



Steven L. Beshear  
Governor

Terry Holliday, Ph.D.  
Interim Commissioner of Education

**EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CABINET  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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March 18, 2014

Stephen E. Gilmore, Superintendent  
Ashland Independent Schools  
1820 Hickman Street  
Ashland, KY 41105-3000

Dear Superintendent Gilmore,

As we make changes to address the needs of our students, we encounter the walls of the past. One goal of Kentucky Statewide Consolidated Monitoring (KSCM) is to help remove those walls wherever possible and create opportunities for the programs in our schools and districts to look at new ways to collaborate and collectively meet our ultimate goal: increasing student achievement while closing gaps and positioning our students to be college- and career-ready. The team members from your visit have engaged in this collaborative process in order to produce the attached Consolidated Monitoring Report.

During the 2013-14 school year, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) conducted monitoring in Ashland Independent school district. During this process, KDE program staff, utilizing program-specific monitoring tools, conducted on-site visits for the following programs:

- Title I, Part A
- Title II, Part A
- Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)
- Kentucky Preschool Program
- Alternative Programs
- Career and Technology Education

Each program involved in the KSCM has an impact on our goal.

For example, Career and Technical Education (CTE) impacts student success and helps to close the achievement gap by working to make all students career ready. Through the use of a sequence of courses known as career pathways, CTE ensures that all students have equal opportunity to develop skills in demand by local industry.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) supports the vision of KDE by focusing the efforts of the state, districts, schools and teachers toward closing achievement gaps for students with disabilities and ensuring all students reach proficiency, graduate from high school, and successfully transition to a career or postsecondary education.

Title II, Part A focuses on improving teacher and principal quality to ensure that all students have equal access to highly qualified and effective teachers and leaders. Title I programs provide not only funding but guidance on working with disadvantaged students.

Simply by reducing duplication of effort, these programs and the others engaged in consolidated monitoring can work together to achieve more collaboratively than any of them could alone.

This report is the result of what can be best described as a “snapshot” of the district taken during our visit. It begins with identifying “Effective Practices”. These are practices that the individual programs felt were effective, and in some cases innovative. We strongly suggest that the practices identified be submitted to the KDE Best Practices website.

In addition, the monitoring team collectively discussed the findings and concerns of each program to identify what is categorized as “Common Concerns”. This represents a consolidation of findings reported by individual programs that were similar in nature and therefore presented a potential opportunity for collaboration between identified programs. Each of these concerns has been identified by at least two programs. Any suggested or required actions will be addressed by the specified programs. During this collaborative time, team members from all programs discuss suggestions for potential opportunities to work across programs, streamline implementation and increase success within each program.

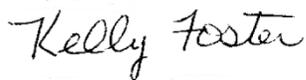
Each program has already provided an individual report as required by federal or state law. Any required actions are monitored by the programs through those individual reports. In order to help the collaborative work of the programs and provide districts with a way to document improvement efforts, we encourage you to utilize the Consolidated School and District Improvement Planning tools in ASSIST.

KDE is striving to provide examples of collaboration and continuous improvement. Our hope is that what we have begun becomes an example that can be replicated across the state.

Each district representative will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the consolidated monitoring process. In the meantime, if you have questions regarding specific program monitoring requirements, please contact the individual program contacts listed in this report. If you have questions concerning the consolidated monitoring process, please contact Claude W. Christian by e-mail at [claudewchristian@education.ky.gov](mailto:claudewchristian@education.ky.gov) or by phone at (502)564-3791. Information regarding education programs within the state of Kentucky may also be found at [www.education.ky.gov](http://www.education.ky.gov).

Thank you for your work in improving Kentucky’s education programs to better provide for our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Foster".

