35.1 points.



The School Finance category has two subcategories – equity and spending – and presents mixed news for the state. With the exception of one indicator, Kentucky scores in the top 15 of states in equity of school finance with the highest ranking in the relationship between district funding and local property wealth. The state ranks 45th in the country on the actual spending as a percent of the amount needed to bring all students to the median per pupil expenditure level in the state.

In spending, the state ranks below the middle on most indicators. **Kentucky’s adjusted per-pupil expenditure (PPE) is \$1,279 less than the national average.** However, of greater concern is the fact that **only 13.7 percent of Kentucky students go to school in a district with a PPE which is at or above the national average.** Nationally, the number is 39.8 percent.

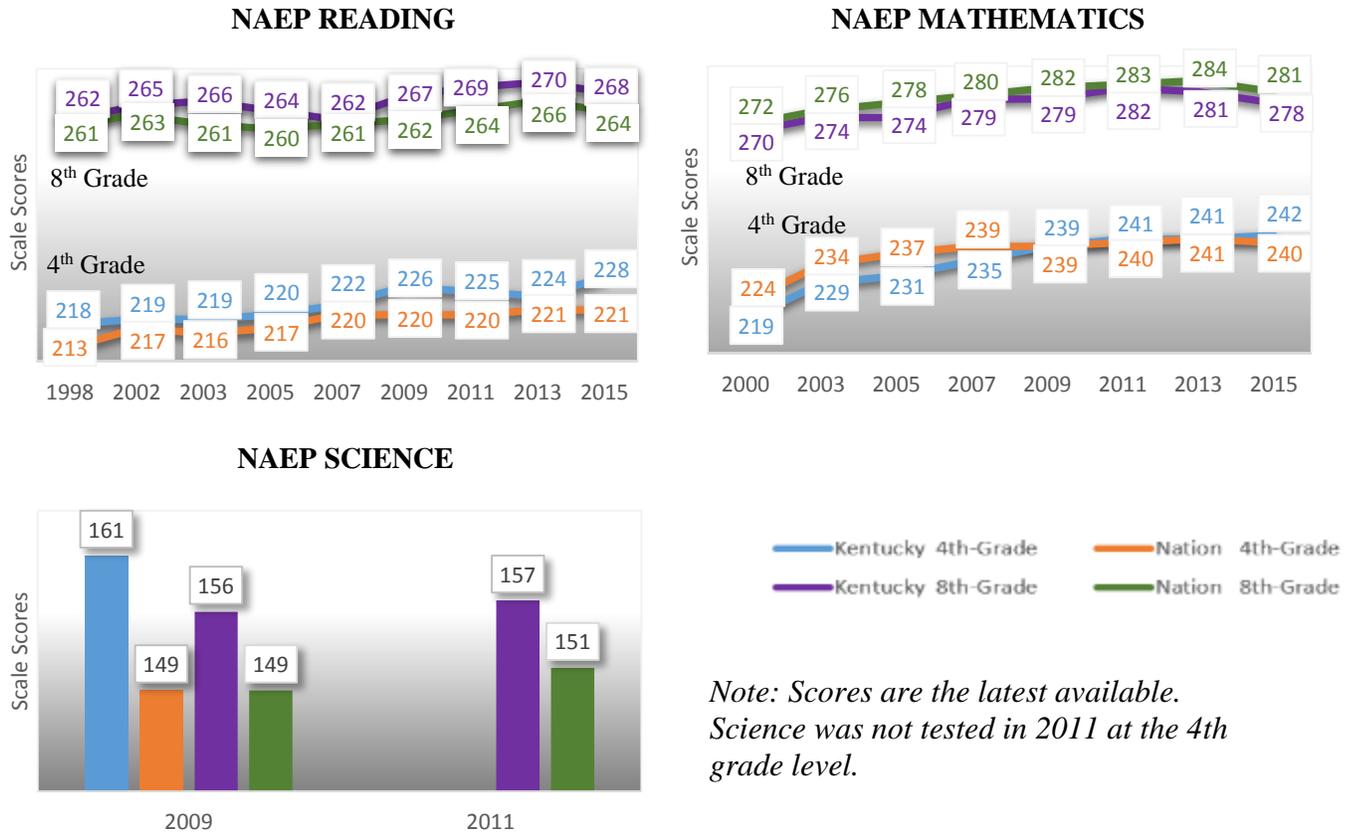
The Chance for Success index captures the importance of education in a person’s lifetime from cradle to career. Its 13 indicators span a variety of factors including preparation in early childhood, the performance of public schools, and educational and economic outcomes in adulthood. Kentucky ranked lowest, at 35th in this area, primarily due to poverty, employment and the relatively low numbers of adults in the state with more than a high school education.



Other Measures of Success
Achievement –Elementary and Middle School

NAEP

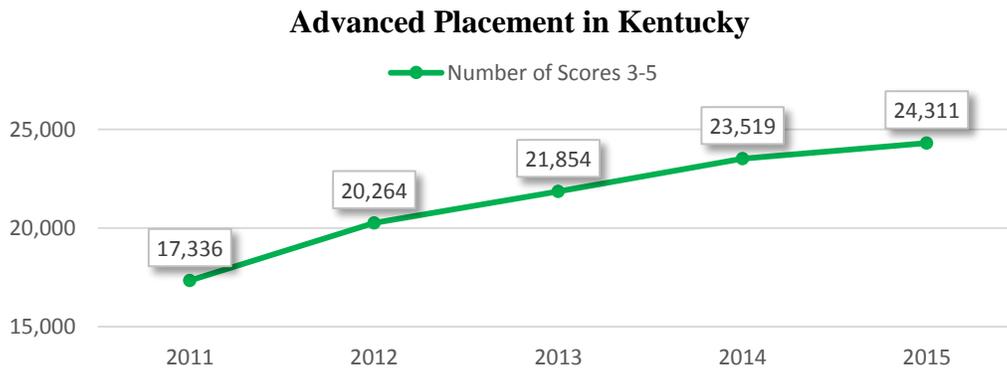
Kentucky students outperform their peers at most levels in reading, mathematics, and science on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).



Achievement – High School

Advanced Placement (AP) Tests

In 2015, more Kentucky public high school students took rigorous Advanced Placement (AP) tests (see Advanced Placement section of this report) and scored higher than ever before. In the past five years the number of tests with a qualifying score of 3, 4 or 5, has increased by 40 percent.



Students must earn at least a 3 to earn college credit for the course. Five is the highest score possible.

