

EDUCATION ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Minutes of the 2019 Interim

October 17, 2019

Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting of the Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee was held on Thursday, October 17, 2019, at 1:00 PM, in Room 129 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; Representative Brandon Reed, Co-Chair; Senators Alice Forgy Kerr, and Mike Wilson; Representatives Tina Bojanowski, Regina Huff, and Steve Riley.

LRC Staff: Joshua Collins, Yvette Perry, and Christal White.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Representative Riley and a second by Representative Reed, the minutes of the September 17, 2019 meeting were approved.

Teacher Shortages and Supports for New Teachers

Staff from the Office of Education Accountability, Dr. Bart Ligouri, Research Division Manager, and Allison Stevens, Research Analyst, presented the committee report adopted for the 2019 OEA Research Agenda.

Ms. Stevens provided an overview of teacher shortages and teacher turnover in Kentucky, including Career and Technical Education (CTE). The report examines teacher turnover rates by region, district, school demographics, certification type, and the association between teacher turnover and student outcomes. Data used in the compilation of the report was provided by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), the Kentucky Center for Statistics, the Council for Post-Secondary Education (CPE), and an OEA Principals Survey regarding teacher shortages, turnover, and supports for new teachers.

Teachers with emergency certificates and alternative certificates represent 3.9 percent of Kentucky teachers and may underestimate overall teacher shortages. Emergency certificates are issued when a district proves difficulty in hiring a qualified

candidate. Teachers with alternative certificate can be hired based on valuable work experience and continued pursuit of a professional teaching certification without the requirement of proving an unavailable, qualified candidate. Teachers with alternative and emergency certificates help determine critical shortage areas but are not included in the number of out-of-field teachers or unfilled positions in Kentucky. Ms. Stevens suggested KDE may want to consider publishing methodology and associated data used to determine critical shortage areas and a method to differentiate long-term vacant positions within the Kentucky Educator Placement System.

Prevalent teacher shortages exist in physics, chemistry, transportation, engineering, math, world languages, and family and consumer sciences. Based on 2019 data, Kentucky identified nine subject areas and a local workforce area expected to have critical teacher shortages in 2020. More than 90 percent of states reported facing shortages in math, exceptional children, and science. More than half of the states reported potential shortages in language arts, world languages, English as a second language, and career and technical education. Less common areas of teacher shortages were identified as social studies, health and physical education, and early childhood.

Ms. Stevens said OEA's calculation of teachers with alternative certificates, emergency certificates, and other indicators of teacher shortages were based on an original analysis of certificates, teacher preparation data, and a survey. Since 2010, emergency certificates increased less than 1 percent while alternative certificates increased 7.9 percent. Current data for the same period indicates Kentucky has 1,600 fewer certified teachers, 74 more alternative or emergency certificate teachers, and an additional 1800 students, which slightly increases student-teacher ratio.

From the survey, principals said teacher shortages result in eliminating classes, increasing class sizes, renewing non-effective teachers, or hiring lower quality teachers in lieu of having unfilled positions. During the past ten years, the increase in teacher turnover suggests a lower number of teacher preparation program completers and current teachers becoming eligible for retirement could create future shortages. Teacher turnover is lower in larger geographic areas due to larger population districts having more schools in which to transfer.

Ms. Stevens said schools affected by high teacher turnover have difficulty in carrying out organizational goals; building relationships with students, parents and community; and providing required training for new teachers. Survey results also implied negative effects on student achievement, disciplinary issues, and school culture may be affected by new and inexperienced teachers; however, some principals view a positive culture shift as a potential benefit to turnover.

The report indicated major barriers for recruiting and retaining teachers include insufficient salary and benefits compared to private industry; lack of qualified candidates in a particular subject; and lack of qualified candidates in general. Principals reported a plan for prioritizing recruitment and retention of teachers and the development of strategies for supporting new teachers. Frequently mentioned supports for new teachers include requiring mentor support, encouraging beginning teachers to participate in community or peer networking, and providing dedicated meeting times for beginning teachers and mentors. Less common strategies mentioned were the mentor selection process and additional mentor stipend. Few schools offer a reduced teaching load for beginning teachers or mentors.

In response to a question from Senator Wise, Ms. Stevens said a lack of funding for teacher internship programs was not mentioned but superintendents and principals are trying to replicate those programs as best they can.

Responding to a question from Senator Wilson, Ms. Stevens said answers regarding barriers for geographical locations varied depending on the person. Dr. Ligouri said some survey responses indicated rural communities could integrate teachers within the community better and offer a better fit into the school culture.

