

Matthew G. Bevin
Governor



Don Parkinson
Interim Secretary
Education and
Workforce Development Cabinet

Wayne D. Lewis, Ph.D.
Interim Commissioner of Education

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

300 Sower Boulevard • Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
Phone: (502) 564-3141 • www.education.ky.gov

May 9, 2018

Kelly Sprinkles, Superintendent
200 Daniel Boone Drive
Barbourville, KY 40906

Dear Superintendent Sprinkles:

As you know, one goal of Kentucky Statewide Consolidated Monitoring (KSCM) is to help create opportunities for the programs in our schools and districts to look at new ways to collaborate and collectively meet our ultimate goal: increasing student achievement while closing gaps and positioning our students to be college- and career-ready. The team members from your visit have engaged in this collaborative process in order to produce the attached Consolidated Monitoring Report.

During the 2017-18 school year, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) conducted monitoring in Knox County School District. During this process, KDE program staff, utilizing program-specific monitoring tools, conducted on-site visits for the following programs:

- Title I, Part A
- Title II, Part A
- Title III, Part A
- Gifted and Talented
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Alternative Programs

Each program involved in the KSCM has an impact on our goal. For example, Title II, Part A focuses on improving teacher and principal quality to ensure that all students have equal access to highly qualified and effective teachers and leaders. Title I programs provide not only funding, but also guidance on working with disadvantaged students. These programs and the others engaged in consolidated monitoring can work together to achieve more collaboratively than any of them could alone simply by reducing duplication of effort.

Knox County Schools
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This report is the result of what can be best described as a “snapshot” of the district taken during our visit. It begins with identifying “effective practices.” These are individual program practices that the team felt were effective, and in some cases innovative. We strongly suggest that the practices identified be submitted to the KDE Best Practices [website](#).

In addition, the monitoring team collectively discussed the findings and concerns of each program to identify Opportunities for Improvement. This represents a consolidation of findings reported by individual programs that were similar in nature and therefore present a potential opportunity for collaboration between identified programs. Each of these concerns has been identified by at least two program areas. Each district program has already been provided an individual report as required by federal or state law. All findings will need to be addressed by district program areas as specified in the individual reports.

In the meantime, if you have questions regarding specific program monitoring requirements, please contact the individual program contacts listed in this report. If you have questions concerning the consolidated monitoring process, please contact Sharma Aitken at (502) 564-3791, extension 4018, or via email at sharma.aitken2@education.ky.gov. Information regarding education programs within the state of Kentucky may also be found at www.education.ky.gov.

Thank you for your work in improving Kentucky’s education programs to better serve our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Foster". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelly Foster, Ed.D.
Associate Commissioner
Office of Continuous Improvement and Support

KF/NN/vb

Attachment: Consolidated Monitoring Report for Knox County

2017-18 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| District: | Knox County | |
| Date(s) of Visit: | Feb. 6-8, 2018 | |
| Team Leads: <i>(List primary person on this visit for each program.)</i> | | |
| <i>Title I – Sean Murphy</i> | <i>Preschool – Bill Buchanan</i> | |
| <i>Title II – Jennifer Baker</i> | <i>Career and Technical Education – Karla Tipton</i> | |
| <i>Alternative Programs – Donna Deal</i> | <i>Gifted And Talented – Kathie Anderson</i> | |
| <i>English Learners (EL) – N/A</i> | <i>IDEA – Erma White</i> | |

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 1

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------|----------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i> | Title I | X | Career and Technical Education | |
| | Title II | | Alternative Programs | X |
| | EL | | Gifted and Talented | |
| | IDEA | | Preschool | X |
| <i>Clearly describe actions and/or practices that the team deems as effective. (Include impact on student achievement.)</i> | | | | |
| Student Services | | | | |
| <p>The Title I team found that the district conducts a yearly kindergarten camp at all elementary schools that is effective in preparing students for transitioning to kindergarten. The district also utilizes programs such as Save the Children, Berea Partners for Education and the Promise Neighborhood Zone to meet all the needs of the students. Preschool indicated that all Knox County preschool sites have achieved five out of five stars in Kentucky All Stars, the state’s early childhood quality rating improvement system. There is strong district support for all three alternative programs. KDE staff feels resources at the alternative programs are equitable to those in the rest of the district. Knox County provides all requested resources in a timely manner. The three alternative programs provide effective student services to positively impact student achievement. There are several after-school opportunities for gifted and talented students such as robotics, Science Olympiad and Odyssey of the Mind.</p> | | | | |