ACT

In the last five years, Kentucky has made greater gains on the ACT than the rest of the United States.

Kentucky Public High School Graduates’ Average ACT Scores



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	KY 5-year gain	US 5-year gain
English	18.7	19.0	19.2	19.4	19.6	+.9	--
Mathematics	18.8	19.1	19.2	19.3	19.6	+.8	-.1
Reading	19.6	19.8	19.8	20.2	20.3	+.7	+.2
Science	19.3	19.5	19.7	20.0	20.1	+.8	+.2
Composite	19.2	19.5	19.6	19.9	20.0	+.8	+.1

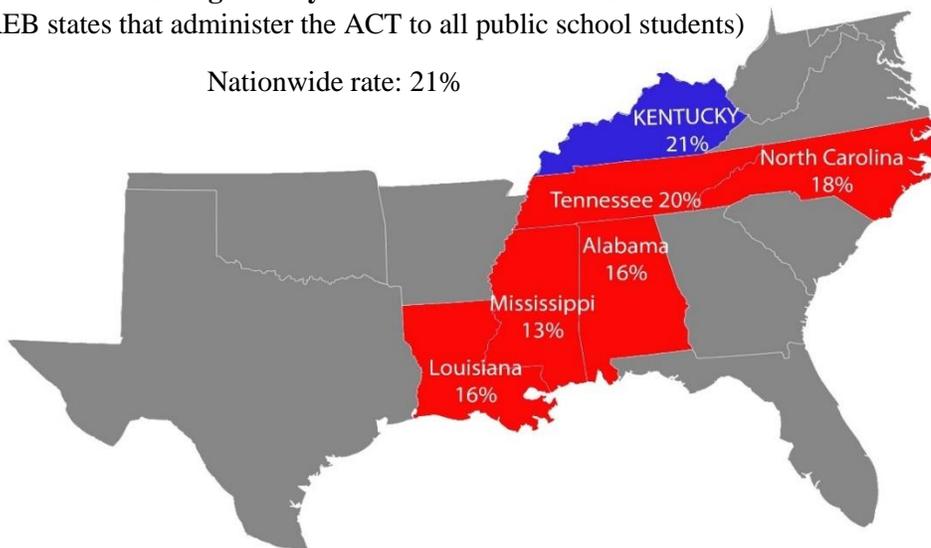
Of the 16 member states of the Southern Regional Education Board that give the ACT to all public high school students, **a higher percentage of students in Kentucky meet all four college-ready benchmarks** (English, reading, math, and science) than in any other state. Although Kentucky tests all students regardless of whether they plan to go to college, the state **ties the percentage of students nationwide in meeting all four benchmarks.**

Percentage of Students Meeting

All Four College Ready Benchmarks on the ACT

(of SREB states that administer the ACT to all public school students)

Nationwide rate: 21%



For a complete look at performance on K-PREP state assessments and End-of-Course Exams for which there is no national comparison, please see the 2014-15 Unbridled Learning Assessment and Accountability Briefing Packet online at <http://bit.ly/UnbridledLearning201415>.

Graduation

In 2015, **88 percent of Kentucky public students graduated from high school on time, among the highest rates in the nation** (all states now use the same 4-year cohort graduation rate calculation). **Kentucky ranks the highest of states that require Algebra II and four years of English to graduate.**



The *2015 Building a Grad Nation* report released annually by the Alliance for Excellent Education, America’s Promise Alliance, Civic Enterprises and the Everyone Graduates Center at Johns Hopkins University called **Kentucky “a beacon to all other states.”**

Even though more than half of Kentucky’s students are considered low-income, its graduation rate for low-income students is nearly identical to its graduation rate for middle/high-income students and well above the national average for all students. According to the report, **nationwide, low-income students are graduating at a rate 15 percentage points behind their more affluent peers.**

College- and Career-Readiness

In 2015, **66.9 percent of Kentucky public high school students graduated college- and/or career-ready.**

College-ready means students were prepared to take entry-level, credit-bearing, college classes without remediation or additional coursework.

Career-ready students earned an industry-recognized career certificate or a passing score on a Kentucky Occupational Skills Standards Assessment, aligned to a Career and Technical Education Career Pathway.

In 2011, **every school board chair and superintendent in the state signed a pledge, the Commonwealth Commitment, to increase the college/career-readiness rate in their high schools by 50 percent by 2015.** The state provided a comprehensive set of strategies with specific annual targets to help districts reach their goal. Some **68 percent (114 districts) met their college/career-readiness goal**; 32 percent fell short of meeting their goal. However, of those 54 districts, 20 came within 5 percent of meeting their goal, another 14 districts came within 10 percent, significantly increasing the state’s overall college/career-readiness rate.

Postsecondary Enrollment and Success

According to the Kentucky Center for Education and Workforce Statistics (KCEWS), **60 percent of the Class of 2013 enrolled in an institution of higher education** the fall following graduation from high school.



Additionally, KCEWS reports that **students who graduate from high school having reached the Kentucky college/career-readiness benchmarks realize more success their first year in college** than those who do not meet benchmarks for readiness. Specifically, they:

- have a higher GPA – 2.6 versus 1.7;
- complete more college hours – 22 versus 11; and
- return for a second year of postsecondary at higher rates –85 percent versus 65 percent.

Maximizing Educational Outcomes for All Students

The Kentucky Board of Education has high expectations for all students – from the day they enter kindergarten until the day they walk across the stage to collect a high school diploma – And the board is dedicated to maximizing students’ educational outcomes by increasing readiness and closing opportunity and achievement gaps. This effort does not pertain to only certain children or groups of children, but applies to ALL children, regardless of family income, the part of the state where they live, the school they attend, their race or ethnicity, the language they speak, whether they have a disability or where they fall on the spectrum of learning.

Kindergarten readiness



Each year, Kentucky public schools administer the Brigance Kindergarten Screener to each student starting kindergarten to determine his or her readiness to learn. School readiness skills and behaviors are not used to determine school eligibility; all children who meet the legal age requirement are entitled to a public school education.

In 2015-16, only half of the children entering kindergarten were deemed ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences that promote success. Screener results allow teachers to meet each student where he or she is on the first day of school and determine how to best meet the child’s learning needs moving forward. When children start out behind their peers in kindergarten, the push to bring them up to grade level is urgent. The longer a child lags behind academically, the more difficulty they have succeeding in school.

Closing the achievement gap

Each year, students receive reports that place their performance on state tests in each content area tested into the categories (from lowest to highest) of Novice, Apprentice, Proficient and Distinguished (NAPD). The achievement gap refers to a substantive performance differences between the various groups of students, including:

- male and female students;
- students with and without disabilities;
- students with and without English proficiency;
- minority and nonminority students;
- students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and those who are not.



