

ASSESSMENT AND SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

THE BASICS OF THE LAW

- In Kentucky, **schools have been held accountable for student learning** since 1992 through state requirements established by the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. The General Assembly required the development of a state assessment and accountability system which was known as the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System or KIRIS, which was used from 1992 to 1998, when the legislature abolished KIRIS and created the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). The Federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) under Title I added more accountability. The same standards and assessments (Kentucky Core Content Test or KCCT) have been used for both accountability systems using different calculations. In 2009 the state legislature enacted Senate Bill 1 (see summary on next page) abolishing CATS accountability and calling for another revision of the assessment and accountability system. Schools will not be held accountable by a ‘state’ system for the school years 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 but they will be held accountable through the federal No Child Left Behind. The new state system must be in place for the 2011-12 school year.

STANDARDS

High standards – both content and performance have been established for all students and are described below.

Content Standards set out what students need to know and be able to do. They are defined by the following.

- **Student learning goals** were established by the 1990 Kentucky General Assembly and revised in 2000 and again in 2009. These seven goals establish the basis for student learning. In 1994 the legislature decided that goals three and four would not be assessed for school accountability. (See list at the end of this chapter.)
- The goals are further defined by **57 Academic Expectations**, which were adopted by the state board and approved by two legislative committees. They can be found at <http://www.education.ky.gov> (search for Academic Expectations).

MAIN PROVISIONS OF SENATE BILL 1

Senate Bill 1 is the 2009 legislation calling for major changes in Kentucky standards, testing, accountability, teacher preparation, and professional development. This is a brief summary of the major elements of the new law.

Standards	<p>Substance: Fewer, deeper, clearer, aligned with college readiness and “success in the global economy.”</p> <p>Process: KDE and CPE to organize development of the standards. Each postsecondary institution to specify skills for entry-level courses. P-12 standards work to include P-12 educators, professors, business leaders, parents, and others.</p> <p>Timetable: Mathematics by December 2009, others by December 2010.</p> <p>Partners: Kentucky will partner with large group of states to develop common core standards in mathematics and language arts, and use a matching process for work on state standards for the other subjects. This work is the kind of project that should qualify for federal stimulus “Race to the Top” funding.</p>
Testing in 2012 and Later years	<p>Assessment elements to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading, math, science, social studies criterion-referenced tests with constructed-response and multiple-choice items, augmented with norm-referenced. • Writing on-demand prompts plus editing and mechanics test. • EXPLORE/PLAN/ACT readiness tests. <p>End-of-course can replace high school tests (KBE option).</p> <p>Testing to take no more than five of last fourteen instructional days of the year, with scores back to schools within 75 days.</p>
Program Reviews	<p>KBE to set program standards for arts, career/practical living, writing programs.</p> <p>Districts to check all schools each year, with KDE checking every other year.</p>
Accountability	<p>New KBE regulation and formula using scores and program reviews.</p>
Educator Implementation	<p>Current P-12 teacher and administrator training on standards, assessing student progress, adjusting instruction (KDE responsibility).</p> <p>Pre-service education programs on same issues (EPSB responsibility).</p> <p>Teacher preparation faculty and staff information and training sessions (EPSB).</p> <p>Postsecondary faculty information sessions regarding the standards (CPE).</p>
Interim Testing and Accountability	<p>Reading, mathematics, science, social studies and on-demand-writing tests continue, along with EXPLORE/PLAN/ACT, for 2009, 2010, and 2011.</p> <p>New norm-referenced test for graded 3-7 starts in 2010 and 2011.</p> <p>NCLB reading and math accountability rules apply to all schools. For elementary and middle schools, KBE will choose an “other academic indicator,” for 2010 and 2011 with scores from other subjects as an option.</p>

Senate Bill 1 can be downloaded at www.lrc.ky.gov/record/09RS/SB1.htm: click the link for SB 1.

This chart, prepared by Susan Perkins Weston, and more detailed discussion of the legislation can be downloaded from prichblog.blogspot.com/2009/05/SB1-roundup.html.

- The **Academic Standards**, formerly called the **Core Content for Assessment (core content)**, provides lists of content in reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, arts and humanities, and practical living and vocational studies, as required by law. Senate Bill 1 requires the Kentucky Department of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education to revise the standards in these subjects with involvement of practicing teachers, college faculty members, business leaders, parents and citizens. These standards must be aligned so that students meeting these standards will be well prepared to succeed at the next level from elementary to middle to high school to college. The state-revised subject area standards must be released to schools and colleges no later than 30 days after approval. All standards must be final and approved no later than December 15, 2010 and released to the public by January 15, 2011.

Kentucky is participating with over 45 other states to develop a Common Core of Standards in language arts and mathematics, creating 'national' standards. The other subjects will be revised for Kentucky purposes.

The 2006 revision added a Depth of Knowledge (DOK) dimension which indicates the cognitive demand or the level to which students must achieve.