In response to a question from Representative Bojanowski, Ms. Stevens said the survey did not include why fewer students are entering the career education field. She suggested the General Assembly review insufficient salary and benefit information during the upcoming 2020 Regular Session.

Responding to a question from Senator Wise about programs in physics and chemistry, Ms. Stevens said access to general college data was not available.

Representative Riley said students are impacted negatively when rural area principals face teacher retention dilemmas. He said surrounding states are experiencing teacher shortages as well.

On a motion by Senator Kerr and a second by Representative Reed, OEA's report, Teacher Shortages and Supports for New Teachers, was accepted.

2018 Assessment Results Overview

Dr. Wayne Lewis, KDE Commissioner, and Rhonda Sims, KDE Associate Commissioner, presented the previous year's results on school and student performance.

Dr. Lewis said with the passage of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and 2017 Senate Bill 1, the Accountability Performance Standard Setting Committee along with hundreds of stakeholders across the Commonwealth developed and implemented the accountability system's performance level description of what each star level means. Dr. Lewis and Ms. Sims said the performance level descriptions and recommendations are a new level of transparency in Kentucky.

Ms. Sims said accountability indicators contain five components that align with federal requirements including reading and mathematics proficiency; proficiency in social studies, science, and writing; students' growth/progress over an academic year; transition readiness; and graduation rates. Commissioner Lewis said a common myth about Kentucky's accountability system is that schools with higher ratings receive additional state or federal funding. Only CSI schools in the bottom 5 percent are eligible for school improvement dollars to improve performance.

Commissioner Lewis said schools with 3-star ratings show the school's overall performance is on pace with the majority of other schools in the state. Schools with 4- or 5-star ratings indicate a school has exhibited an exceptional level of performance. Because of different components at each educational level, maps are separated by elementary, middle, and high schools. Specific county or district ratings may be accessed at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/CommitteeDocuments/117>.

Dr. Lewis said student growth, a feature of Kentucky's Accountability System, is not required by federal law. The amount of progress students have made within a given year accounts for 35 percent of the schools overall weight. Superintendents and school districts disagreed with the manner in which growth was calculated due to the complexity and inability to calculate student growth without school and district data. Dr. Lewis convened a group of superintendents, data assessment coordinators, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders in an effort to revise growth calculation. It was determined that growth should be based on the level of improvement or progress. Special recognition was given to the top 20 schools who exhibited at least 10 points in student growth.

Performance level descriptor labels are defined as the level of understanding of Kentucky Academic Standards at specific grade levels. The terms are 1) novice - a

minimal understanding; 2) apprentice - a basic understanding; 3) proficient - a broad understanding; and 4) distinguished - a comprehensive understanding. Every student receives a scale score and rating for each subject area. Ms. Sims provided stark illustrations of Kentucky's achievement gaps and how performance works with assessment. Schools receive credit for students in each group according to the scale. Schools do not earn any points until growth is achieved in the novice area. Schools receive one-half point for apprentice students, one point for proficient students, and 1.25 points for distinguished students. As student scores improve, points are earned in the system.

Novice level data identifies students with the largest achievement gaps and the greatest need for instructional support. In all school groups, KDE's report indicates African Americans, Hispanics, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students experience larger achievement gaps in all subject areas. Asian students have the lowest achievement gap in the same subject areas. KDE's presentation illustrates percentages for each ethnic group. Subsequent pages provide student performance level percentages by year and subject matter and is separately reported for elementary, middle, and high schools. In the curriculum area, challenges continue for students with disabilities to move them out of the novice category.

The transition readiness indicator allows flexibility for students to demonstrate academic or career readiness and includes an exam on attainment of English language proficiency for English learners including speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English. The indicators include earning a high school diploma and meeting expectations for either academic or career readiness and can include CTE courses, ACT, KYOTE test, college placement exam scores, dual credit courses, certifications, and others. Commissioner Lewis said transition readiness accounts for 35 percent of a high school's rating and provides opportunities for high schools to move into the 3- and 4- star range even though proficiency scores may not be at KDE standards. Ms. Sims said the exceptional work experience program provides another means for schools to raise scores.