Kentucky’s goal is 100 percent proficiency for all students. The distance from that goal or gap is measured by creating a student Gap Group – an overall count of student groups that have historically had achievement gaps.

Percentage of Non-Duplicated Gap Group¹ Students Scoring Proficient or Distinguished on K-PREP

Level	School Year	Reading	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Writing	Language Mechanics
Elementary School	2014-15	44.5	38.9	n.a. ²	50.4	34.5	45.6
	2011-12	37.5	30.3	59.4	48.9	23.1	38.6
Middle School	2014-15	42.8	31.3	n.a. ²	47.1	29.4	35.0
	2011-12	34.8	28.7	50.1	46.0	30.8	27.6
High School	2014-15	44.0	27.5	27.2	44.9	38.0	38.9
	2011-12	38.4	27.9	18.5	26.3	31.6	38.6

¹ Students who are members of one of the individual student groups (African American, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native, students with disabilities, free/reduced-priced meal eligible and Limited English Proficiency) are included in the non-duplicated gap group.

² Elementary and middle school students were tested with the Science Stanford 10 norm-reference test only. A performance level is not assigned and is not a part of accountability

Novice reduction

A key part of KDE’s efforts to close the achievement gap relates to novice reduction, or reducing the number of students who score at the lowest “novice” level on state tests.

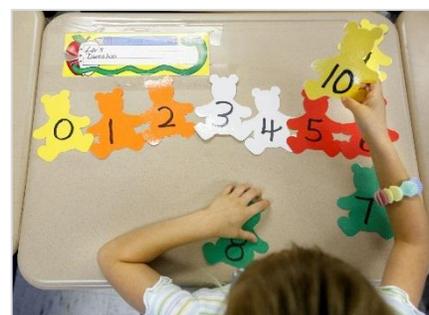
2014-15 Number of Novice Students

Grade Levels	Reading	Math
Elementary School (3rd-5th)	31,618	26,172
Middle School (6th-8th)	32,177	25,379
High School	16,302 (English II End-of-course)	10,899 (Algebra II End-of-course)
Total	80,097	62,450

This is a moral and ethical imperative since the chances of these students graduating college- or career-ready is reduced, chances of incarceration are increased and chances that these students will need social support services are also increased.

The novice reduction plan focuses in four areas:

- curriculum and standards
- instruction
- continuous improvement and assessment
- environment and support



KDE has an established a process for how districts and schools can reduce the number of novice students, including:

- an approach to novice reduction and how to conduct a needs assessment of work that impacts novice reduction;
- a process for schools and districts to identify and prioritize their strengths and weaknesses; and
- a tool to assist schools and districts on the novice reduction webpages.

The department also provides coaches to work with districts and schools to search for ways to improve the novice reduction process and provides training for schools and districts. There has been much interest from districts in novice reduction.

So far, KDE has worked with more than 100 leadership teams, and 880 workshop participants and conducted 3,031 face-to-face meetings about novice reduction and gap closure.

In addition, the Kentucky Board of Education approved several changes to the accountability model that would provide incentives for schools and districts to move all students to higher performance levels. The board approved:

- Establishing 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; and
- Giving credit to schools for moving students up one or more performance category (novice, apprentice proficient, distinguished) or keeping students at the proficient or distinguished level.



Student Supports

The Kentucky Department of Education’s primary function is to provide service and assistance to the state’s 173 school districts. Among the supports provided are programs that meet students’ learning needs as well as basic student needs.

Basic Supports

Nutrition

Good nutrition makes a vital contribution to physical development and a student’s cognitive performance. KDE administers several programs that deliver quality nutrition and nutrition education to Kentucky students including the school breakfast and lunch programs and Summer Food Service Program. In addition to the important mission of providing fuel for growth and learning, these programs bring into Kentucky more than \$150 million annually in federal reimbursement funds, employ several thousands of people and utilize thousands of dollars’ worth of commodities produced by American farmers.



The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 that allows schools and local educational agencies with high poverty rates to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students. CEP eliminates the burden of collecting household applications to determine eligibility for school meals, relying instead on information from other means-tested programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Community eligibility is designed to be extremely easy for a school or district to adopt and became available nationwide in the 2014-15 school year. As of the 2015-16 school year, 137 school districts had attained either full or partial community eligibility status.

Student Health

There is a critical link between health and learning and the role of schools to help improve the well-being of students, families, and the entire school community. Research shows that when school districts and schools have effective policies and practices that support the health of their students and staff:



- student concentration improves;
- student behavior problems are reduced;
- student and staff attendance increases; and
- children and adolescents develop life-long health-promoting behaviors.

The Kentucky School Health and Physical Education (SHAPE) Network provides a comprehensive approach for engaging schools across the state to promote healthy schools: nutrition policies, physical education/activity policies and staff wellness through a Coordinated School Health Plan.

The SHAPE team has members both at the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Department for Public Health.



The Kentucky Youth Risk Behavior Survey is conducted as part of a national effort by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and prevention to monitor students' health-risk behaviors in six priority areas. These six areas include injury and violence, alcohol and drug use, tobacco use, nutrition, physical activity, and sexual risk behaviors. These risk behaviors contribute to the leading causes of death, disability and social problems among youth and adults in the U.S. Kentucky has been administering the survey since 1997. The survey is voluntary and is administered to a randomly selected sample of middle and high school students across the state.

The 2015-16 survey showed students still are engaging in some risk behaviors, such as texting or emailing while driving, engaging in a physical fight one or more times during the 12 months before the survey, and riding with a driver who had been drinking alcohol one or more times in the 30 days before the survey.

Safe Schools

Kentucky's General Assembly, through KRS 158.442, provides funding to local school districts through the Kentucky Center for School Safety in an effort to support substance abuse prevention and violence reduction programming. Since the federal Title IV program was discontinued, the Safe Schools Grant program is the state's primary funding source for prevention activities and provides funds to all school districts within the state, with allocations based on enrollment. This grant money is managed and monitored by the Kentucky Center for School Safety, according to spending guidelines within that agency.



KDE collaborates with the Kentucky Center for School Safety to provide training and professional development to school districts. Throughout the year, the Kentucky Center for School Safety is available to schools across Kentucky, as a "one stop shop" for school safety resources, training and assistance.



