



## KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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### **KENTUCKY'S PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT IS APPROVED**

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has approved Kentucky's Consolidated State Plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

The plan outlines how the state will implement federal title programs, hold schools accountable, ensure equity and promote success for every Kentucky student.

"I am pleased that the United States Department of Education has approved Kentucky's plan. The plan's development included engagement with thousands of Kentuckians from K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, families, businesses, education partners, policymakers and communities," Interim Commissioner of Education Wayne Lewis said. "I am most excited that the plan includes an unprecedented focus on closing Kentucky's achievement gaps, emphasis on students' readiness for success in careers and postsecondary education, and a much more transparent and easy to understand rating system for schools."

At the heart of Kentucky's state plan is a new accountability system. The system includes multiple indicators including:

- student **proficiency** in the academic areas of reading, mathematics, science, social studies, and writing;
- a student's **growth** toward proficiency in reading and math, and when applicable English language (elementary and middle schools only);
- **a combination of graduation rates (four- and five-year) will be used** at high school;
- **transition readiness** that includes whether a student has attained the knowledge, skills and dispositions to successfully transition to postsecondary education or careers, and when applicable, progress toward English language proficiency
- **achievement gap closure** centers reducing current significant disparities between the performance of student demographic groups
- **opportunity and access** to a rich curriculum beyond math and reading; gifted and talented services and rigorous coursework; and school quality as measured by chronic absenteeism, behavior events and the incidents of restraint and seclusion.

"While Kentucky's accountability system relies heavily on the results of state assessments, it also incorporates measures of a rich curriculum – including the visual and performing arts, health and physical education, cultural studies and/or world language," Lewis said.

(more)

Under the plan, 2017-18 will be a transition year whereby performance on the indicators for which data is available will be used to determine low-performing schools and whether targeted support and improvement (TSI) or comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) will be provided. TSI schools include those where any particular subgroup of students – English-language learners, students in special education, racial or ethnic minorities, or disadvantaged children – are performing significantly lower than their peers. CSI schools are those in the bottom 5 percent of performers in the state, those where more than a third of students don't graduate, and those where subgroups of students are chronically underperforming. Under ESSA, Kentucky must set aside at least 7 percent of its Title I funds for school improvement, and allocate that money to districts.

The system will be fully implemented in the 2018-19 school year when performance on all of the indicators will combine and lead to a one to five star designation for a school or district. A school with significant achievement gaps will be disqualified from earning the highest ratings. The system also includes measures that will be reported only to provide a broader view of performance and information that can be used for improvement.

Kentucky's plan includes ambitious interim and long-term goals on which to measure progress. Goals include:

- increasing academic achievement significantly for all students
- cutting the achievement gap for each student group in half by 2030
- increasing the graduation rate significantly for all students and each student group
- increasing the proportion of English language learners making significant progress toward proficiency in the English language

"The state's new accountability system will hold schools and districts to a higher level of accountability," Lewis said.

"Raising the bar is essential if Kentucky is to make the strides in student performance we intend to make."

Other highlights include:

- The accountability system promotes a well-rounded educational experience by including student performance in science, social studies and writing.
- Additional measures that have a critical impact on student achievement are reported only (not included in schools' ratings) such as access to quality state-funded preschool; half-day vs. full-day kindergarten; the percentage of first-year teachers; teacher turnover; teachers with certifications in their specialized area; career counselors/coaches; out-of-school suspensions; and whole child supports such as access to a school-based counselor or mental health services provider; nurse or health services provider; librarian/media specialist; a family resource/youth service center.
- The growth indicator is based on individual students' progress toward proficiency.
- Special attention has been given to ensure the accountability system is fair, reliable, minimizes "gaming" and reduces other unintended consequences.
- The accountability system includes an optional competency-based education and assessment pilot with a commitment to ensure students master standards.
- The proposed accountability system is intended to be flexible so it can adapt without requiring extensive modifications as new assessments are implanted and/or additional measures for the system are developed.

(more)

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Lewis said a new online school report card will reflect the changes in the accountability system, be more visually engaging and present a more complete and transparent story of each school – its strengths and opportunities for improvement. Parents will still receive individual student reports based on their child’s performance on state assessments.

Kentucky’s plan to use federal funds underscores the agency’s belief that the best way to improve student achievement is to increase the effectiveness of educators who are closest to students. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) will provide support for implementation of rigorous standards, educator effectiveness and improved student achievement through strong investment in educators, especially principals who are well-prepared and supported to lead the professional development of other educators.

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