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ACHIEVEMENT REMAINS FLAT. GAPS PERSIST IN KENTUCKY SCHOOLS

(Frankfort, KY) – The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) today released 2017-2018 student assessment results, and also identified the state’s lowest performing schools as well as those struggling to meet the needs of specific groups of students.

In all, KDE identified 51 schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), meaning they are in the bottom 5 percent of schools at their level (elementary, middle or high) in the state or had a graduation rate below 80 percent.

“CSI schools are, by definition, the lowest performing schools in the state,” said Interim Commissioner of Education Wayne Lewis. “Being on this list means that a significant shift must be undertaken to better address student learning. This is not about shaming schools, leaders, or teachers, but these schools can neither continue doing what they have always done, nor make only minor adjustments.”

CSI schools will receive state support in the current school year to help them improve.

Another 418 schools were identified for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) as a result of having at least one student group performing as poorly as schools in the bottom 5 percent. Schools not identified as CSI or TSI are identified as “Other” this year.

Lewis said being identified as TSI allows schools to focus on raising achievement for groups of students who have been underserved, and may have previously been hidden by overall school achievement data.

“It is an imperative that we ensure every group of students is performing at high levels. We can’t leave groups of students behind,” he said. “This is a moral issue. Our expectation must be that all of our students can learn at high levels, regardless of income, gender, race/ethnicity, or disability status. It is schools’ responsibility to identify approaches, curricula, and strategies for meeting students’ needs. Our students and their families depend on it, and our Commonwealth depends on it.”

Lewis said while KDE will provide resources for TSI-designated schools to improve, ultimately it is the responsibility of schools and districts to use the accountability results to chart a course that continuously improves achievement for all their students.

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Kentucky is in the process of phasing in a new accountability system, which is scheduled to be fully implemented in the 2018-2019 school year and conforms to requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Senate Bill 1 (2017). Once implemented fully, school and district performance will be classified using Kentucky's 5-star rating system.

Under this new system, accountability determinations are only made at the school level. Determinations are based on student performance on state assessments and other school quality indicators or measures, such as growth or graduation rate, depending on the grade level. Additionally, per Senate Bill 1 (2017), the new accountability system does not provide a single summative score that ranks schools against each other.

The assessment results released today show academic performance has remained largely flat in Kentucky public schools, including foundational subject areas like reading and mathematics. Achievement gaps persist for different groups of students, including students with learning disabilities and students of color. Writing on-demand scores did make gains at the middle and high school levels.

"There are not a lot of positives here. For the past five years there has been virtually no movement. We are not improving," Lewis said. "And achievement gaps between student populations continue to be incredibly disturbing."

ACT scores, which are based on all public school juniors taking the test last spring, also mimicked a national downturn, with across the board performance declines in English, mathematics, reading and science.

Lewis said the results reinforce the KDE's current efforts to address lagging student achievement in critical subject areas like reading and mathematics. For example, proposed graduation requirements would require students to demonstrate basic competency on 10th grade reading and mathematics assessments in order to earn a diploma.

"This is a daunting moment of truth for our state. We cannot lie to ourselves about what these scores mean any longer. While the data are sobering, it allows us to get an accurate picture of where our schools are and strengthens our conviction in what is needed in the months and years ahead," Lewis said. "Instead of being discouraged, this is a call to action for schools, districts, educators, parents, students, and community and business leaders. We must take bold and immediate action for the benefit of our students."

Comprehensive Support and Improvement

A school is identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) if it meets any one of the following categories:

- **CSI I:** Bottom 5% of Title I or non-Title I schools (by level – elementary, middle or high):
- **CSI II:** Less than an 80% graduation rate for Title I or non-Title I high schools

Beginning in 2021-2022:

- **CSI III:** Title I or non-Title I schools previously identified for Tier II Targeted Support for at least 3 years and have not exited.

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While non-Title I schools can be identified for CSI under Kentucky law, for 2017-2018, the only schools that met the established profile and cuts cores were Title I schools. (See Appendix A for list of CSI schools.)

