AN ACT relating to school leadership.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔SECTION 1. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 156 IS CREATED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Department" means the Kentucky Department of Education; and

(b) "Principal" means a person who:

1. Is the primary administrator and instructional leader of a public school or program;

2. Supervises students and school employees; and

3. Is selected by the district's superintendent pursuant to KRS 160.345.

(2) There is hereby established the principal leadership development practicum to provide all new principals within the first five (5) years of experience in the position with leadership development training. It is the intent of the General Assembly to ensure that a school district or principal incurs no cost for the participation in the first, second, and fourth years of the practicum and the principal receives a stipend toward the cost of the fifth year of the practicum. The Kentucky Department of Education shall develop and operate the practicum, subject to the following provisions:

(a) The practicum shall operate based on cohorts of new principals and offer five (5) years of leadership development training with specific requirements in each year. The department shall annually establish a calendar for the operation of the practicum;

(b) Each year's cohort of new principals shall consist of those people who first became principals by September 1 of each year;

(c) The department shall establish the minimum requirements for successful completion of each year, including hours of instruction or specific work

products;

(d) The first and second year of the practicum shall provide professional learning and mentorship supports to each principal, subject to the following:

1. The mentors shall have significant and successful experience as a principal and may be currently employed in a school district or retired. The mentors shall provide ongoing support to the new principals through the first and second school year with regular personal sessions to provide individualized support to the new principal;

2. The mentorship shall also provide the cohort of new principals an opportunity to build a peer support network; and

3. The professional learning provided by the department shall be aligned to the most recent professional standards adopted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration and include, at a minimum, the following topics:

a. Personnel evaluation and feedback;

b. School-based decision making and school councils;

c. Implementation of instructional leadership, high-quality instructional materials, and curriculum alignment;

d. Assessment and accountability;

e. Multitiered systems of support;

f. Services for exceptional children and youth; and

g. School safety;

(e) The third year of the practicum shall require that the new principal select a personalized list of trainings under the effective instructional leadership program established in Section 2 of this Act based on the leadership needs of the new principal. However, a principal may elect to substitute this

requirement with an additional year of the high-level leadership training provided during the fifth year of the practicum with the district's support. Any high-level leadership trainings completed during the third year shall not negate the fifth-year requirements under paragraph (g) of this subsection;

(f) The fourth year of the practicum shall require the new principal participate in an intensive leadership program during the summer with follow-up sessions throughout the following year. The leadership program shall be established by the department in partnership with the Kentucky Chamber Foundation;

(g) The fifth year of the practicum shall provide high-level leadership training opportunities for new principals. The department shall establish the standards for training providers and the trainings under this paragraph, including the number of hours required. The department shall maintain a list of training providers who are eligible to provide the high-level leadership training and make it available to new principals; and

(h) After the fifth year, each principal shall continue leadership development through the effective instructional leadership program established in Section 2 of this Act.

(3) A principal may submit the participant hours of instruction that the principal earns under this section during a year toward the twenty-one (21) participant hours required by the effective instructional leadership program established in Section 2 of this Act. The department shall grant program credit for the verified hours the principal submits.

(4) If a person discontinues serving as a principal during the first five (5) years of service and subsequently returns to a principal position, then that person shall continue the new principal program for the year in which the person was

previously participating.

(5) The principal leadership development practicum required under this section shall begin on July 1, 2027, for the 2027-2028 school year, and each principal with less than five (5) complete school years of experience shall be placed in a cohort and year of the practicum based on completed years of experience. Subsequent cohorts shall be admitted as provided in subsection (2) of this section.

(6) The Kentucky Board of Education may promulgate administrative regulations in accordance with KRS Chapter 13A for the operation of the section.

➔Section 2. KRS 156.101 is amended to read as follows:

(1) The purpose of this section is to encourage and require the maintenance and development of effective instructional leadership in the public schools of the Commonwealth and to recognize that principals, with the assistance of assistant principals, supervisors of instruction, guidance counselors, and directors of special education, have the primary responsibility for instructional leadership in the schools to which they are assigned.

(2) ***As used in***~~[For the purpose of]~~ this section, "instructional leader" ***means***~~[shall be defined as]~~ an employee of the public schools of the Commonwealth employed as a principal, assistant principal, supervisor of instruction, guidance counselor, director of special education, or other administrative position deemed by the Education Professional Standards Board to require an administrative certificate.

(3) In order to carry out the purpose of this section, the Kentucky Board of Education shall establish a statewide program to improve and maintain the quality~~[and effectiveness]~~ of ***effective*** instructional leadership in the public schools of the Commonwealth.

(4) The ***effective instructional leadership***~~[instructional leader improvement]~~ program shall contain the following provisions:

(a) Each instructional leader employed by the public schools of the

Commonwealth shall participate in a continuing intensive training program designed especially for instructional leaders;

(b) Each instructional leader shall annually complete an intensive training program approved by the Kentucky Board of Education to include no fewer than twenty-one (21) participant hours of instruction**. *Hours completed by participants in the principal leadership development practicum under Section 1 of this Act may be substituted to satisfy this requirement***;

(c) The Kentucky Board of Education shall prescribe specific criteria for the training program. The Kentucky Department of Education may contract for specific training with qualified agencies or institutions or approve programs offered by training providers, including local district training programs, except that the department shall ensure the requirements of paragraph (d) of this subsection are met; and

(d) Annually, each local district superintendent shall report to the Kentucky Department of Education any instructional leader who fails to complete the training requirements of paragraph (b) of this subsection and shall place the leader on probation for one (1) year. The Department of Education shall verify completion of the required training. If the required training for the prior year and the current year is not completed during the probationary period, the Department of Education shall forward the information to the Education Professional Standards Board, which shall revoke the instructional leader's certificate.