Kelly Foster, Ed.D.  
Associate Commissioner  
Office of Next Generation Schools and Districts

## 2013-2014 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

<b>District:</b>	<b>Ashland Independent</b>
<b>Date(s) of Visit:</b>	<b>January 14-16, 2014</b>
<b>Team Leads:</b> <i>(List primary person on this visit for each program)</i>	
<i>Title I</i> <b>Helen Jones</b>	<i>Preschool</i> <b>Sally Shepherd</b>
<i>Title II</i> <b>Jennifer Baker</b>	<i>Career and Technical Education</i> <b>Karla Tipton</b>
<i>Alternative Programs</i> <b>Tom Edgett</b>	<i>IDEA</i> <b>Christel Hockensmith</b>

### Highlight of Effective Practices

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	Title I	X	Preschool	X	Career and Technical Education
	Title II		IDEA	X	Alternative Programs
<i>Clearly describe actions and/or practices that the team deems as effective</i>					
<p><b>Parent Involvement</b></p> <p>The district pays the FRYSC coordinator one hour a week from Title I funds to work with Title I parent involvement. This is a creative use of spending that has allowed the schools to use an established community contact to increase parent engagement. In addition, it releases funds for use in other identified areas of need. Parent input and involvement was evident in special education due process files reviewed.</p> <p>Ashland Independent Preschool has a very strong family involvement component and support system. Various family involvement activities are scheduled throughout the school year to engage and involve families. Students of the program are targeted for the activities; however activities for all ages are planned and provided. The preschool program also collaborates with the FRYSC coordinator and Head Start to ensure families feel welcomed and a part of their child's school.</p>					

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### Common Issue

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	Title I	X	Preschool		Career and Technical Education	
	Title II	X	IDEA		Alternative Programs	X
<b>Common Issue</b> <i>(Clearly describe Issue and its connection to each program)</i>						
<p><b>Communication</b></p> <p>Communication between the coordinators at the school and district levels does not appear to be consistent. Communication between the programs may leave one person responsible for all of the information for several groups. This made it difficult to find the needed information and for specific coordinators to know what their programs were doing and needed to do.</p>						
<b>Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)</b>						
<p>A districtwide initiative would help address communication between programs. Program coordinators should have access to the information for their specific program(s). This would allow coordinators to share information directly in order to review effectiveness of programs and investigate opportunities for collaboration. This information could then be made available to the schools. This would expand knowledge of the programs and plans while helping the schools to better serve students.</p> <p>As there are variations in every school district, the regional co-op staff may be able to help with determining what forms of communication are most effective for Ashland Independent.</p>						

### Common Issue

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	Title I	X	Preschool		Career and Technical Education	X
	Title II	X	IDEA	X	Alternative Programs	X
<b>Common Issue</b> <i>(Clearly describe Issue and its connection to each program)</i>						
<p><b>Documentation/Records Retention</b></p> <p>There appears to be some inconsistency at both schools and the district regarding records retention and access. Specifically this is evident with federal programs and student monitoring. Currently, documentation and information is maintained by a small number of individuals.</p>						
<b>Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)</b>						
<p>The district could develop a process for maintenance of documentation, including student progress monitoring. A documentation and communication plan would allow for consistent and accurate information to be obtained and shared through the schools, to better serve the students. This could include maintenance of documentation for parent engagement in meetings, CSIP/CDIP planning, and with the school in general. It may also be helpful for the district to refer to the Kentucky Department for Library and Archives Records Retention Schedules for information.</p> <p><a href="http://kdla.ky.gov/records/retentionschedules/Pages/LocalRecordsSchedules.aspx">http://kdla.ky.gov/records/retentionschedules/Pages/LocalRecordsSchedules.aspx</a></p>						

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### Final Overview

Clearly describe the following:

- a. How programs are effectively working collaboratively to better serve students
- b. Suggestions for adjustments that could help programs begin or improve their collaborative efforts

**The FRYSC coordinator is doing a very effective job of reaching out to the parents of the community and getting them involved in the schools. This coordinator has a strong relationship with some of the more challenging families and neighborhoods in the district. The benefits of this work by the FRYSC coordinator makes its way into the schools and to the teachers and students, creating a more collaborative environment that better serves students. The state-funded preschool program works closely with the FRYSC coordinator and Head Start program to coordinate activities for preschool students and their families.**

Although there are some suggested adjustments to better document activities, the work with the FRYSC coordinator is commendable. Working in the community and with individual schools to increase and make parent engagement more effective is a model we would like to see shared across the state. It is recommended that Ashland Independent submits this process for review on the KDE Best Practices website. <http://education.ky.gov/school/bpsust/Pages/default.aspx>

It is evident that Ashland Independent is working to address the needs of its students. The district's use of innovative practices for parent engagement is just one example of their efforts. As Ashland continues to streamline and document its processes, the district will continue moving forward, establishing a blueprint for others to follow.