

Starting points

With the academic year right around the corner, a new school-based decision making council should already have been elected for each school and its first meeting scheduled. At those initial meetings, there are some important documents to review to make sure the council runs efficiently. Every school council member should have copies of these basic documents governing the school's work. These can be placed in a binder with room to add others as needed or on a thumb drive or cloud drive. The following items are a place to start:

- **School council policies** – Policies are the written guidelines and procedures for the school to follow. These policies are developed and adopted by the school council. Include with the policies a checklist of the required policy areas and the date in which they were last reviewed and/or revised. Policies need to be reviewed annually.
- **School council bylaws** – Bylaws are the operating procedures of the school council. These bylaws will help effectively and efficiently conduct meetings. Include the last date of review and/or revision with the bylaws. Bylaws need to be reviewed annually.
- **School improvement plan** – School improvement plans define the school's goals for the future. The plan includes a needs assessment that points out the priority needs of the school. It lays out the strategies and activities that are addressing these priority needs, including the staff's professional learning requirements.
- **Budget** – Each spring, the school council is to approve the budget for the Section 6 instructional funds. The new school council will need to review this budget and may make amendments as necessary to meet the needs of the instructional staff.

As always, please remind council members that the goal of their work is to **increase student achievement** and that this should be at the forefront of every discussion, policy and decision.

Civics test information

Earlier this year, the Kentucky General Assembly passed Senate Bill 159 (2017), which states that beginning in July 2018, students must pass a 100-question civics test in order to graduate from a public high school with a regular diploma. Local boards of education will be expected to prepare or approve an exam that must be composed of questions from the [civics test administered by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services](#) (USCIS).

The full text of the bill can be found [here](#).

Critical highlights include:

- Local boards of education and charter school governing bodies may decide how the test is administered and implemented.
- Students must correctly answer at least 60 of the 100 questions on the civics test.
- Students may retake the test as many times as necessary to pass.
- Local boards of education will determine how the passing grade will be documented.
- A student who has passed a similar test within the previous five years is not required to take the test.
- Schools must administer this test in accordance with the requirements and accommodations of a student's individualized education program as defined in KRS 158.281 or a Section 504 Plan as defined in KRS 156.027.

The Kentucky Department of Education will be preparing additional guidance and resources to districts and schools in the next couple of months so that ample time for planning and preparation for administration is provided.

Those individuals who wish to find out more about this exam can attend the 2017 Kentucky Civics Symposium referenced below.



KDE hosts civics symposium

KDE will host the 2017 Kentucky Civics Symposium to promote best practices in civics education. Symposiums will be held in two locations, both from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. ET:

- July 10 – Elizabethtown, Hardin County Schools Early College and Career Center
- July 14 – Ashland, Kentucky Educational Development Corporation

Join us as speakers provide educators with hands-on

support in creating civics curricula with robust, relevant learning experiences for students to promote the “doing” of social studies through action civics. You can:

- learn new social studies-related strategies that engage and motivate students;
- dig into effective strategies for improved student achievement; and
- gain a deeper understanding of civics best practices.

Information regarding the new citizenship test will be provided.

[Click here](#) to register for this event, or email KDE social studies consultant [Lauren Gallicchio](#) for more information.

Verification database is open

Once trainings are conducted for SBDM members, the training information and EILAs can be entered into the new database. This database is housed in the [KEPS web applications](#) and should be accessible with your KEPS username and password. If you do not have a KEPS login, please email [Windy Newton](#) to gain access.

Training modules available

Several modules are now available for the annually required training for new and experienced council members. As a reminder, new council members are required to have six hours of training, while experienced members must receive three hours. KDE offers several trainings at no costs to districts. More details can be found [here](#).

Alternatively several of KDE’s partners have training modules that have been approved for the purpose of SBDM. In order to participate in an alternative training, please contact the appropriate group identified below:

REMINDER
Principal Selection Training does not count toward the required SBDM training hours for new and experienced council members.

Kentucky Department of Education	Introduction to SBDM Roles and Responsibilities Bylaws and Policies Teamwork for Achievement Family and Community Engagement TELL Kentucky Survey
Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence	Governor’s Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (GCIPL) Missing Piece of the Proficiency Puzzle
Kentucky Association of School Councils	Novice Reduction for SBDM Councils School Council and Budgets Council Tools for Closing the Disability Gap
Kentucky Education Association	Putting It All Together: Multiple Measures for School Success SBDM and ESSA
Kentucky Association of School Administrators	SBDM and the Principal’s Role
Kentucky Educational Television (online courses)	Introduction to SBDM Exploring Your School’s Data Formative Assessment (three courses)

**Office of Next Generation
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Division of Consolidated Plans and Audits

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