(5) The Kentucky Department of Education shall ensure that training options in human resource management and conflict resolution techniques are available to education leaders throughout the state.

(6) This section shall be known as the ~~["]~~Effective Instructional Leadership Act.~~"]~~

➔Section 3. KRS 161.027 is amended to read as follows:

(1) The Education Professional Standards Board, pursuant to KRS 161.028, shall by administrative regulation establish requirements for a preparation program in institutions of higher education for all new applicants for principal certification and establish criteria for admission to the program.

(2) The Education Professional Standards Board and the Council on Postsecondary Education shall evaluate the preparation programs for principals and maintain only those institutional programs that can demonstrate both the quality and the capability to enroll adequate numbers of students to justify the resources necessary for maintenance of a quality program.

(3) The Education Professional Standards Board shall develop or select appropriate assessments for applicants seeking certification as principals, including an assessment of the ability to apply knowledge, instructional leadership, management, and supervision skills.

(4) The Education Professional Standards Board shall establish the minimum score for successful completion of assessments and shall establish a reasonable fee to be charged applicants for the actual cost of administration of the assessments. The Education Professional Standards Board shall provide for confidentiality of assessment scores.

(5) ~~[The Education Professional Standards Board shall develop an internship program which shall provide for the supervision, assistance, and assessment of beginning principals and assistant principals. The internship shall not be required of applicants who have completed, within a ten (10) year period prior to making application, at least two (2) years of successful experience as a principal in a school situation. The Education Professional Standards Board, by administrative regulation, shall establish the internship program.~~

~~(6)]~~The certification of principals shall require the successful completion of the examinations required by subsection (3) of this section. A one (1) year certificate

may be given to a person who has:

(a) A comparable certificate from another state; or

(b) All other qualifications except the assessments and is selected as a principal or assistant principal in a district where the superintendent certifies to the Education Professional Standards Board that there is a limited number of applicants to meet the requirements.

Upon successful completion of the assessments, a certificate shall be issued for an additional four (4) years. A person employed in Kentucky as a principal or assistant principal who was certified in another state and practiced in that state for two (2) or more years is exempt from taking the assessment described in subsection (3)(a) of this section.

(6) ~~[(7)]~~ Upon successful completion of the approved preparation program and the assessments, the Education Professional Standards Board shall issue to the applicant a statement of eligibility for internship valid for five (5) years. If the applicant does not ***gain employment as a principal*** ~~[participate in an internship program]~~ within the five (5) year period, the applicant shall reestablish eligibility by repeating and passing the assessments in effect at that time or by completing a minimum of six (6) graduate hours, directly related to instructional leadership, management, or supervision, at a regionally or nationally accredited institution. The option for renewal through completion of graduate hours shall be available only for the first reestablishment of eligibility. Upon obtaining employment for an internship position as principal or assistant principal within the period of eligibility, the applicant shall be issued the appropriate one (1) year certificate for the position.

(7) ~~[(8)]~~ ~~[All applicants for principal certification, after successfully completing the assessments, shall successfully complete the internship program described in subsection (5) of this section for principal certification. If the principal's or assistant principal's internship performance is judged to be less than satisfactory pursuant to~~

~~administrative regulations developed by the Education Professional Standards Board, the applicant for principal certification shall be provided with an opportunity to repeat the internship one (1) time if the applicant is employed by a school district as a principal or assistant principal.~~

~~(9) ~~]Following successful completion of the ***first year of principalship***~~[internship program]~~, the principal certificate shall be extended for four (4) years. Renewal of the certificate shall require the completion of a continuing education requirement as prescribed by the Education Professional Standards Board.

➔Section 4. KRS 156.492 is amended to read as follows:

(1) The Kentucky Department of Education may enter into an agreement with any building and construction trade organization to develop a training program for school counselors providing services to students in the Commonwealth. The purpose of the training program shall be to promote building and construction trades and training facilities available to students by making school counselors aware of what is available to students participating in the building and construction trade. The training program shall include information relating to:

(a) The pay and benefits available to people who work in the building and construction trades; and

(b) Job opportunities, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and pathways within the building and construction trade industry.

(2) The participating trade organization shall ensure ample opportunities for school counselors that serve grades seven (7) through twelve (12) to complete the training created under subsection (1) of this section annually and shall bear all costs associated with the training. The participating trade organization may choose to offer professional development opportunities to teachers who serve students in grades seven (7) through twelve (12), if resources are available for this purpose.

(3) The department shall include the training program created in this section on the

electronic consumer bulletin board created pursuant to KRS 156.095(8) if requested by the training program.

(4) A school counselor serving students in grades seven (7) through twelve (12) may complete four (4) hours of training developed under this section which shall count towards the twenty-one (21) hours required annually pursuant to KRS 156.101(4)(b)~~[2]~~.

(5) Local boards of education or school-based decision making councils may incorporate this training as part of the four (4) days of professional development required pursuant to KRS 158.070(3)(a) for teachers who serve students in grades seven (7) through twelve (12) if offered by the participating trade organization.

➔Section 5. By November 1, 2026, the Kentucky Department of Education shall submit to the Legislative Research Commission for referral to the appropriate interim joint committees a plan for the implementation of each year of the practicum described in Section 1 of this Act that includes any minimum requirements for successful completion that the department will require and any statutory amendments the department needs for implementation of the practicum.