



Four Years of Progress in Kentucky Public Education (2009-2013)*

- **Implemented Senate Bill 1 (2009).** This legislation raised the bar on public education in Kentucky in an effort to better prepare students for success in college and postsecondary endeavors.
 - **Adopted and implemented new academic standards in English/language arts and mathematics (2011) and science (2013).** The new Kentucky Core Academic Standards define the minimum that Kentucky students are expected to know at every grade level. These standards are more rigorous than previous standards and are aligned with college/career-expectations. They promote creative and critical thinking over rote memorization, and prepare students with the problem solving, collaboration, creativity and communication skills that today's jobs demand.
 - **Created a system of Leadership Networks.** The networks are designed to support the high-quality implementation of Senate Bill 1(2009). By involving teachers and leaders from every district in the state along with staff from the Kentucky Department of Education, education cooperatives and higher education, the regional networks build the capacity of each school district as it implements the Kentucky's Core Academic Standards and aligned assessments, develops assessment literacy among all educators and works toward ensuring that every student is college- and career-ready.
 - **Implemented new assessments, Program Reviews and a balanced accountability system.** New, more meaningful assessments aligned with college/career-readiness standards include both formative assessments that inform instruction as well as summative assessments of student performance and progress. Program Reviews in arts and humanities, practical living/career studies and writing ensure student learning opportunities in subjects critical to a well-rounded education and support program improvement. The Unbridled Learning Accountability System more accurately reflects all the major elements that define school and district success and ultimately impact student success.
 - **Created an online School Report Card.** In an effort to increase transparency and encourage improvement, an online data base provides key performance and other school, district and state education information to parents and the public.
- **Secured flexibility (federal waivers) on some provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).** Federal waivers allow Kentucky to have a single accountability system that is based on more than just proficiency and promotes continuous improvement rather than labeling schools and districts pass or fail. It reveals student learning gaps that were unintentionally masked under No Child Left Behind. Waivers provide districts more flexibility in the use of federal dollars for school improvement and promote increased educator effectiveness through professional growth and development.
- **Won a \$17 million Race to the Top grant.** The money was used for professional learning and to support implementation of new standards (see next item on CIITS) and to expand AdvanceKentucky sites, which provide access to, preparation for and successful student participation in Advanced Placement (AP) Courses.
- **Developed and implemented the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS).** This online technology platform brings together academic standards, instructional materials, formative assessments, student performance results, educator evaluation and prescriptive professional learning into a one-stop shop to support student and educator improvement. The system is registering more than one million logins each month.
- **Piloted and implemented a common Kindergarten readiness screener statewide.** Kentucky's public schools and teachers use the screener results to ensure that all children receive the support they need to be successful in school. Communities use the data to help support parents and the development of high quality early learning opportunities for young children.
- **Created a process to encourage innovative approaches to raising student achievement.** "Districts of Innovation," created by House Bill 37 (2012), offers Kentucky public school districts the opportunity to come up with new or creative alternatives to existing instructional and administrative practices, while providing relief from certain administrative regulations and statutory provisions in an effort to improve student learning.
- **Established the Fund for Transforming Education in Kentucky.** This independent 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation is designed to help support innovative strategies in Kentucky public schools, promoting creative and collaborative solutions by conducting research, spurring dialogue, incubating innovative ideas, brokering partnerships and scaling promising practices. The Fund seeks dollars to provide support to school districts outside of traditional state, federal and local sources.
- **Implemented a statewide working conditions survey of school-based educators.** Results from the biennial Teaching Empowering, Leading, and Learning Survey (TELL) are used to improve working conditions for educators which directly impact learning conditions for students. In 2013 more than 44,000 educators took part, about an 87 percent response rate.

*Any future progress is threatened due to funding challenges.

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Four Years of Progress in Kentucky Public Education (2009-2013) – continued

- **Implemented a comprehensive system of school and district improvement and support.** House Bill 176 (2010) provided much-needed interventions in the state’s lowest-performing schools. Now, Kentucky is able to offer school districts more options to help them improve. The process of improvement planning for all schools is used as the means of determining how schools and districts plan to ensure that all students graduate college- and career-ready. A best practices website provides a platform for sharing what works best.
- **Developed, field tested and piloted a new Professional Growth and Effectiveness System for teachers, principals and superintendents.** The system defines effectiveness, uses multiple measures and focuses on educator support, professional learning and continuous improvement to ensure every student is taught by an effective teacher, every school is led by an effective principal and every district is run by an effective superintendent. The superintendent system also provides the public with additional transparency of local board of education decisions and district operations.
- **Implemented a fair and consistent way to assess school facilities.** The Kentucky Facilities Inventory and Classification System assesses the physical condition, educational suitability and technology readiness of the schools to guide funding decisions.
- **Raised the compulsory school age to 18.** Senate Bill 97 (2013) cleared the way for districts to adopt a policy raising the compulsory school age to 18 starting in the 2015-16 school year. To date, 139 of the state’s 173 school districts have done so. The new compulsory school age policy will become mandatory statewide in the 2017-18 school year.
- **Increased the percentage of students graduating from high school.** In 2013, Kentucky moved to a cohort graduation rate, the same as what most other states use and a more accurate way to measure the number of students who graduate. Kentucky’s rate of 86 percent is among the highest in the nation.
- **Increased the percentage of students ready for college and careers.** More than half of graduating students (54 percent) are now considered ready to take credit-bearing college courses or a postsecondary training program. The rate is up 20 percent from 2010. In cooperation with the Department of Workforce Development, KDE designed and implemented Operation Preparation, a community-based advising program for 8th- and 10th-grade students. KDE also partnered with the Lt. Governor’s office to expand “Close the Deal” to more districts across the state. The program is aimed at challenging high school seniors, especially in districts with low college-going rates, to pursue additional education after graduation.
- **Reforming Career and Technical Education.** Kentucky is in the process of developing and implementing a new model of secondary career and technical education with an emphasis on innovation and integration of core academics, 21st-century skills, project-based learning and the establishment of full-time career and technical education (CTE) programs. This effort recognizes career and technical education as a viable alternative career pathway for students.
- **Implementing a statewide electronic transcript service.** eTranscript, makes it easier for students to submit high school transcripts to colleges. The system is free to students attending all in-state and many out-of-state colleges.
- **Increased student achievement.**
 - In 2013, overall student performance improved from 2012 with the percentage of proficient and distinguished students increasing in nearly every subject at every grade level on state assessments.
 - On the National Assessment of Educational Progress, Kentucky 4th graders and 8th graders continue to outperform their peers nationally in reading even with the inclusion of more students with special needs. In science, 4th and 8th graders scored significantly above the national average.
 - More students, including more minority students, are taking Advanced Placement tests and scoring higher.
 - High school graduates’ overall composite scores on the ACT increased as did their performance in every subject; the percentage of students meeting Council on Postsecondary Education benchmarks is also up in all subjects.
- **Earned national recognition for education improvement.**
 - In *Education Week’s* annual Quality Counts report of key education indicators, Kentucky ranked 10th, moving up from 34th place in 2010. This reflects efforts to improve teaching, raise student achievement and many other variables related to public education.
 - A Harvard study ranked Kentucky eighth in student performance improvement in the last two decades.
 - According to the Data Quality Campaign, Kentucky has implemented all but one of ten actions to ensure effective data use among teachers, policymakers and parents -- making it among the state leaders in effective educational data use. The average among states was 6.6 actions; only two states had implemented all ten.