2017-18 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 2

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------|----------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i> | Title I | X | Career and Technical Education | |
| | Title II | | Alternative Programs | X |
| | EL | | Gifted and Talented | X |
| | IDEA | | Preschool | X |
| <i>Clearly describe actions and/or practices that the team deems as effective. (Include impact on student achievement.)</i> | | | | |
| Climate and Culture | | | | |
| <p>The Title I team indicated that the focus with everything at Knox County seemed to be on the children. There are many programs within the district to build community and enhance the educational outcomes for students. Gifted and talented (GT) indicated that great relationships were observed between staff and students. Parents were very complimentary of the GT coordinator in the district during interviews. The culture in the GT program promoted student achievement. Preschool observed evidence from the site visit indicating all preschool classrooms provide developmentally appropriate teaching and learning experiences for preschool students. Classroom interactions are positive and engaging, and teachers actively encourage conversation and language development. The alternative program noted that all programs also had calm, structured and safe environments that foster academic success.</p> | | | | |

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 3

| | | | | |
|--|-----------------|----------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i> | Title I | | Career and Technical Education | |
| | Title II | | Alternative Programs | |
| | EL | | Gifted and Talented | X |
| | IDEA | X | Preschool | |
| <i>Clearly describe actions and/or practices that the team deems as effective. (Include impact on student achievement.)</i> | | | | |
| Leadership | | | | |
| <p>During its visit, IDEA observed that all three alternative programs have committed staff members and a principal who encourage staff participation in decision-making processes. Gifted and talented (GT) indicated that the GT coordinator and the pre-engineering and biomedical teachers are leaders. The leadership in these programs enhances student achievement.</p> | | | | |

2017-18 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 4

| | | | | |
|--|-----------------|--|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i> | Title I | | Career and Technical Education | |
| | Title II | | Alternative Programs | |
| | EL | | Gifted and Talented | X |
| | IDEA | | Preschool | X |
| <i>Clearly describe actions and/or practices that the team deems as effective. (Include impact on student achievement.)</i> | | | | |
| Parent and Family Engagement | | | | |
| <p>According to parent interviews, Knox County preschool staff members interact positively with parents and families. Families report having opportunities to be involved in their children’s education, and they have opportunities for meaningful communication about their child’s development with preschool staff. According to the gifted and talented (GT) team, parent communication is good. They receive progress as related to the gifted student service plan each semester, and parents volunteer and assist in competitions such as Odyssey of the Mind and Science Olympiad. Both programs’ effective parent and family engagement enhance student achievement.</p> | | | | |

2017-18 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Opportunity for Improvement No. 1

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------|----------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i> | Title I | X | Career and Technical Education | |
| | Title II | X | Alternative Programs | X |
| | EL | | Gifted and Talented | X |
| | IDEA | | Preschool | X |
| Common Issue <i>(Clearly describe issue as it relates to each program.)</i> | | | | |
| Policies and Procedures | | | | |
| <p>Title II found that the district discusses allocations with the schools in an informal and undocumented manner. Gifted and talented stated that policies and procedures needed improvement in the area of special considerations/exceptions to identification criteria. Preschool identified playground safety hazards at sites and found deficiencies in record-keeping procedures. Alternative education indicated that there are low attendance rates at two of the three programs visited. The third program is residential, so students cannot be absent there unless they are ill or kept in the residential setting for disciplinary reasons, which does not occur often. Secondly, the exit transition processes could be improved at all three alternative programs.</p> | | | | |
| Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s) | | | | |
| <p>Title II recommends the schools make federal program services a standing agenda item at school-based decision making council meetings and record any actions taken in meeting minutes. Gifted and talented (GT) recommends updating its screening tool to ensure all students have access to GT services. There should be training on the characteristics of underrepresented populations and on how to identify students using the exceptions to the identification criteria. There is guidance on this topic on the KDE'S Gifted and Talented Resource webpage. Preschool recommends providing evidence that playground safety concerns have been addressed and advises reviewing and revising preschool record keeping procedures to ensure records are kept up to date and referrals are made in a timely manner.</p> <p>Knox County should consider ways to improve students' attendance at the alternative programs that are not residential. KDE's chronic absence report and the new transient student report in Infinite Campus may be useful resources in addressing attendance. Additional details about each of these tools can be found in the individual alternative program reports already sent to the district. Also, the transition process for alternative programs could be improved by including an exit assessment with students and parents/guardians, communication with the next program or school a student will attend regarding strengths and needs, and/or a follow-up plan to provide support.</p> | | | | |