- The **Program of Studies** is an outline of the minimum content to be taught in Kentucky schools and is more extensive than the Core Content. It was revised in 2006 and can be found at <http://www.education.ky.gov> (search for Program of Studies) and will need to be revised again once the new standards have been adopted.
- The **Combined Curriculum**, created in 2006, includes the Academic Expectations, Core Content and Program of Studies in one easy-to-use document for teachers as they develop curriculum, and for parents and the public to know what is to be taught in Kentucky schools. It will continue to be used until the 2011-12 school year when new standards have been adopted. It is available on the Kentucky Department of Education Web site at <http://www.education.ky.gov> (search for Combined Curriculum).

Performance standards, were established by the Board of Education to define how well students learn the Core Content. These standards describe skills and knowledge students demonstrate at each performance level for each content area. Individual scoring guides are written for each open response item.

- Based on the performance standards, student work was originally categorized as novice, apprentice, proficient, and distinguished. The current system uses eight levels that have been in place since 1999 for reading, mathematics, science, and social studies and since 2007 for writing:
 - ✓ low novice
 - ✓ medium novice
 - ✓ high novice
 - ✓ low apprentice
 - ✓ medium apprentice
 - ✓ high apprentice
 - ✓ proficient
 - ✓ distinguished

ASSESSMENTS

The **Kentucky Core Content Tests (KCCT)** will continue to be used to assess learning in the core content for reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies until new tests are adopted in 2011-12. They include the following test items:

- ✓ multiple-choice questions
- ✓ open-response questions (require an answer that may include a written explanation, graph, pictures, diagrams, or charts)
- ✓ writing prompts (questions that require longer, more developed writing responses)

Arts and humanities, practical living/vocational studies, and writing portfolios will not be assessed by the state until 2011-12 when program reviews will be used to evaluate these programs.

Writing portfolios will be required of each student, primary through grade 12, but individual scores will not be used for state accountability purposes. Local districts and schools will decide whether to score portfolios and how to use them for the transition years 2009, 2010, and 2011.

Alternate assessments include: portfolios, attainment tasks and transition attainment record checklists that are specially designed for students with the most severe disabilities who cannot participate even with accommodations in the regular curriculum.

Also included in school assessment program:

- ✓ **ACT** college admissions test to assess English, reading, mathematics and science in grade 11 is required for all high school students (as of 2008). Students with ACT scores that fail to meet benchmarks established by Kentucky's Council on Postsecondary Education must be offered the accelerated learning program. Students who complete an accelerated program may repeat the ACT prior to graduation. The Kentucky Department of Education is to cover the cost of one retake for students eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program. Currently, retakes of ACT are not funded.
- ✓ **EXPLORE**, a high school readiness test of English, mathematics, reading and science is given in grade 8 and is intended to help students plan for their high school course of study and beyond.
- ✓ **PLAN**, a readiness test of English, mathematics, reading and science given in grade 10, is intended to help students plan for postsecondary education or work. PLAN is a predictor of performance on the ACT.
- ✓ **ACT, EXPLORE, and PLAN** will be included in school accountability beginning with the 2011-12 school year.
- ✓ **National norm-referenced tests** will be administered in reading and mathematics in grades 3-7 in 2010 and 2011.

TESTING SCHEDULE BY GRADE (2008 TO 2011)

2008 ASSESSMENTS										
	End of Primary	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Reading Core Content Test	★	★	★	★	★	★		★		
Mathematics Core Content Test	★	★	★	★	★	★			★	
Science Core Content Test		★			★				★	
Social Studies Core Content Test			★			★			★	
Arts & Humanities Core Test			★			★			★	
Practical/Vocational Core Test		★			★			★		
Writing Core Content Test			★			★				★
Writing Portfolio		★			★					★
Explore/Plan/ACT *Readiness Tests						★		★	★	
2009 ASSESSMENTS										
	End of Primary	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Reading Core Content Test	★	★	★	★	★	★		★		
Mathematics Core Content Test	★	★	★	★	★	★			★	
Science Core Content Test		★			★				★	
Social Studies Core Content Test			★			★			★	
Writing Core Content Test			★			★				★
Explore/Plan/ACT Readiness Tests						★		★	★	
2010 AND 2011 ASSESSMENTS										
	End of Primary	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Reading Core Content Test	★	★	★	★	★	★		★		
Mathematics Core Content Test	★	★	★	★	★	★			★	
Science Core Content Test		★			★				★	
Social Studies Core Content Test			★			★			★	
Writing Core Content Test			★			★				★
Nationally-Normed Reading Test	★	★	★	★	★					
Nationally-Normed Mathematics Test	★	★	★	★	★					
Explore/Plan/ACT Readiness Tests						★		★	★	

This chart was prepared by: Susan Perkins Weston

Other optional assessments:

- ✓ **WorkKeys**, a test in reading for information, locating information and applied mathematics, skills needed in the workplace, will be available for students in grades 10, 11, and 12. WorkKeys will be offered if funds are available.
- ✓ Successful school **performance under CATS** included student attendance, retention, dropout and graduation rates, and successful transition to adult life (college, jobs, or military). These are known as non-cognitive or **nonacademic indicators of school success**. As required by Kentucky law, nonacademic data is still collected and reported to schools and the public each year, but is no longer used in state accountability. Graduation rates are still used as the other indicator for high school NCLB accountability.

