



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Office of the Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kerri Richardson
502.564.2611
502.330.6633

Terry Sebastian
502.564.2611
502.229.6130

Nancy Rodriguez
502.564.2000

‘Blitz to 96’ a Success; Age 18 Policy to Be Implemented Statewide

96 school boards and counting adopt policy to keep students in school until 18th birthdays or graduation; triggers change for school districts across the Commonwealth

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 10, 2013) – Governor Steve Beshear, First Lady Jane Beshear and Education Commissioner Terry Holliday today commended 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.

Just two weeks after they could vote to raise the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18, 96 school districts have adopted the policy and more are in the process of approving it.

“After five years of hard work by Commissioner Holliday, the First Lady and others to implement raising the compulsory graduation age to 18, I am overwhelmed by the support our school boards have shown by racing to adopt this policy,” said Gov. Beshear. “We know that keeping our students in school will not only offer them a better future, but will ensure that Kentucky has a better-trained, better-prepared workforce that will benefit the state for decades to come. Implementing this important policy shows that Kentucky puts a high value 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, amending the school attendance law created in 1934.

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

SB 97 made adoption voluntary until 55 percent—or 96—of the state’s school districts adopt the policy. Since that threshold has been reached, the remainder of Kentucky’s 173 districts must now adopt and implement a compulsory attendance age of 18 no later than the 2017-18 school year.

Two weeks ago, leaders launched “Blitz to 96” – an effort to get 96 school districts to adopt the higher compulsory attendance age as soon as possible. June 25 was the first day local boards of education could adopt the “Graduate Kentucky” standard; within the first 48 hours, 58 districts had voted to implement the policy and within the first week, 75 districts had done so.

“We achieved our goal much faster than we anticipated,” said Mrs. Beshear, who championed the ‘Graduate Kentucky’ legislation. “The effort speaks so highly of the dedicated school boards, administrators, parents, teachers and communities who have made high school graduation a top priority for our students.”

Planning grants of \$10,000 are being provided through the Kentucky Department of Education to the first 96 school districts that joined the effort to reach the 55 percent threshold. The funds are designed to be used to plan for full implementation of the policy in the 2015-16 school year.

”We are excited that so many of our boards and districts have taken quick action to raise the compulsory school attendance age to 18,” Commissioner Holliday said. “Although we have reached the maximum number of planning grants that we can fund, we would still encourage all districts to pass a policy this school year so that more students will stay in school and on track to college- and career-readiness at an earlier date. It is the right thing to do for our students and the right thing for Kentucky.”

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.

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 12:46 p.m. on July 9.

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Adair County | 33. Estill County | 65. Mayfield Independent |
| 2. Augusta Independent | 34. Floyd County | 66. McCracken County |
| 3. Barbourville Independent | 35. Franklin County | 67. Menifee County |
| 4. Barren County | 36. Fulton County | 68. Mercer County |
| 5. Bath County | 37. Fulton Independent | 69. Metcalfe County |
| 6. Bell County | 38. Garrard County | 70. Monroe County |
| 7. Bellevue Independent | 39. Glasgow Independent | 71. Montgomery County |
| 8. Berea Independent | 40. Graves County | 72. Morgan County |

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| 9. Bourbon County | 41. Green County | 73. Murray Independent |
| 10. Bowling Green Independent | 42. Greenup County | 74. Nelson County |
| 11. Boyd County | 43. Hancock County | 75. Nicholas County |
| 12. Boyle County | 44. Hardin County | 76. Owensboro Independent |
| 13. Bracken County | 45. Harrison County | 77. Owsley County |
| 14. Breathitt County | 46. Hart County | 78. Paducah Independent |
| 15. Bullitt County | 47. Hazard Independent | 79. Paris Independent |
| 16. Burgin Independent | 48. Henry County | 80. Pendleton County |
| 17. Campbellsville Independent | 49. Hopkins County | 81. Powell County |
| 18. Carter County | 50. Jackson Independent | 82. Pulaski County |
| 19. Casey County | 51. Jefferson County | 83. Rowan County |
| 20. Christian County | 52. Johnson County | 84. Russell County |
| 21. Clay County | 53. Kenton County | 85. Russell Independent |
| 22. Cloverport Independent | 54. Knox County | 86. Scott County |
| 23. Corbin Independent | 55. LaRue County | 87. Simpson County |
| 24. Covington Independent | 56. Lawrence County | 88. Somerset Independent |
| 25. Danville Independent | 57. Leslie County | 89. Spencer County |
| 26. Dawson Springs Independent | 58. Lewis County | 90. Taylor County |
| 27. Dayton Independent | 59. Lincoln County | 91. Trigg County |
| 28. Edmonson County | 60. Livingston County | 92. Union County |
| 29. Elizabethtown Independent | 61. Logan County | 93. Warren County |
| 30. Elliot County | 62. Marion County Public | 94. Washington County |
| 31. Eminence Independent | 63. Marshall County | 95. Williamsburg Independent |
| 32. Erlanger-Elsmere Indep. | 64. Mason County | 96. Wolfe County |

More information about Graduate Kentucky and resources available to school districts is available at www.graduate.ky.gov.

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