



Dr. Robbie Fletcher  
Commissioner of Education

**KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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

November 7, 2024

**VIA EMAIL**

Sen. Stephen West, Co-Chair  
Rep. Scott Lewis, Co-Chair  
Education Assessment & Accountability Review Subcommittee  
702 Capital Avenue  
Frankfort, KY 40601

**RE: RESPONSE TO OFFICE OF EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY STUDY**  
***Student Achievement: Lessons Learned from Kentucky's Relatively Highest- and Lowest-Performing Schools***

Co-Chairs West and Lewis:

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is grateful to the Office of Education Accountability (OEA) and its staff for their detailed and diligent work on the above-referenced study and corresponding Research Report (Report). During course of the study, OEA staff consulted with KDE staff to obtain relevant data, information, and explanations. KDE appreciates the professional and collaborative working relationship with OEA throughout the course of this study.

KDE would like to take this opportunity to provide you with additional information in response to notes within the Report related to school climate, culture, and student behavior in those schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI). The Report notes that there is comparatively less emphasis on school climate, culture, and student behavior within the scope of school improvement practices. For CSI schools, diagnostic reviews frequently prioritize instruction and curriculum improvements, which subsequently become the focal points of improvement plans. Evidence indicates that high-quality instruction mitigates classroom behavior incidents, as it engages students in learning, thereby reducing off-task behavior. Furthermore, student engagement fosters a sense of belonging and motivation, positively influencing behavior and attendance. Teachers who deliver high-quality instruction also cultivate stronger relationships with students, contributing to a trust-based, respectful climate that enhances the overall school environment. Consequently, instructional and curricular focus predominates in school improvement strategies for these institutions.

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Administrators interviewed for this study expressed that the timing of the improvement planning process may not align seamlessly with data availability and natural planning cycles. However, the four phases are structured around the academic calendar and the release of assessment and accountability data, reflecting intentional alignment with the school year. Furthermore, KDE encourages schools and districts to consider these plans to be living documents that evolve throughout the year and from year to year. As such, KDE considers the compliance dates as check points along the process rather than deadlines.

Page 49 of the Report indicates that reviews are conducted solely for a limited subset of schools identified within federal intervention categories. This statement does not accurately reflect current practices. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) ensures that improvement plans for all districts and schools across the state are submitted in accordance with the regulatory planning timeline. KDE provides targeted feedback and reviews all turnaround plans for schools designated for CSI. Additionally, KDE employs a risk assessment tool to annually select 20-30 improvement plans for review from schools and districts not identified within federal intervention categories.

Once again, KDE appreciates this opportunity to collaborate with OEA, as well as provide additional information to the Education Assessment & Accountability Review Subcommittee. If you have any questions, please contact Associate Commissioner Kelly Foster at [Kelly.Foster@education.ky.gov](mailto:Kelly.Foster@education.ky.gov).

All In,



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cc: Bryan Jones, OEA Interim Deputy Director  
Brian Perry, KDE Director of Government Relations  
Kelly Foster, KDE Associate Commissioner  
Todd Allen, KDE Deputy Commissioner & General Counsel