

EDUCATION ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the 2018 Regular Session

February 26, 2018

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 1st meeting of the Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee was held on Monday, February 26, 2018, at 2:30 PM, in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Max Wise, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Max Wise, Co-Chair; Senators Alice Forgy Kerr, Gerald A. Neal, and Mike Wilson; and Representative Steve Riley.

Guests: Erin Klarer, KHEAA.

LRC Staff: Joshua Collins, Lauren Busch, Caroline Alexander, and Chris White.

Senator Wise said today's meeting includes a discussion of Kentucky Board of Education Administrative Regulation 703 KAR 5:270, to which the subcommittee may defer with the agency's consent, amend with the agency's consent, or find the regulation deficient. Copies of the regulation, an agency amendment, and a staff review were included in members' folders.

Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Commissioner Stephen Pruitt and Associate Commissioner for Assessment and Accountability Rhonda Simms presented "Kentucky's New Accountability Model" report. The requested agency amendment modifies the regulation extending more flexibility to school districts. Mr. Pruitt said the regulation aligns Kentucky with Senate Bill 1 (2017) and more closely with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The amendment moves Kentucky from focusing primarily on test scores and school rankings and accomplishes the goal of cutting the achievement gap in half over the next 13 years.

As a result of negotiations between KDE and the US Department of Education (USED) on ESSA details and regulations regarding flexibility, Ms. Simms said the agency amendments incorporate legislative and ESSA concerns into Senate Bill 1 and reflect changes expected by USED and approved by the Kentucky Board of Education.

Senate Bill 1 requires testing on writing once in elementary, middle, and high school. Because writing in Kentucky is not tested every year in the same pattern as reading, USED determined it cannot be used as an academic measure. While Kentucky will continue to assess and report writing and include it in school accountability, it will not be labeled as an academic indicator. Agency amendments required by USED include writing as a separate academic indicator for reporting purposes, adjusting range of weights in high schools to ensure proficiency and graduation rate combined are greater than 50 percent, altering opportunity and access to a reported measure by removing locally-determined measures, and clarifying all Kentucky indicators are used to identify low performing schools and the English learner (EL) calculation.

Kentucky believes opportunity and educational experiences go far beyond test scores. Because federal language does not allow the flexibility Kentucky requested, the amendment removed many items to remain in compliance with ESSA. Kentucky's plan will identify low-performing schools and will provide clarifications on the calculations of English learners.

KDE wants students to be well-rounded, transition-ready, and prepared with the knowledge, skills, and essential dispositions to successfully pursue the pathway of their choice after high school graduation. Key goals for the new system promote higher levels of student learning and achievement; reduce achievement gaps and ensure quality; establish opportunity and access for students to receive a quality education; build a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement; and communicate a clear and honest understanding of strengths and opportunities for improvement in schools and districts.

Ms. Simms said the model for Kentucky schools include growth, achievement gap closure, proficiency, other academic indicators, transition readiness, opportunity, and success. Focus will be placed on gap closure for student groups and opportunity and access for student success. Kentucky provided the USED additional detail and clarifications to align the amendments with federal expectations.

Individually, accountability indicators will focus on student success regarding proficiency, separate academic indicators, growth indicators for elementary and middle school, graduation rates for high school, and transition readiness. The dashboard model will be used to communicate quality and for gauging student groups.

State testing determines proficiency in reading and math. The separate academic indicator includes science, social studies, and writing. Reaching the desired level of knowledge and skills as measured on academic assessment sets a high-level academic benchmark with the same rigorous expectations for all students.

Growth measures include elementary and middle student levels in reading and math and evaluates progress for English learners (EL). Each student's growth is projected and evaluated as to whether the student is "catching up," "keeping up," or "moving up." Ms. Simms said these concept are simple in terms but critical for the importance of student performance and moving kids forward.

Mr. Pruitt said that each child gets their own growth trajectory as opposed to the previous system which measured with a band approach.

