



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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MEDIA CONTACT: Nancy Rodriguez

Office: (502) 564-2000, ext. 4610 | **Cell:** (502) 330-5063 | **E-mail:** nancy.rodriguez@education.ky.gov

KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION BEGINS GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS REVAMP

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – The Kentucky Board of Education kicked off its examination of the state’s graduation requirements with a national overview of what other states are doing to ensure their high school graduates can successfully transition to careers and college.

The board will spend the next several months looking at ways to amend the [state’s minimum graduation requirements](#), which currently require students to earn 22 course credits in specific subject areas and other courses, like health and physical education. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is looking to implement the new requirements with the freshmen class entering high school in the fall of 2019.

“We want to learn as much as we can from other states, but I want us to be on the leading edge of this work as well,” said Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt.

Jennifer Zinth, director of high school and STEM with the Education Commission of the States, a nonpartisan policy organization based in Denver, Colorado, told board members Kentucky is among many states that are in the process of reviewing and upgrading their graduation requirements. She provided an overview of what other states are doing, including some that are opting to move away from students collecting credits based on courses completed to more competency-based models, which involve students progressing at their own pace based on when they can demonstrate they have obtained required skills and knowledge in specific subject areas. She also noted some states allow individual school districts to determine graduation requirements versus setting a common set of requirements at the state level.

Some members thought ceding more control to local districts could result in increased innovation and reflect the needs of local communities and businesses. Pruitt agreed flexibility and local involvement was important, but stressed there needs to be a balance.

“We want to make sure there is quality,” he said. “It really comes down to quality and the level of expectation.”

This spring, KDE convened a group of 80 shareholders from business and industry, postsecondary education, and K-12 teachers and leaders to identify the knowledge and skills a Kentucky graduate should have as he or she transitions out of high school. The profile will be used as a guide for the team of educators and education partners who will be developing and revising the graduation requirements.

Board member Alesa Johnson, who attended the group's first meeting, said her general sense from business representatives was that the state's current graduation requirements are not producing students "who are meeting their needs."

"I think we are headed in the right direction, engaging with all the stakeholders," she said.

In addition to that group's work, Pruitt will host a series of Town Hall meetings across Kentucky focused on high school graduation requirements. Those meetings, which begin this week, will allow educators, parents, students, business representatives and community members to share their thoughts on what they think high school graduates should be able to know, do and experience to be ready for postsecondary education and/or a career.

During the meeting, the board also:

- approved a Statement of Consideration for 703 KAR 5:280, School Improvement procedures
- reappointed Pete Galloway to the Kentucky High School Athletics Association (KHSAA) Board of Control
- approved 2018-19 Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education State Plan
- approved a request for an Alternative Model of School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) from Mt. Sterling Elementary School (Montgomery County)
- approved a request for a waiver of 702 KAR 7:140, Section 4, from the Marshall County school district
- approved a request for a waiver from 702 KAR 5:060, Section 6(2), from the Fort Thomas Independent school district

The board also awarded the 2018 Dr. Johnnie Grissom Award to Dr. Soraya Matthews, director of curriculum, instruction and assessment for the Fayette County Public Schools. The 2018 Dr. Samuel Robinson Award was presented to the Black Males Working (BMW) Academy program in Lexington.

The board's Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Committee held the first reading of the Kentucky Academic Standards for Historical and Cultural Influences of the Bible Elective Social Studies Course, an elective course for grades 9 and up that was created with the passage of HB128 (2017). Similar electives have been taught in several schools previously, but this is the first time standards have been created for the course.

The course has to follow applicable laws and federal and state guidelines in maintaining religious neutrality, said Todd Allen, a KDE attorney. Courses are secular and shall not endorse, favor, promote and particular religion or faith, he said. The proposed standards will be brought back to the board for a second reading at the June meeting.

During the meeting, the board also received updates on:

- the 2018 Session of the Kentucky General Assembly
- local school districts finances
- state management in Breathitt and Menifee School Districts
- the 2018-2020 Executive Budget Recommendation regarding P-12 education
- Audit Report of the Commissioner and KBE Expenses for July-December 2017
- 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results

Visit the board portal at <http://portal.ksba.org/public/Agency.aspx?PublicAgencyID=4388&AgencyTypeID=1> to access the agenda and supporting materials online. The next regular meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education is scheduled for June 6 in Frankfort.

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