Of the 51 schools identified as CSI, 33 are elementary schools, 12 are middle schools and six are high schools.

CSI Schools

School Level	Total Number of Schools	Total Number of Title I Schools	5% of Title I Schools	Total Schools identified for CSI (CSI I and CSI II*)	Total % Schools identified for CSI (CSI I and CSI II)
Elementary	722	653	33	33	5.1
Middle	320	241	12	12	5.0
High	230	103	5	6*	5.8
Total	1272	997	50	51	5.1

*Only 1 school is identified through CSI II criteria

Targeted Support and Improvement

A school is identified for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) if it meets the following criteria:

- **Tier II Targeted Support – Low performing Subgroup(s):** One or more student groups performing as poorly as all students in any lowest performing 5% of Title I schools or non-Title I schools (by level – elementary, middle or high school) based on school performance.

Beginning in 2020-2021:

- **Tier I Targeted Support (Early Warning): Consistently Underperforming Subgroup(s):** One or more student groups performing as poorly as all students in any of the lowest performing 10% of Title I schools or non-Title I schools (by level – elementary, middle or high school) based on school performance for two consecutive years

Total TSI Schools (Title I and non-Title I)

School Level	Total Number of Schools	Number of Schools Identified for TSI	% of Schools Identified for TSI
Elementary	722	178	25
Middle	320	128	40
High	230	112	49
Total	1272	418	33

Many schools were identified as TSI schools because of achievement gaps that exist between students with disabilities and their peers.

“Other” designation

Schools that were not identified as CSI or TSI received the “Other” designation. Of the state’s 1,272 schools, 63 percent were identified as “Other.”

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Total Other Schools (Title I and non-Title I)

School Level	Total Number of Schools	Number of Schools Identified for Other	% of Schools Identified for Other
Elementary	722	511	71%
Middle	320	180	56%
High	230	112	49%
Total	1272	803	63%

Accountability Indicators and Measures

Accountability is based on three indicators at each grade level. Elementary and middle schools use proficiency, separate academic indicator and growth. High Schools use proficiency, transition readiness and graduation rate.

Unlike the previous accountability system, Kentucky’s new system is prohibited under Senate Bill 1 (2017) from using a single summative score to rank schools. As a result, accountability comparisons with previous years are not valid. Accountability comparisons, however, can be made between schools at the indicator level. For example, reading and math scores can be compared to previous years.

State Indicator Scores for 2017-2018 Accountability (Indicator scores do not reflect percentages)

School Level	Proficiency Indicator (0 to 125)	Separate Academic Indicator (0 to 125)	Growth Indicator (-150 to +150)	Transition Readiness Indicator (0 to 125)	Graduation Rate Indicator (0 to 100)
Elementary	70.5	64.8	17.1	--	--
Middle	72.8	66.8	12.1	--	--
High	59.3	--	--	60.9	90.8

Proficiency Indicator

Proficiency is defined as reaching the desired level of knowledge and skills as measured on state-required academic assessments. It is designed to measure how students achieve on Kentucky’s Academic Standards (KAS) in reading and mathematics.

- Schools earn points based on student performance levels: Novice (0 points); Apprentice (.5 point); Proficient (1 point); and Distinguished (1.25 points)
- Reading and mathematics are weighted equally
- Student performance is aggregated to school, district and state levels

Separate Academic Indicator

The Separate Academic Indicator is designed to measure how students achieve on Kentucky’s Academic Standards (KAS) in science, social studies and writing.

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- Schools earn points based on student performance levels: Novice (0 points); Apprentice (.5 point); Proficient (1 point); and Distinguished (1.25 points)
- Highest proportion of weights are attributed to science and social studies
- Student performance is aggregated to school, district and state levels

Growth Indicator

The focus of the growth indicator is the progress (or lack thereof) the student has made in the current year and the projection of that path toward proficiency. The trend may indicate the student’s performance is going up, moving down or staying the same.