One new program being offered by KDE is training in the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, with the goal of reducing and preventing bullying problems and improving peer relations among students. The program is being used extensively in other states, including Pennsylvania and South Carolina. East Carter Middle School became the first school in Kentucky to adopt the program and received special training and support from KDE staff to implement it.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

The Kentucky Department of Education collaborates with special education cooperatives as other shareholders to increase the number of schools and districts that implement the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Annual web-based training is provided to all districts in an effort to increase appropriate behavior, decrease inappropriate behavior and respond to dangerous behavior. The focus is on effective teaching strategies – not only for behavior, but also academic achievement.

Learning Supports

Kentucky has numerous programs to help all of the Commonwealth’s students stay on track to graduation and a successful future.

Individual Learning Plans

Students across Kentucky are required to complete an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) beginning in the 6th grade. This learning plan is designed to help students bring together their academic



achievements, extracurricular experiences, and career and education exploration activities. This enables the student, parents or guardians, teachers and counselors to work together to develop a course of study that meets the student’s needs and goals.

An online Student ILP Tool lets students record their goals for their career, education and life; bookmark careers and schools that are of interest to them, explore career clusters, record extracurricular activities, community activities and work experience; and create professional looking resumes. An online Parent/Guardian ILP Tool gives parents the chance to see what their child has entered into his or her ILP account, learn about careers that are of interest to their child and email comments to their child’s advisor.

Both of these tools and the curriculum used in the classroom help students to begin seeing early in their educational life the connection between what they are learning in the classroom and how it can affect their future careers.

Kentucky’s System of Interventions (KSI) and Response to Interventions (RtI)

An additional support for schools and districts to help keep students on track is Kentucky’s System of Interventions (KSI) and Response to Interventions (RtI).

This comprehensive system addresses Response to Interventions, accelerated learning requirements, closing achievement gaps, highly effective instruction, readiness to learn and student transitions. KDE has expanded the framework for RtI to assist schools and districts in incorporating state and federal programs to provide a seamless system of interventions for improving student achievement.



KSI is based on a three-tiered system depending upon the needs of the student. Tier 1, which includes 80 percent of the students in Kentucky’s classrooms, is the universal instruction provided to all students in the general education classroom. Tier 2 is targeted instruction, which covers 15 percent of the public school system population, for students who need additional

academic or behavioral interventions due to either not meeting or exceeding the standards. Tier 3, which covers 5 percent of the student population, provides more intensive instruction for students not making adequate progress in the core curriculum and Tier 2 interventions.

KDE provides schools and districts with guidance and best practice resources. It also provides technical assistance to schools/district on the implementation of the tiered intervention system, and helps problem solve district or school-specific intricacies around implementation and management.

Extended School Services (ESS)

The Extended School Services (ESS) program is another tool for school districts to use and is designed to assist individual students who are having difficulty in one or more content areas.

ESS funds are allocated to every school district for the purpose of operating a program for students having short- or long- term academic difficulties. ESS programs offer extra instructional time outside regular school hours and may take a variety of formats, including after-school or before-school programs, evening sessions, Saturday learning opportunities, summer programs and/or intercessions.



Districts have the opportunity to request a waiver to offer ESS services during the school day. There is close collaboration between the regular day program and the ESS program to best meet the student's needs. ESS programs being implemented across the state offer a wide array of curricular programs and instructional formats. Many of these programs are designed to gain the interest of and inspire motivation in students.

Persistence to Graduation Tool

Another tool offered to schools is the online Persistence to Graduation Tool. It is an early warning system to help schools identify students who may be off-track for graduation or



promotion to the next grade level. The tool uses student-level data and research-based indicators – such as attendance, suspensions or removals, and failing grades -- to highlight students who may be in need of additional intervention or support. Drawing information from the current and prior academic year, the tool calculates a risk value for each student. Each school may then determine the necessary and appropriate supports and interventions for students who may be off track for graduation.

Alternative Education Programs

Alternative education programs exist to meet the needs of students that cannot be addressed in a traditional classroom setting through the assignment of students to alternative classrooms, centers, or campuses that are designed to remediate academic performance, improve behavior or provide an enhanced learning experience. Alternative education programs do not include career or technical centers or departments. There has been a greater focus on alternative education programs since the compulsory school attendance age has increased to age 18. The goal is to provide a meaningful education program, not just warehouse the student until he or she turns 18. The Kentucky Department of Education is currently working to improve the alternative monitoring and support process and providing professional learning activities using the 11 Alternative Programs of Distinction as examples of alternative education done right.

Exceptional Children

A significant portion of the students enrolled in a public school in Kentucky qualify as exceptional children – either because they are English language learners, possess a disability or are identified as gifted and talented.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

For the 2014-15 school year, almost 24,000 students, or 3.6 percent of the population, were classified as English language learners. These are students whose primary language is something other than English. The vast majority of these students were of a Hispanic background (14,688), with the number of Asian students (3,796) being the next most populous group.



Each new student in a district is given a home-language survey. If the answer to any of the four required questions is any language other than English, then a special screener is given, the results of which must be shared with parents within the first 30 days of enrollment or two weeks of enrollment during the school year.

For each identified ELL student, a program services committee will design a Program Services Plan (PSP). The teacher will provide services throughout the year with appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations for each individual ELL student.

All identified ELL students are required federally to be assessed annually with an English Language Proficiency test. Students must meet certain standards on the ACCESS English Language Learner assessment to exit from the ELL program.

Students with Disabilities

There were 86,966 students in the 2014-15 school year, or 13.3 percent, identified as having a disability and placed in special education. The majority of those students, by an almost 2 to 1



margin, were male and the majority of them (69,532) were classified as white. There were 22,768 students with a speech language disability, 15,079 with a specific learning disability and 13,438 with another health impairment. In 2014, more than 73 percent of students with disabilities spent 80 percent or more of their day in general education classrooms.

Greater strides need to be made to reduce the number of students with disabilities who score as below

proficient on state tests. Almost 70 percent of students with disabilities were not proficient in either reading or math at the elementary school level; and although 70 percent of students with disabilities graduated from high school in 2014, only 22 percent were deemed ready for college and careers.

It is notable that the focus of many states, including Kentucky, on regulatory compliance over the past 30 years has resulted in improved compliance. However, over that same period of time, educational results and outcomes for students with disabilities have not improved. While it is important to celebrate the achievement of improved compliance and to ensure that commitment moving forward, it is clear that a sole focus on compliance does not improve the educational results for the students.