2017-18 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Opportunity for Improvement No. 2

| | | | | |
|--|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i> | Title I | <input type="checkbox"/> | Career and Technical Education | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Title II | <input type="checkbox"/> | Alternative Programs | X |
| | EL | <input type="checkbox"/> | Gifted and Talented | X |
| | IDEA | <input type="checkbox"/> | Preschool | X |
| Common Issue <i>(Clearly describe issue as it relates to each program.)</i> | | | | |
| Professional Development | | | | |
| <p>Gifted and talented indicated professional development is needed on differentiation for high-ability learners, underrepresented populations needs and characteristics and identification exceptions to criteria. Preschool found a need to increase resources and professional learning opportunities to support culturally responsive practices. Alternative education noticed that ongoing professional development in the district may not be geared toward the specific needs of teachers and support staff as related to their roles in alternative programs and working with students with a variety of adverse life experiences (e.g., ongoing trauma informed care, bullying prevention training, suicide prevention training, Youth Mental Health First Aid, et cetera).</p> | | | | |
| Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s) | | | | |
| <p>The Center for Gifted Studies has resources on underrepresented populations on its Reaching Academic Potential webpage. Preschool recommends increasing professional learning opportunities to support culturally responsive practices. Along with other state partners, KDE offers various trainings related to improving school climate and culture that may be of interest, including Youth Mental Health First Aid, Sources of Strength, Olweus Bullying Prevention and Trauma-Informed Care for Educators. Additional details about each of these programs can be found in the individual alternative program reports already sent to the district.</p> | | | | |

2017-18 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

Opportunity for Improvement No. 3

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i> | Title I | | Career and Technical Education | X |
| | Title II | | Alternative Programs | |
| | EL | | Gifted and Talented | X |
| | IDEA | | Preschool | |
| Common Issue <i>(Clearly describe issue as it relates to each program.)</i> | | | | |
| Student Plans | | | | |
| Career and technical education found some courses and credits counted for pathways are not approved for the pathway in which they are being counted. State course codes are not listed on student transcripts. Student assessment data is not always properly documented. Gifted and talented indicated that student plans did not include teacher comments and examples. | | | | |
| Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s) | | | | |
| Career and technical education recommends that courses being counted in a pathway are part of the approved electives in the pathway and that the correct state course codes used and reflected on the transcripts. Ensure credits and students assessment data are properly entered for all students. Gifted and talented recommends adding teacher comments and examples to student plans. | | | | |

Final Overview

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| <i>Clearly describe the following for the identified program(s):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How programs are effectively working collaboratively to better serve students;</i> • <i>Suggestions for adjustments that could help programs begin or improve their collaborative efforts; and</i> • <i>Suggestions for how each program can further help with student success and closing gaps.</i> |
| <p>Knox County is a small rural district working diligently and systematically to overcome challenges presented due to its size and changing population. Knox County prides itself on its philosophy of uniting in service for excellence and creating lifelong learners and successful citizens. The district recognizes a need for closing achievement gaps for free or reduced-price meal-eligible students and students with disabilities, increasing classroom rigor, and continuing data analysis to drive instruction and remediation. About 4,200 students are enrolled in K-12 and 72 percent of those qualify for free or reduced-price meals. While the community endures a high poverty rate, the employees of the district are committed to the educational well-being of each child and work diligently to ensure their needs are met. This commitment begins during the preschool years and remains throughout the process of the student becoming college- and career-ready. Since the release of the individual monitoring reports, Knox County has already shown a commitment to improving its processes. The gifted and talented coordinator will be looking at other screening tools to ensure underrepresented populations are included in identification process.</p> |