Ms. Simms said the graduation rate reports successful completion of Kentucky's graduation requirements. Kentucky uses a four- and five-year adjusted cohort rate in accountability and a four-year adjusted cohort rate to identify the lowest performing schools, required by both Senate Bill 1 and federal standards. Graduation rates will be based on students' final enrollment location.

Transition readiness is determined by the attainment of necessary knowledge and having the skills and dispositions to successfully transition to the next level of career or education. A transition readiness benchmark is set at elementary and middle school levels and goes beyond high school to demonstrate academic or career readiness. The transition readiness in high school includes EL proficiency.

Reducing the disparity between the performances of student groups will close the achievement gap by moving all students to higher levels and moving those students at the lowest levels more rapidly.

Opportunity and access is provided by equitable availability to research-based student experiences and school factors that impact student success using required measures in the accountability rating of school and districts. Reported measures are not used in the rating of the school but are displayed in the school report card. Reported measures are not included in 703 KAR 5:270.

The required areas of opportunity and access include a curriculum with access to standards-based, visual and performing arts; health and physical education; science; social studies; Career and Technical for middle and high school; cultural studies and/or world languages in high school; and essential skills in middle and high school. A proportionate student group must have access to gifted and talented services as well as rigorous and advanced courses. School quality and safety includes chronic absenteeism, behavior events, and restraint and seclusion.

The reported areas of opportunity and access include whole child supports, state-funded preschool rating, percentage of students in half-day versus full-day kindergarten, percentage of teacher turnover and first-year teachers, student group out-of-school suspensions, and proportionate group enrollment. KDE will report achievement gap

closure information and other segments of opportunity and access that are new and different.

During the fall of 2018 the new reporting dashboard will be introduced using available data to identify the lowest performing schools, as required by USED and ESSA, and will be reporting and modeling the new data collections.

The overall accountability rating based on strengths of performance on system indicators will be introduced in the fall of 2019. The ratings, 1 to 5 stars, will indicate performance levels of very low to very high and will be based on standards of excellence instead of a normative comparison of schools. Kentuckians will set the performance standard levels, beginning with a standard setting process during the summer of 2018 and continuing in the summer of 2019. Language in the regulation will cap the performance rating of a facility with significant achievement gaps at a 3-star rating, with an emphasis on achievement gaps reduction. Kentucky proposed a range of weights to give standard setters a relative emphasis of each area, the agency amendment increases the weight on high school proficiency and the graduation rate, which when combined must be greater than 50 percent. Ms. Simms said Kentucky has been honest and transparent in setting their range goal. The regulation has three charts that gives an overview of the pattern of performance expected to be seen from the indicators at elementary/middle, high school, and district level.

Senator Neal said the presentation brings a clarity to individual students being targeted for improvement and is more consistent with the original Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA). When Senator Neal expressed concerned of the possibility of one child being left behind, Mr. Pruitt said accountability should be a spotlight for displaying positive results and a flashlight shining on areas that need improvement. Kentucky can begin to identify and focus attention on areas that require the most support and intervention. While many states use minimum groups of 30 students, Kentucky chose to group only 10 students, a further protection to prevent a student from being left behind.

Representative Riley questioned the .25 percent difference between distinguished and proficient status when the other statuses are separated by .5 percent. Ms. Simms said the distinguished scale was designated at a lower rate so as not to skew overall achievement status numbers. In response to Representative Riley's questions regarding aligning safety with a teacher's fear of hurting accountability measures, Mr. Pruitt stressed student safety should be the most important measure.

In response to Representative Riley's question, Mr. Pruitt said the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is not part of accountability in its current form.

In response to Senator Wise's question, Ms. Simms said the dashboard profile performance is unique to Kentucky. While California uses a methodology profile system without any ratings, Kentucky's has a more visual and less complicated format.

In response to a question from Senator Wise, Ms. Simms said some of the concerns were specific to military, but the majority of concerns related to performing arts, specialty teachers, and a concern of having a test-oriented measure for Arts and Humanities.

On a motion by Senator Neal and a second by Representative Riley, the agency amendment was passed by voice vote.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.