One possible tool to help in this matter is a requirement from the federal Office of Special Education Programs for states to create a State Systemic Improvement Plan. The purpose of the plan is to increase the capacity of school districts to implement, scale and sustain evidence-based practices to improve educational results and outcomes for students with disabilities. KDE is requiring regional co-ops to develop regional systemic improvement plans, with an emphasis on improvement in math.



Gifted and Talented Students

In the 2014-15 school year, there were 107,509 students classified as gifted and talented, 16.4 percent of the total school population. This group was split fairly evenly between male and female students, with the top abilities classified as general intellectual ability (32,984), specific academic aptitude – language arts (25,292) and specific academic aptitude – mathematics (24,415).



Kentucky law requires the state to oversee a comprehensive educational program for its exceptional school-aged children. All school districts are required to operate programs for exceptional children, including gifted and talented students. Among the strategies used to meet the unique learning needs of the gifted and talented community are:

- Differentiation – Differentiation recognizes students with varying background knowledge, readiness, language, preferences in learning and interests. Teachers can differentiate content, process and product using a variety of tiered activities including small group instruction, graphic organizers, compacting assignments, jigsaw and learning centers.
- Accelerated Learning – This includes Advanced Placement, dual credit opportunities, the International Baccalaureate program and performance-based credit, which allows students to earn credit outside the traditional structure of a 120-hour instructional course.
- Early Graduation – Early Graduation is a deliberate pathway for students who intend to progress through high school on an accelerated timeline and graduate college ready in three years or less of high school or at age 18. Early Graduation students move on when ready, receive a diploma from the district and are eligible for acceptance into Kentucky public universities and non-profit independent colleges and universities. The related regulation provides a financial scholarship, known as the Early Graduation Certificate, to support this action. In its first year of implementation, more than 345 students enrolled in the program, representing 63 different districts and 89 diverse high schools across the state.

Kentucky was one of several states awarded a Javits Grant to meet the special education needs of gifted and talented students. In addition to verifying and reporting achievement data disaggregated for gifted students, a professional learning opportunity is planned for March 2016 which will focus on identifying and serving gap and under-represented groups of students in the state.



Accountability and School Improvement

Accountability

The Unbridled Learning Assessment and Accountability System provides in-depth information about the performance of students, schools, districts and the state as a whole. The Unbridled Learning accountability model includes annual public reporting of student performance disaggregated by various student groups. The data also gives Kentucky education shareholders the information they need to make decisions on education polices, programs and curricula, and overall school improvement.



Kentucky’s current accountability system, the Unbridled Learning College/Career-Readiness Accountability model, was designed under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and provides one system for state and federal accountability. The model supports the Kentucky Board of Education’s strategic priorities: Next-Generation Learners, Next-Generation Instructional Programs and Support and Next-Generation Professionals, though this component has not yet been included in the actual accountability calculation.

Various component scores in each area are calculated and weighted to produce an overall score.

Based on overall scores, schools and districts fall into one of three performance classifications.

Number of Schools and Districts by Classification¹				
Schools	Year	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Distinguished
Elementary	2012	508	148	77
	2013	483	172	75
	2014	371	187	162
	2015	328	196	188
Middle	2012	231	66	36
	2013	210	82	39
	2014	174	86	69
	2015	181	70	76
High	2012	160	46	24
	2013	86	80	65
	2014	88	81	59
	2015	51	84	93
Total Schools	2012	899	260	137
	2013	779	334	179
	2014	633	354	290
	2015	560	350	357
Districts	2012	121	35	18
	2013	88	61	25
	2014	78	55	40
	2015	53	73	47

Progressing is an additional designation that is added to a school/district performance classification of distinguished, proficient or needs improvement to indicate that the school has met its annual measurable objective, student participation rate for the all students group and each subgroup, and has met its graduation rate goal.

Number of Schools and Districts Progressing				
Schools	Year	Needs Improvement/ Progressing	Proficient/ Progressing	Distinguished/ Progressing
Elementary	2013	212	101	49
	2014	227	147	139
	2015	141	109	122
Middle	2013	106	42	23
	2014	116	61	60
	2015	56	33	39
High	2013	32	42	35
	2014	32	43	41
	2015	12	30	39
Total Schools	2013	350	185	107
	2014	375	251	240
	2015	209	172	201
Districts	2013	33	26	4
	2014	32	27	25
	2015	11	17	11

Schools and districts are placed in rewards or assistance categories based on overall scores and other data.

Focus schools were originally identified in 2011-12 as outlined in 703 KAR 5:225 and generally represent those schools/districts with the lowest performance, largest achievement gaps and/or the lowest graduation rates in the state.

Number of Schools and Districts by Assistance Category			
Schools	Year	Priority School ¹	Focus School ²
Elementary	2012	0	103
	2013	0	102
	2014	0	98
	2015	2	101
Middle	2012	9	106
	2013	9	105
	2014	9	103
	2015	10	106
High	2012	32	76
	2013	32	75
	2014	27	73
	2015	17	75
Total Schools	2012	41	285
	2013	41	282
	2014	36	274
	2015	28	284

Districts		Priority District	Focus District
	2012	n/a	17
	2013	n/a	17
	2014	n/a	17
	2015	0	17

¹ Two Priority Schools also are identified as Distinguished and are reported as Priority Schools for monitoring purposes only.

² Schools previously identified remain in their status for a minimum of two consecutive years (2012 and 2013) over this time they must demonstrate sustained improvement to exit. Some Focus Schools exited in 2014, but additional Focus Schools were identified based on federal requirements. Focus Districts represent the lowest 10 percent of districts identified annually.

School Improvement

While Kentucky public education has made great strides in recent years, schools and districts continue to work to improve student achievement.

Through a system of continuous improvement schools and districts are constantly learning, reflecting, monitoring and evaluating for success. Schools use 30-60-90 Day Plans to pursue goals that are aligned to their Comprehensive School Improvement Plan or Comprehensive District Improvement Plan. Outcomes are measured by data for each initiative.

In order to disseminate practices that motivate, engage and provide measurable results in the classroom across the state, the Kentucky Department of Education hosts a Best Practices website that allows teachers and administrators access to strategies that have been proven successful. The searchable database allows educators to zero in on their specific need or browse the practices that have been proven to improve student performance.

For schools that need extra help, the department offers a vast array of supports.

Focus Schools

As required under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the department has identified schools as Focus Schools. These schools meet the following criteria:

- Schools that have a non-duplicated student gap group score in the bottom 10 percent of non-duplicated student gap group scores for all elementary, middle and high schools
- Schools with an individual student subgroup within assessment grades by level with a score in the third standard deviation below the state average for all students; or
- High schools that have a graduation rate that has been less than 60 percent for two consecutive years.