Graduation rate is a federal requirement. Kentucky uses both a 4-year and 5-year calculation that are equally weighted in getting an adjusted cohort graduation indicator. Kentucky has an overall graduation rate in the low 90th percentile, but all graduates have earned the required credits although they may not have demonstrated a transition component. The 5-year rate recognizes the persistence of students and educators in completing requirements for a Kentucky high school diploma. Kentucky's graduation indicator averages the 4- and 5- year rates.

In addition to the 5-star system, KDE has a federal requirement to create an improvement plan based on accountability results. The federal rule requires identifying the bottom 5 percent of Title 1 schools relating to performance; however, Kentucky law requires both Title 1 and Non-Title 1 schools. Schools designated as comprehensive support improvement (CSI) schools must be audited by a turnaround team selected by the local board of education. The audits must include specific goals as found on slide 23 of KDE's presentation. While Jefferson County had a significant increase in CSI schools this year, Fayette County had a significant decrease. Dr. Lewis said KDE staff held regional orientation training sessions with superintendents and principals. Following the audit results, schools have an opportunity to designate whether KDE or the district will lead the turnaround. After partnering with districts, Dr. Lewis reported many schools designated last year as CSI are no longer classified in that category.

In 2019, SB 175 language was changed to be consistent with the USDE language of "targeted support and improvement" (TSI) and "additional targeted support and improvement" (ATSI), previously identified as "TSI-Tier II". ATSI schools are defined as those with one or more groups of very low-level performing students. In 2018, schools with improvement indicators allowed them to exit the TSI-Tier II/ATSI status. New schools were not identified for ATSI in 2019, allowing Kentucky time to develop a new definition of TSI that met USDE standards. This year, KDE identified only 11 of over 400 previously designated ATSI schools as requiring additional support needs.

To raise the bar and close the gap, educators are urged to: 1) become intimately familiar with Kentucky's new academic standards for reading, math, science, and social studies; 2) teach to the standards at grade level including standards-aligned, high quality curriculum and lesson plans that will lead to significant improvement in student learning and assessment scores; and 3) expose standards at grade school level to ensure mastery on state assessments at middle and high school levels.

In response to a question by Senator Wise, Dr. Lewis said elementary, middle, and high schools experience a disproportionate number of underperforming male students, regardless of economic disadvantage and race. According to Ms. Sims, a student may be identified in multiple categories, if applicable. Relating to federal reporting requirements, Kentucky is required to submit cross-tab data including gender and ethnicity. Overall females outperform males, especially among the African American group.

Responding to a question by Representative Bojanowski, Dr. Lewis said it is possible to eliminate students in the novice range since no bell curve is imposed on the K-Prep assessment. Ms. Sims said scores are set during the administration of the first

round of testing and cut scores are set and remain in place unless there is a significant change in tests or standards. Categorization is based and grounded on students' work.

In response to a question from Senator Kerr, Ms. Sims said students earning a diploma are positive in the graduation rate but may lack other benchmarks for transition readiness. Dr. Lewis said transition readiness in the accountability system has no bearing on students but factor in to school ratings. Dr. Lewis said it is encouraging to see different regions with different levels of poverty experiencing extraordinary high rates of transition readiness. In response to a follow-up question, Dr. Lewis said achievement gaps, regardless of adversity, show every school district has economically and non-economically disadvantaged students but said gaps are being closed across the state. He said many kids face significant social and emotional challenges and there are differences across school districts as to how to reach those students. Leadership and staff have high expectations for student learning regardless of family background. Dr. Lewis said changes in adult behavior in similar populations with the same challenges have seen a difference in academic behavior in some schools while others have experienced no change. KDE's challenge is to be more consistent and systematic, giving kids the best opportunity for growth.

In response to a question by Representative Huff, Dr. Lewis said high-performance schools with a large number of proficient and distinguished students have concerns regarding the growth component and lack of reward for sustaining the ratings within the scoring mechanism. Growth helps balance the playing field between middle class and affluent students who have an advantage over low-income and disadvantaged students. Ms. Sims said KDE has organized a group of people to analyze the test results and study the intended and unintended consequences of SB 175, both positive and negative. She said many individuals have expressed concern about growth credit for students maintaining proficient or distinguished levels. Dr. Lewis said the growth value table was recommended by the stakeholder's group and was not imposed by KDE.

Election of Co-Chair

On a motion by Senator Wilson and a second by Senator Kerr, Senator Wise was nominated as Co-Chair of the committee. Senator Wilson made a motion that nominations cease and by acclamation and without objection, Senator Wise was elected.

Other Business

The next meeting of the Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee will be held November 12th at 10 a.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.