Students are reported in relation to the likelihood of them achieving proficiency within the next two years:

- "less than catch up" (not on track to make it to proficiency)
- "catch up" (on track to make it to proficiency),
- "keep up" (maintaining proficient or distinguished levels) or "move up" (moving to distinguished).

Transition Readiness Indicator

The new accountability system promotes the development of students who are well-rounded, transition-ready – prepared with knowledge, skills and essential dispositions to succeed in the next educational setting or career pathway. Students ready for the next level are transition ready.

Transition ready high school students should be able to enter and succeed in entry level postsecondary courses without remediation or enter the workforce possessing the knowledge and technical skills needed for employment in their desired career field. To be transition ready, a student must earn a high school diploma by meeting/exceeding the

Kentucky Minimum High School Graduation Requirements and meet one type of readiness (Academic or Career).

Requirements for Academic and Career Readiness

Academic Readiness	Career Readiness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Meet benchmarks, determined by Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), on a college admissions exam; OR ✓ A grade of B or higher in each course on 6 or more hours of KDE-approved dual credit; (Dual Credit will not be added until the 2018-2019 school year to allow for reliable data collection) OR ✓ A score of 3+ on exams in 2 or more Advanced Placement courses; OR ✓ A score of 5+ on 2 exams for International Baccalaureate courses; OR ✓ Benchmarks on 2 or more Cambridge Advanced International examinations; OR ✓ Completing a combination of academic readiness indicators listed above. <p>Demonstration of academic readiness must include one quantitative reasoning or natural sciences and one written or oral communication, or arts and humanities, or social and behavioral sciences learning outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Meet benchmarks on Industry Certifications <i>(Approved by the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board on an annual basis)</i>; OR ✓ Score at or above the benchmark on the Career and Technical Education End-of-Program Assessment for articulated credit; OR ✓ A grade of B or higher in each course on 6 or more hours of KDE-approved Career and Technical Education dual credit; (Dual Credit will not be added until the 2018-2019 school year to allow for reliable data collection) OR ✓ Completing a KDE/Education Workforce and Development Cabinet-approved apprenticeships; OR ✓ Completing a KDE-approved alternate process to verify exceptional work experience. (Exceptional work experience will not be added until the 2018-2019 school year to allow for reliable data collection)

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In addition, for English Learners, performance on the English Language proficiency assessment as measured by WIDA ACCESS must be met for any student who received English Language Services during high school.

This year's results show that 60 percent of students were transition ready, with widely varying rates of readiness between different groups of students.

Transition Readiness – High School

Demographic Group	Number of Graduates plus English Learners	Students Transition Ready	% Students Transition Ready
All Students	47,687	28,704	60.2
White	37,361	24,445	65.4
African American	5,179	1,672	32.3
Hispanic	2,857	1,262	44.2
Asian	1,039	646	62.2
American Indian or Alaska Native	70	36	51.4
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	46	21	45.7
Two or More Races	1,125	620	55.1
English Learners plus Monitored	2,500	711	28.4
Free/Reduced-Price Meals	24,828	12,072	48.6
Disability-with IEP (Total)	3,883	953	24.5

These same achievement gaps persisted when comparing percentages of students who were academically ready or career ready.

Transition Readiness – High School by Type of Readiness¹

Demographic Group	Number of Students Academic Ready	% Students Academic Ready	Number of Students Career Ready	% Students Career Ready	Number of EL Students English Proficient	% EL Students English Proficient
All Students	21,278	44.6	15,989	33.5	487	39.0
White	18,446	49.4	14,150	37.9	55	46.2
African American	1,115	21.5	762	14.7	76	29.7
Hispanic	692	24.2	545	19.1	265	41.0
Asian	522	50.2	165	15.9	88	40.6
American Indian or Alaska Native	31	44.3	19	27.1	0	--
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	18	39.1	6	13.0	1	16.7

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Transition Readiness – High School by Type of Readiness (continued)

Demographic Group	Number of Students Academic Ready	% Students Academic Ready	Number of Students Career Ready	% Students Career Ready	Number of EL Students English Proficient	% EL Students English Proficient
Two or More Races	453	40.3	341	30.3	2	50.0
English Learners plus Monitored	127	5.1	126	5.0	487	39.0
Free/Reduced-Price Meals	7,455	30.0	7,488	30.2	395	38.0
Disability-with IEP (Total)	352	9.1	692	17.8	13	16.5

¹ Students may be counted more than once if they meet multiple readiness criteria.