In the 2014-15 school year, 284 schools were identified as Focus Schools. These schools work with the department to create a new Comprehensive School Improvement Plan designed to help the school improve student achievement. Schools that rate as Focus Schools for four years receive additional supports including improvement strategies, the assignment of a high-achieving partner school and other resources from KDE staff. Schools that have been identified as Focus Schools remain in that category for a minimum of two consecutive years during which time they must demonstrate sustained improvement in order to exit Focus status.

Priority Schools

Schools that have been identified as the state's lowest performing schools require more assistance to turnaround student achievement. These Priority Schools are defined as performing in the lowest 5 percent or have a graduation rate of 60 percent or are low-performing and have failed to meet their goals.

In the 2015-16 school year, 27 schools are identified as Priority Schools. That number included three new schools. Eleven schools exited Priority status after the 2014-15 school year. Those schools included:

- Bryan Station High School (Fayette County)
- Fern Creek High School (Jefferson County)
- Greenup County High School
- Knox Central High School
- Lawrence County High School
- Lee County High School
- Lincoln County High School
- Newport High School (Newport Independent)
- Perry Central High School (Perry County)
- Trimble County High School
- Waggener High School (Jefferson County)



These schools met their annual goals for three consecutive years, have a graduation rate of greater than 70 percent and are above the bottom 5 percent of schools in reading/math combined scores.

Of the 36 schools that were in Priority status in the 2014-15 school year, four rated as Distinguished and nine rated as Proficient in the latest accountability data release.

The results also showed that 21 of the 36 schools showed improvements in their overall scores and 15 of the 36 schools had overall scores at or above the state average.

Three of the schools were able to reach the Rewards category of High Progress, which requires a school to be in the top 10 percent of improvement for all schools.

The three schools that entered Priority status will receive intensive examination and turnaround support from KDE staff. When schools enter Priority status they undergo diagnostic reviews and are monitored for progress. The department assesses the functioning of the school and the school council and the school council and principal's ability to turn the school around in order to make a recommendation to the commissioner of education about whether the school council or principal should remain in place.

The schools also have the option of external management, restaffing, closing or transforming, which involves deploying specific strategies to turnaround the school.

Priority Schools are assigned Education Recovery staff. Education Recovery regional directors work collaboratively to support schools by developing partnerships with universities, educational agencies and external shareholders in the region.

Education Recovery staff are assigned to the school to support the staff with an emphasis on leadership, literacy and math. The Educational Recovery leaders and specialists focus their work around a systems approach that aligns with the mission and vision of the school leader. The leaders and specialists work with staff to help turn around the school in many ways including ensuring rigorous and authentic assessments to inform and improve instruction, helping staff work with families and the community to remove barriers to learning, and working with teachers to identify areas of growth that will enhance their teaching skills.

The Education Recovery staff is proving effective at many of the Priority Schools. Of the 27 schools currently under Priority status, a great number are making substantial gains.

Three schools that were former Priority Schools have now be identified as Hub Schools which serve as a model for school turnaround and best practices in teaching and learning. Those schools are: Franklin-Simpson High School, Pulaski County High School and East Carter High School.

During the 2014-15 school year, more than 2,220 educators from 274 schools and several districts visited the Hub schools.

This year KDE staff continue to work with the Priority Schools to implement Novice Reduction strategies, strengthen the capacity of the schools' leadership, review data and develop sustainability plans for exiting schools.

Every Student Succeeds Act

In December 2015, Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, called the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which will allow states greater flexibility than under No Child Left Behind.



ESSA still requires annual tests in grades 3-8 and once in high school. But it also requires states to rate schools on other measures of student progress other than testing, including graduation rates, advance courses and English language proficiency.

States also will have to include one other measure, such as engagement, educator engagement, access to and completion of advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, school climate/safety or another measure.

The ESSA also encourages the development of richer, performance-based assessments and may include portfolios and projects.

Instead of adequate yearly progress states will be able to define long-term goals that are “ambitious” and include measures of interim progress.

The Every Student Succeeds Act will provide Kentucky the opportunity to modify and simplify its accountability model to promote continuous improvement in our schools that is fair, equitable and promotes success for all students. Any changes will need to be in place by the 2017-18 school year. Kentucky’s current accountability model will remain in place for the 2015-16 school year. The state awaits direction from the U.S. Department of Education on how accountability will be handled in the 2016-17 school year.

State assisted and managed districts

When local school districts demonstrate an inability to execute their responsibilities or properly govern themselves, it can become necessary for KDE to provide assistance or even take full control of operations in the district. When a district that demonstrates such a critical lack of efficiency or effectiveness in governance or administration that state-mandated corrective action or state control of the district is required, the district is designated for state assistance or management.

When a district is placed under state assistance, KDE provides management assistance to the district to develop and implement a plan to correct deficiencies. Under state management, KDE has full control of all administrative, operational, financial, personnel and instructional management duties typically carried out by the local school board and superintendent. The state maintains control until the Kentucky Board of Education (KDE) determines that the patterns of ineffective and inefficient governance and the deficiencies have been corrected.

The commissioner's recommendation to the KBE that a district be designated for state assistance or management is based on a management audit that includes an investigation of the district's compliance with state and federal statutes, administrative regulations and local board policies.

There are five districts currently under state assistance or management, and progress has been made in each of them since those designations were put in place by the KBE.

These districts are currently under state assistance:

- Caverna Independent: Progress has been made toward a more intentional approach to teaching and learning, including strengthening lesson plans and improving parent and community involvement so the district can avoid state management.
- Fleming County: The district has worked to make financial improvements through spending cuts and is collaborating with KDE on a major renovation at its high school. The district also has placed an intentional focus on instruction which will help it work toward its ultimate goal of becoming a District of Distinction.
- Robertson County: The district has worked to lower expenses and add revenue to its general fund and to reverse declining enrollment, all teachers have been trained in using classroom systems for continuous improvement and new leadership at the district level has strengthened community involvement.

