



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

Number 18-149

October 1, 2018

MEDIA CONTACT: Jessica Fletcher

Office: (502) 564-2000, ext. 4611 | **Cell:** (502) 229-1915 | **E-mail:** Jessica.Fletcher@education.ky.gov

LEWIS MAKES STATEMENT REGARDING GRADUATION STANDARDS

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Kentucky Department of Education Interim Commissioner Wayne Lewis offered the following comments to the media today regarding the Prichard Committee’s statement on the high school graduation requirement proposal that will be heard by the Kentucky Board of Education this week:

“The Prichard Committee and the coalition have stretched the findings of the research literature in order to support their position, have not been accurate in their likening of our proposal to ‘exit examinations’ in other states, and have asked the Kentucky Board of Education to address concerns that Kentucky statute clearly states must be addressed at the district and school levels. Additionally, the coalition is discounting the reality that we must set a higher bar that ensures students receive more than just a certificate of attendance when they graduate.

Our current requirements fail to ensure that Kentucky students can demonstrate competence in reading and mathematics and are ready to transition to college and the workforce upon graduation. This proposed cut score on high school reading and mathematics assessments would serve as one indicator of graduation readiness, but under the proposal, alternative avenues are available for the student to graduate if they can demonstrate competency. Further, the proposal phases in the requirement beginning with the transition readiness requirement for the class of 2023 and the basic competence requirement for the class of 2024.

Many stakeholders and stakeholder groups have participated in the development of this proposal. I find it incredibly unfortunate that in an effort to mislead and create panic, the Prichard Committee has conveniently left out of their communication the fact that if the proposal is approved by the Board, there would be a 30 day public comment period and a public hearing during which all Kentuckians could submit and share their concerns and suggestions. These comments would be considered by the KBE at an upcoming meeting and revisions to the requirements could be made if deemed necessary by the board.

The Prichard Committee’s outcry against the proposed requirement that Kentucky graduates demonstrate basic competence in reading and mathematics shows that they and others have known for some time that many of our graduates exit high school with diplomas but without basic skills. We must make a change to give our students the best possible chance at future success. I look forward to addressing these questions and concerns at the Kentucky Board of Education meeting this week.”

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