Graduation Rate Indicator

The Graduation Rate is the percentage of students completing the requirements for a Kentucky high school diploma compared to a cohort of students beginning in Grade 9. The cohort is “adjusted” by adding any students who transfer into the cohort and by subtracting any students who transfer out of the cohort to a legitimate educational setting or situation (for example, transfer to an out-of-state school; enroll in a private school; emigrate to another country; or death). The Graduation Rate is reported for all students and all student groups and based on the students’ final enrollment.

Kentucky’s Graduation Rate indicator averages the 4- and 5-year rates. The 5-year rate recognizes the persistence of students and educators in completing the requirements for a Kentucky high school diploma.

Both the 4-year and 5-year adjusted cohort formula uses the number of students who graduate in four and five years divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class.

For several year’s Kentucky has had among the highest graduating rates in the nation; the rate reported for last year was 91 percent. Lewis said while that is appears very positive, the challenge is to ensure graduation can be equated with a student’s ability to be successful in postsecondary education and/or the workplace. At present, about 40 percent of students who graduate in Kentucky do not have the skills or knowledge to make that successful transition, he said.

“It is critical that we prepare our students for success in college and the workforce,” Lewis said. “One of the priorities I spelled out for the KDE earlier this summer was to increase the number of students completing career and technical education (CTE) pathways and earning industry-recognized credentials in high-demand sectors. Further, the revised high school graduation requirements we have proposed to the Kentucky Board of Education would make transition readiness a requirement for graduation in our new school accountability system.

“We cannot continue to issue high school diplomas to students we know have not been prepared for success after high school.”

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Graduation Rate

Demographic Group	Total Number of Students in 4-year cohort	Number Students who Graduated in 4-years	4-Year Graduation Rate (shown as %)	Total Number of Students in 5-year cohort	Number Students Who Graduated in 5-years	5-Year Graduation Rate (shown as %)
All Students	49,649	44,811	90.3	48,801	44,554	91.3
White	39,329	36,144	91.9	39,271	36,317	92.5
African American	5,607	4,591	81.9	5,448	4,621	84.8
Hispanic	2,522	2,092	83	2,157	1,870	86.7
Asian	837	796	95.1	690	656	95.1
American Indian or Alaska Native	71	63	88.7	60	48	80
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	39	33	84.6	43	34	79.1
Two or More Races	1,244	1,092	87.8	1,132	1,008	89
English Learners plus Monitored	1,422	1,096	77.1	1,137	899	79.1
Free/Reduced-Price Meals	25,984	22,783	87.7	25,571	22,905	89.6
Disability-with IEP (Total)	4,446	3,319	74.7	4,275	3,344	78.2

State Assessments

Kentucky administers state tests known as K-PREP – Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP) – tests. The tests were developed by Kentucky teachers and align with the *Kentucky Academic Standards* in each content area.

All students in grades 3 through 8 take reading and mathematics tests in the spring of each year. The other subjects are tested once per grade level (science in grades 4 and 8; social studies and on-demand writing in grades 5 and 8.)

For 2017-2018, with the exception of writing, high school scores come from the junior administration of the ACT college entrance exam given to juniors in spring 2018.

Students with disabilities who qualify take Alternate K-PREP tests. English language learners take ACCESS 2.0, which serves as the basis for English proficiency determinations.

Student performance on these tests serves as the basis for several indicators in Kentucky's accountability system.

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Student performance on state tests

Student performance on K-PREP assessments fall into four categories (from low to high) of Novice, Apprentice, Proficient and Distinguished (NAPD).