These districts are currently under state management:

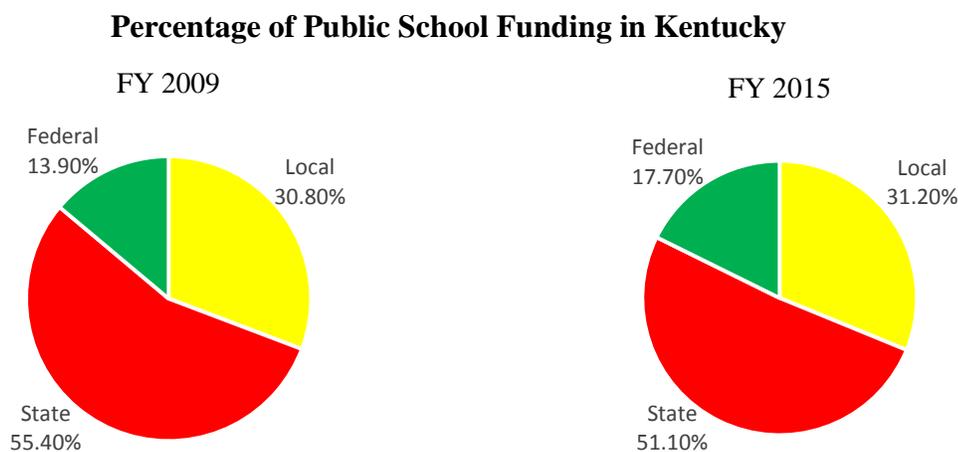
- Breathitt County: The district has hired a superintendent who is collaborating with a state manager on daily operations, local board members continue to develop the capacity for leadership and self-governance through partnerships and a district-wide focus has been placed on improving results through monitoring and analyzing data.
- Menifee County: There has been improvement in transparency in communication, culture and climate, and systems are in place to educate and hold all shareholders responsible for following policies and procedures. The district is working with the state manager to improve student achievement and day-to-day operations.

District Support

Funding

Kentucky's 173 public schools are funded through a mix of local, state and federal tax dollars and outside grant money.

Since 2009, revenues from local and federal sources have increased in districts' budgets. At that same time, state funding has decreased.



Budget shortfalls beginning in 2008 have resulted in reductions in education spending. The decline is the result of the national recession and increased state costs for health care, prisons and pensions, leaving fewer funds for education and other services.

Despite efforts to protect elementary and secondary education in the state budget relative to other areas, and even with a small increase in funding in the 2014-16 budget, Kentucky schools continue to deal with fewer resources.

The state ranks **10th worst in the country when it comes to K-12 funding cuts since the recession started in 2008 with a decline of 12.1 percent per student** in inflation-adjusted terms – according to a report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Nationally, according to Education Week's 2016 *Quality Counts* report, the state ranks 45th in the country on the actual spending as a percent of the amount needed to bring all students to the median per pupil expenditure level in the state.

In actual spending, **Kentucky received a failing grade. According to the report, Kentucky's adjusted per-pupil expenditure (PPE) is \$1,279 less than the national average. Only 13.7 percent of students go to school in a district with the PPE at or above the national average.** Nationally, the number is 38.8 percent.

On a more positive note, a recent report from the Gatton College of Business and Economics at the University of Kentucky points to a high return on investment in Kentucky for per pupil expenditures using NAEP scores as a comparative metric. **Kentucky was one of eight states that outperformed the rest of the nation academically when obstacles to cost-effective educational spending are taken into consideration.** Those obstacles include poverty, parental education, missed school days, rural population and high obesity rates.

Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK)

Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) is the basic state funding formula used to allocate state dollars to school districts.



The SEEK formula requires a minimum local tax effort for school districts of 30 cents per \$100 of assessed property valuation. School districts may raise the revenues through any combination of the property tax, motor vehicle tax and three optional taxes. Districts may exceed the required minimum under a two tier system that limits local support.

SEEK sets a guaranteed district allotment for each student, taking into consideration additional needs for exceptional students, economically-disadvantaged students, transportation, students who do not speak English, and students served in home and hospital settings. The base SEEK per pupil allotment varies depending on these unique district needs. The amount provided by the state also varies depending on districts' ability to generate revenue to meet the guaranteed amount. Higher wealth districts receive less per pupil than lower wealth districts.

The base guarantee per pupil amount is established by the state budget every two years. Districts are guaranteed this amount, plus adjustments for transportation, at-risk students, students with disabilities and limited English proficiency, and students who need home and hospital services. It appears that a SEEK shortfall will occur in the 2015-16 SEEK final calculation, which will impact districts. The shortfall for all districts combined is expected to be no more than \$10 million for FY 16. The primary factor contributing to this shortfall is a higher than projected Exceptional Child Count.

Districts have been warned to anticipate an approximate reduction of no more than 1 percent in their district SEEK allocations for this year.

Facilities

As a result of Senate Bill 132 (2010), the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) conducted an assessment of 485 public school facilities in Kentucky which included a detailed facility condition, educational suitability and technology readiness evaluation.

The report identified deficiencies that included condition needs, deferred maintenance needs, educational suitability needs and technology readiness needs. A total of \$3.7 billion of needs were identified. Current replacement value was estimated at \$7.4 billion.



Districts must levy a 5-cent equivalent tax to participate in the School Facilities Construction Commission program which provides debt service for new facilities or major renovations.

School Facility Renovation and Building Projects

Projects			New Buildings	
Year	Number	Total Cost	Number	Total Cost
2011	298	\$713,584,121	21	\$235,585,176
2012	267	\$467,412,782	7	\$98,861,918
2013	255	\$380,752,300	2	\$23,239,301
2014	249	\$531,308,161	9	\$203,397,629
2015	306	\$618,312,134	11	\$141,142,055

In the 2015 calendar year, the Kentucky Board of Education approved 49 new plans and three amended plans. KDE has identified, based on district facility plans and available funding sources, \$5,221,259,581 in unmet needs for the upcoming budget cycle.

Transportation

Transportation is an integral part of the total school program. Approximately 390,000 pupils are transported annually in 8,252 buses over a total of 115,000,000 miles.

As of November 2015, 1,784 buses – nearly a quarter of the total fleet – are 15 years or older. Depreciation stops after year 14. The average cost of bus replacement is \$85,000.



Currently 40 percent of the 117 school districts that responded to the most recent KDE survey have a shortage of school bus drivers.

Transportation is currently funded at 59 percent of the SEEK calculation and is having a negative impact on local district budgets. To fully fund transportation at 100 percent, \$356,724,837 would be needed annually.

Creating Efficiencies

In 2013-14, the Kentucky Association of School Administrators and The Center for Education Leadership (KASA/CEL) partnered with the Kentucky Department of Education, to make several grant opportunities available for school districts as part of the Kentucky Education North Star Project to increase productivity and efficiency. The purpose was to help districts analyze their operations in hopes of saving both time and money that could be spent on improving student achievement.

