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BOARD DEFINES SCHOOL PERFORMANCE LEVELS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY; CONTINUES BREATHITT MANAGEMENT; DISCUSSES GRAD REQUIREMENTS

(Frankfort, KY) – The Kentucky Board of Education approved school performance levels for 2018 federal and state accountability during a special meeting in Frankfort today.

By law, the state must identify schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) – those in the bottom 5 percent at each level (elementary, middle, and high school) or high schools with a 4-year graduation rate of less than 80 percent – and schools for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) – those with any student group performing as low as CSI schools.

For fall 2018 reporting, schools will be identified based on their performance on three indicators.

Last month, a group of education stakeholders and policymakers evaluated school performance data from the 2017-2018 school year, considered the relative weight ranges for each indicator established by the Kentucky Board of Education, and made a recommendation on the threshold cutscores for each indicator. Interim Commissioner of Education Wayne Lewis made a slight modification to that in his recommendation, which the board approved today. Not all indicator scores are based on a 100-point scale.

School Level	Indicator	CSI Cutscore
Elementary	Proficiency (reading and math scores)	60.5
	Separate Academic Indicator (science, social studies and writing scores)	52.6
	Growth (progress toward proficiency in reading and math; English attainment for English learners)	15.8
Middle	Proficiency (reading and math scores)	62
	Separate Academic Indicator (science, social studies and writing scores)	55
	Growth (progress toward proficiency in reading and math; English attainment for English learners)	9.5
High	Proficiency (reading and math scores)	40
	Transition Rate (academic and career readiness excluding dual credit and verification of exceptional work experience; English learner attainment of English proficiency).	41
	Graduation Rate (average of 4- and 5-year rates)	85

A school in the bottom 5 percent that falls below the recommended score on every indicator for its grade

range will be designated CSI. The CSI threshold cutscores will be applied to identify schools for TSI. All remaining schools will be identified as “Other” for fall 2018 accountability reporting.

Based on preliminary data and the approved cutscores, 50 schools would be designated for CSI based on the federal requirement to identify the bottom 5 percent of Title I schools; about 45-50 percent of all schools would be designated for TSI.

“To be clear, a school’s designation as TSI does not mean the school is failing or a low-performing school,” Lewis said. “It does mean that work remains to be done with raising the achievement levels for all groups of students, and it makes reducing the disparities between the performance of student groups a top priority.”

All CSI and TSI schools will be required to develop improvement plans and will be provided additional support. Support will be tiered, based on the designation, the needs of the school and the capacity of the department.

“There are many things the legislature funded this year that I appreciate, but one terrible oversight was eliminating the School Improvement Fund and that, in and of itself, hamstringing this department,” board member Gary Houchens said. “It is something that needs to be addressed in future state budgets to make sure if we are going to say we value education and we want to turn around these low performing schools, resources are in place to do that.”

The names of the schools and their accountability designations and associated data will be released later this month once data are verified through the final quality control process.

Breathitt Co. Schools State Management

In other action, the board approved continuing state management of Breathitt Co. Schools. In 2012, the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) designated Breathitt a state-managed district after a comprehensive management audit found a pattern of a significant lack of effectiveness and efficiency in the governance and administration of the school district. After a subsequent audit in 2014, the board extended state management in the district. Lewis said while the district has shown great improvement, a November 2017 management audit prompted him to recommend state management be extended once again. Lewis said the state does not want to exit before the district has the capacity to sustain improvement.

The Breathitt Co. Board of Education supported Interim Commissioner Lewis’ recommendation. It calls for the Kentucky Department of Education to conduct another management audit next year, at which point the district could continue under state management, move into state assistance or be done with state intervention entirely.

Board Policy Change

Also at its meeting, the board unanimously voted to approve a change in board policy that would allow the board chair and vice chair to serve as voting members of all standing board committees.

High School Graduation Requirements

The board also discussed changing minimum high school graduation requirements. Under the proposal that first

came before the board in August, students would need to complete a minimum of 22 credits including:

- English I and II AND two additional English language arts credits aligned with the student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- Algebra I and Geometry AND two additional mathematics credits aligned with the student's ILP
- 3 credits social studies (at least 1 aligned with the student's ILP)
- 3 credits science (at least 1 aligned with the student's ILP)
- 1 credit visual and performing arts
- ½ credit physical education
- ½ credit health
- 6 additional credits aligned with the student's ILP

Students also would have to demonstrate proficiency in reading and mathematics, pass a civics exam, receive instruction in financial literacy, demonstrate competency in essential skills and technology, and demonstrate academic or career readiness as defined in the state's accountability system.

Despite dropping a requirement for all students to take Algebra II, Lewis says the state is not lowering the bar for students to get a high school diploma.

"What we are proposing is raising the bar higher than it's ever been in this state," Lewis said. "We are eliminating the days when we are saying one thing, but the reality is something completely different. Kids were graduating having passed Algebra II, but without the skills to perform basic math. When we grant a high school diploma to a student in Kentucky, regardless of where he or she graduates from, we're going to have some basic assurances about what that kids' skill levels are and that he or she is prepared to be successful in that next step."

"I am so thrilled that the high school diploma is finally going to mean something," board member Kathy Gornik said. "This is the best gift we could give to the students of Kentucky."

The board is scheduled to vote on new high school graduation requirements at its meeting in October. If approved, the new requirements would take effect for the freshman class entering high school in fall 2019.

Board Committees

Materials from today's meeting are available on the [board's meeting portal](#).

The next regular Kentucky Board of Education meeting is scheduled for October 2-3 in Frankfort.

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