The percentage of students performing at the proficient/distinguished level on K-PREP tests is included in the table below. The goal is to move all students to a higher performance category and ultimately to the proficient performance level or above on K-PREP tests.

Percentage of Students Performing at Proficient/Distinguished Levels

Subject	Year	Elementary	Middle	High
Reading	2014	54.7	53.2	55.4
	2015	54.2	53.8	56.8
	2016	56.0	55.2	56.5
	2017	54.3	56.9	55.8
	2018	54.6	60.0	45.4 ¹
Mathematics	2014	49.2	44.8	37.9
	2015	48.8	42.8	38.2
	2016	51.8	47.0	42.3
	2017	49.1	47.0	38.1
	2018	48.8	47.0	37.5 ¹
Science ²	2018	30.8	25.9	29.6 ¹
Social Studies	2014	58.2	59.4	58.0
	2015	60.6	58.6	56.9
	2016	57.7	59.7	59.2
	2017	60.0	60.5	57.5
	2018	53.0	60.2	n/a ³
Writing On-Demand	2014	38.7	n/a ⁴	n/a ⁴
	2015	43.8	n/a ⁴	n/a ⁴
	2016	41.0	n/a ⁴	n/a ⁴
	2017	45.9	37.2	37.2
	2018	40.5	44.3	51.8

¹ Reported Performance Level Percentages are for the ACT and Alternate K-PREP assessment.

² Elementary and middle school students were assessed with the new Kentucky Science Academic Standards. Performance levels and scores are not reported for students in prior years as the assessments measured old standards which are not comparable.

³ High school students, with the exception of Alternate Assessment students, were not assessed in social studies, so no performance level percentages are reported.

⁴ Writing On-Demand was removed from grades 6 and 10. For students in the Alternate Assessment Program, writing on-demand was removed at grade 10. Middle and high school scores are not comparable to prior years.

Student performance on the Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP) was for the most part flat.

At the elementary level, performance held steady in reading, but dropped in mathematics, social studies and on-demand writing.

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At the middle school level, scores were flat with the exception of on-demand writing, which saw a significant improvement.

High school scores in previous years were based on End of Course exams in Algebra II, English II and Biology. This year they are based on the ACT, so this year’s scores cannot be compared to previous years.

ACT

Since 2008, all Kentucky’s public school juniors have taken the ACT, which assesses English, mathematics, reading and science and is scored on a scale of 1 to 36. The cost of the exam is paid for by state funds.

The 2017-18 results show a drop across the board in most subject areas for Kentucky public school juniors who took the test. The same trend on the ACT is nationally this year.

ACT Subject Area Scores Kentucky Public School Juniors

Year	English	Mathematics	Reading	Science	Composite	Total Tested
2013-14	18.7	19.2	19.6	19.6	19.4	44,055
2014-15	19.0	18.9	19.8	19.3	19.4	45,626
2015-16	19.0	19.0	19.9	19.8	19.5	45,330
2016-17	19.2	19.4	20.3	19.9	19.8	45,745
2017-18	18.8	18.8	19.8	19.2	19.3	45,636

Disaggregated scores between different groups highlight the achievement gap between white students and students of color, low-income students and students with disabilities.

Students attending a Kentucky public college or university and who meet the Kentucky systemwide standards of readiness are guaranteed access to credit-bearing college coursework without the need for developmental education or supplemental courses.

Half of the juniors tested last year met CPE benchmarks in English. The percentage who met the benchmarks for mathematics and reading were lower.

Percentages of Public School Juniors Who Meet CPE Benchmarks for College-Level Readiness

Year	English	Mathematics	Reading
2013-14	55.9	43.5	47.1
2014-15	55.3	38.1	47.4
2015-16	54.3	39.7	49.2
2016-17	55.8	43.7	53.2
2017-18	51.2	38.9	47.1

All data for the 2017-2018 assessment and accountability reporting are publicly available in [Open House](#) on the Kentucky Department of Education website. All the data will be available later this year in the new and improved online Kentucky School Report Card.

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