As part of this process, KASA/CEL also engaged the American Productivity Quality Center (APQC), which has worked with school districts across the country on this type of work. The initial work on these grants was completed as of December 2014. In the past two school years, KASA has helped 23 school districts across the state save more than \$2 million.

KASA is partnering with KDE, APQC and the Kentucky Council for Performance Excellence, to provide similar opportunities for school districts moving forward.

State Schools and the Kentucky Department of Education

State Schools

The state runs 53 Area Technology Centers as well as two schools to address the special needs of visually impaired and deaf learners. The Kentucky Board of Education also serves as the board for the Kentucky School for the Blind and Kentucky School for the Deaf, and KDE staff serve as resources for all of the state schools.

Area Technology Centers

The state operates 53 Career and Technical Centers (ATCs) across Kentucky that provide planned course sequences of high quality academic content and technical skills, and focus on a specific career and prepare students to successfully transition toward their career goal. The



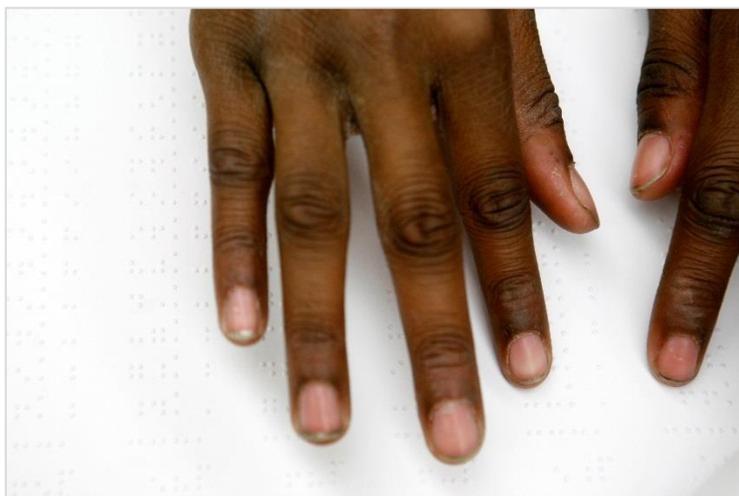
funding mechanisms are distinctly different for the 53 state-operated ATCs than for the 42 locally operated Career and Technical Centers and local schools, making comparisons difficult. The Area Technology Centers are funded utilizing a combination of federal Perkins money and state SEEK and General Fund dollars. State operated ATCs receive no foundational SEEK dollars but do receive special funding for personnel and a portion of operating expenses through a separate SEEK allocation. ATCs apply to the state for these funds and

allocations are made based on the number of fulltime equivalent (FTE) students enrolled in 3-hour (half-day) courses at the center divided into the total state amount available in that year. (See program information under Career and Technical Education section of this report).

Kentucky School for the Blind

The Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) provides comprehensive educational services to all Kentucky students who are blind and visually impaired, birth to 21. In addition to the residential program located in Louisville, KSB supports local school districts in reducing barriers for students with visual impairment needs through its outreach program. The outreach program provides a Low Vision Clinic throughout the state, family support services (including collaboration with other agencies) and other programs, including a summer postsecondary preparation program on a college campus. In addition, KSB has consultants in eight regions which provide

- mentoring for new visual impairment teachers;
- workshops and trainings;
- assessments;
- consultation and technical assistance; and
- visual impairment cadre meetings.





The Kentucky Instructional Materials Resource Center provides textbooks in braille and large print and other educational materials needed by students who are blind and visually impaired for use in local school programs.

When it was founded in 1842, KSB was the third state-supported school for the blind established in the United States. Today, it continues to help all Kentucky students who are blind and visually

impaired to develop their talents, their skills and attitudes to become confident, competent and independent adults.

Kentucky School for the Deaf

The Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) ensures that deaf and hard of hearing children and youth in Kentucky have educational opportunities to develop their potential to become educated, life-long learners and productive citizens. In partnership with families, local school districts, and other service providers, KSD functions as a statewide educational center.

KSD provides several programs for Kentucky’s deaf and hard of hearing students. These include an instructional program for students from kindergarten through the 12th grade, a residential student life program at its campus in Danville, and an outreach program.

Through the instructional program, students from diverse backgrounds grow educationally and emotionally, get involved, and have a meaningful educational experience. The curriculum, course offerings, and extra-curricular offerings are student centered.



The student life program is a wonderful place for students to live during their time at KSD. Depending on the distance students live from KSD, they may become residential students or they may become day students who are transported daily to and from school. Dorm students normally arrive on campus on Sunday afternoons at 5 p.m. and leave on Fridays at 1 p.m. The student life staff provides assistance with homework, plans activities after regular school hours and provides supervision for students when they are not in classes.

The outreach program consists of two parts: center-based and regional programs. The center-based program provides student evaluations for deaf and hard of hearing students across Kentucky, an interpreting department and a family support program. The regional program provides consultation and support services to schools across Kentucky who have deaf and hard of hearing students.

Kentucky Department of Education



The Kentucky Department of Education is a service agency of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The department provides resources and guidance to Kentucky's public schools and districts as they implement the state's P-12 education requirements. The department also serves as the state liaison for federal education requirements and funding opportunities.

The department's major activities include:

- administering the statewide assessment and accountability system;
- providing technical assistance to schools and districts in the areas of finance, management and curriculum;
- providing support and information to the Kentucky Board of Education as it promulgates state education regulations;
- overseeing the state's education technology system; and
- monitoring school and district compliance with state and federal laws.

The department is organized into seven offices and the Office of the Commissioner. Work is led by the commissioner and planning committee, which is comprised of an associate commissioner from each office, the executive director for the Kentucky Board of Education, communications director, legislative policy advisor and the chief performance officer, who also oversees strategic planning for the department. The work of the department is integrated and is seldom confined to just one office.

Excluding the Office of Career and Technical Education, currently the department employs 513 full-time employees (about 13 percent minorities), of which 319 make up the Frankfort-based full time workforce. This is among the lowest number of employees in nearly two decades and compares with 837 total and 538 Frankfort-based employees at the end of the year in 1999, when department employment was at the highest levels in the last 17 years.

The Office of Career and Technical Education employs 608 full time employees (about 2 percent minorities), which includes Frankfort-based staff as well as those employed in the 53 Area Technology Centers. Due to factors such as geographic location, demographics and position requirements, recruitment of minority staffing is difficult, though minority recruitment efforts are ongoing.

According to the 2016 customer service survey, 92 percent of customer contacts with the department are handled in a professional manner with the majority of requests coming from district and school personnel via e-mail.