



Commonwealth of  
Kentucky  
Office of the  
Governor

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **120 School Districts Honored at ‘Graduate Kentucky’ Celebration**

*Leaders recognize districts that adopted policy to keep students in school until 18<sup>th</sup> birthdays or graduation, celebrate success of ‘Blitz to 96’*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 8, 2013)** – Governor Steve Beshear, First Lady Jane Beshear and Education Commissioner Terry Holliday honored school boards across Kentucky that raced to adopt the new “Graduate Kentucky” standard, keeping students in school until they earn a high school diploma or turn 18.

To date, 120 Kentucky local boards of education have voted to raise the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18. Gov. Beshear honored representatives from each district with an official Certificate of Recognition for their swift action in adopting the new policy.

“We stand here today to thank and honor the many dedicated school boards throughout the Commonwealth who showed their support by adopting this graduation policy so quickly,” said Gov. Beshear. “In Kentucky, we fight every day to find better ways to educate our children, and this graduation bill implementation marks an historic moment in our efforts. I am so proud of the high value our state has put on education by putting faith in our students.”

Senate Bill 97 (SB 97), known as the “Graduate Kentucky” bill, passed earlier this year and phases in an increase in the compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 18. SB 97 stated that implementation would be voluntary until 55 percent—or 96—of the state’s schooldistricts adopted the policy.

On June 25, the first day local boards of education could vote to adopt SB97, leaders launched “Blitz to 96” – an effort to get 96 school districts to adopt the “Graduate Kentucky” standard as soon as possible. Within two weeks, the 96 district threshold had

been reached and as a result, the remainder of Kentucky’s 174 districts must now adopt and implement the standard no later than the 2017-18 school year.

Students who graduate from an accredited or an approved four-year high school before they turn 18 are exempt from the new policy.

“Today is the result of more than five years of hard work by education advocates across Kentucky who were willing to stand up for change in our state,” said Mrs. Beshear. “I know that implementing this graduation bill was an uphill battle, and I want to thank the many educators, administrators, community leaders, parents and others who have supported this policy along the way. Raising the compulsory school attendance age from 16 to 18 is an important step in affording our children the opportunity to succeed.”

The first 96 districts to adopt the “Graduation Bill” standard earned \$10,000 grants from the Kentucky Department of Education to help plan for full implementation in the 2015-1616 school year.

“Once again, we are grateful to the Governor and First Lady for their leadership, and we salute the districts that have recognized the important impact the Graduation Bill will have on students,” said Commissioner Holliday. “Passing a policy raising the compulsory school age to 18 is a good start. Now, we must work collaboratively – school boards and districts, communities, the Department of Education and the General Assembly – to support and ensure meaningful implementation of these policies so all of our students will reach the goal of becoming college/career-ready by the time they graduate high school.”

Research shows that high school graduates live longer, are less likely to be teen parents, and are more likely to raise healthier, better-educated children. High school graduates are also less likely to commit crimes, rely on government healthcare or use other public services.

“The legislature worked for several years on this bill with the Governor,” said Sen. David Givens. “I am pleased that we came to a bipartisan solution driven by local districts saying they were ready and providing a transition period for schools to implement supports for at-risk students.”

“I think the quick implementation of this law speaks volumes about our school districts’ desire to truly tackle this issue,” said Rep. Jeff Greer. “I want to thank them for taking this major step, which will pay dividends for generations to come. I also deeply appreciate the hard work and leadership Governor and First Lady Beshear provided, and the overwhelming support shown by my House and Senate colleagues. This law will long be remembered as a watershed moment for education. I’m proud I could play a role in it.”

A list of school districts which have adopted the new compulsory attendance age follows, as reported to the Kentucky Department of Education through its online system as of Aug. 5, 2013 at 2:25 p.m.

Adair County	Estill County	Mason County
Anchorage Independent	Fayette County	Mayfield Independent
Anderson County	Floyd County	McCracken County
Augusta Independent	Frankfort Independent	Meade County

Barbourville Independent	Franklin County	Menifee County
Bardstown Independent	Fulton County	Mercer County
Barren County	Fulton Independent	Metcalfe County
Bath County	Garrard County	Monroe County
Bell County	Glasgow Independent	Montgomery County
Bellevue Independent	Graves County	Morgan County
Berea Independent	Grayson County	Muhlenberg County
Bourbon County	Green County	Murray Independent
Bowling Green Independent	Greenup County	Nelson County
Boyd County	Hancock County	Nicholas County
Boyle County	Hardin County	Owensboro Independent
Bracken County	Harlan County	Owsley County
Breathitt County	Harrison County	Paducah Independent
Breckenridge County	Hart County	Paris Independent
Bullitt County	Hazard Independent	Pendleton County
Burgin Independent	Henderson County	Pineville Independent
Campbell County	Henry County	Powell County
Campbellsville Independent	Hopkins County	Pulaski County
Carroll County	Jackson Independent	Rowan County
Carter County	Jefferson County	Russell County
Casey County	Johnson County	Russell Independent
Christian County	Kenton County	Russellville Independent
Clark County	Knox County	Scott County
Clay County	LaRue County	Shelby County
Cloverport Independent	Lawrence County	Simpson County
Corbin Independent	Lee County	Somerset Independent
Covington Independent	Leslie County	Spencer County
Cumberland County	Lewis County	Taylor County
Danville Independent	Lincoln County	Trigg County
Dawson Springs Independent	Livingston County	Union County
Dayton Independent	Logan County	Warren County
Edmonson County	Ludlow Independent	Washington County
Elizabethtown Independent	Madison County	Whitley County
Elliott County	Marion County	Williamsburg Independent
Eminence Independent	Marshall County	Wolfe County
Erlanger-Elsmere Independent	Martin County	Woodford County

More information about Graduate Kentucky and resources available to school districts is available at [www.graduate.ky.gov](http://www.graduate.ky.gov).

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