Testing Times: Senate Bill 1 requires changes and limits in testing times as follows:

- ✓ Testing window for 2009-10 and 2010-11 may be no longer than six days for regular test administration. Four additional days are available for makeup testing.
- ✓ For 2009-10 and 2010-11 schools may use up to six days for KCCT tests and the NRT must be administered one week before or after KCCT.
- ✓ For 2011-12 and after, testing is limited to five days and must be administered during the last 14 instructional days of the school year.
- ✓ Beginning in 2012, all test results must be reported no later than 75 days after the test is first administered.

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

- Senate Bill 1 calls for the elimination of CATS and the state accountability system until 2012, when a new system is to be established. Until that time, schools will be held accountable using the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Nonacademic data will not be used for accountability from 2009 to 2011 except graduation rates are used at the high school level for NCLB. Schools no longer have growth charts showing their progress toward proficiency by 2014.
- The **scholastic audit process**, a part of the state's mandated assistance for schools, is a comprehensive review of a school's learning environment, organization efficiency, and academic performance of students. Between 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years, schools are selected for audits based on NCLB results. The **Standards and Indicators of School Improvement (SISI)** document is used for this review. Results of these audits are used to determine the level of support necessary for continuous improvement of student academic performance. Audit teams include teachers, administrators, and parents.

New state accountability system: The Kentucky Board of Education is required by Senate Bill 1 to develop a new accountability system to begin the 2011-12 school year. It must include:

- ✓ Student assessment results in language arts, reading, English, mathematics, science, social studies and on-demand writing.
- ✓ Results of program reviews in arts and humanities, practical living and career studies and writing programs.
- ✓ School improvement results
- ✓ Other factors the Board deems appropriate

In developing the system, the Board must seek the advice of the School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council (SCAAC), the Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee of the legislature (EAARS), the Office of Education Accountability (OEA), and the National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability (NTAPAA).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): The federal law, No Child Left Behind or NCLB, enacted in 2001, calls for school accountability including high expectations for all students, student performance standards tied to annual assessments, school accountability and school performance information for parents in the form of school report cards. These goals were shared by Kentucky's assessment and accountability laws.

Standards and Assessments for NCLB: NCLB requires states to determine their own standards and assessments. The same standards and Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) developed for Kentucky's accountability system have been and will continue to be used for NCLB.

Accountability for NCLB: Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): Schools must make adequate yearly progress (AYP) under the federal accountability program. All schools are identified as either making AYP or being an NCLB improvement school. A school becomes an NCLB improvement school if it fails to make AYP two years in a row in the same content area. NCLB accountability applies only to Title I schools. However, non-Title I schools that fail to make AYP two years in a row in the same content area are identified as eligible for state assistance.

Adequate yearly progress requires schools to meet the following objectives:

1. **Meeting an annual measurable objective in reading and math** in grades 3-8 and one year of high school for all students and for each subgroup of students of sufficient size or large enough to be reported. Annual measurable objectives are yearly targets for getting 100 percent of students to the proficient or distinguished performance levels by 2014. The targets apply to the school as a whole and to subgroups based on:
 - a. race/ethnicity
 - b. limited English proficiency
 - c. poverty
 - d. disability

If students in one subgroup do not reach the target, the school does not meet AYP.

Sufficient Size for Annual Measurable Objectives: For subgroups to be included in a school's accountability, there must be 10 or more students in each grade tested in reading and mathematics and 60 students in the grades combined OR that subgroup must comprise 15 percent or more of all accountable students in the grades tested. If there are fewer students than this in a subgroup, the subgroup is not reported. A subgroup too small for inclusion in the school level reports may be large enough to include in district level reports.

2. **Meeting student participation goals:** 95 percent of all students and 95 percent of students in each subgroup must take the assessment.
3. **Meeting goals for another academic indicator:** High schools must make progress or meet goals toward improving graduation rates. Graduation rates from the previous year are used because this data is not available in time for August reporting. Elementary and middle schools have used their prior year CATS classification and in 2009 this indicator was used for a final year. In 2010 and 2011 another indicator must be selected by the Kentucky Board of Education because Senate Bill 1 eliminated the school accountability index.

OTHER PROVISIONS

- **Full academic year:** In calculating AYP for schools and districts, states can only use the assessment scores of students enrolled in a school and district for a full academic year, defined by the Kentucky Board of Education. Prior to Senate Bill 1, the law defined full academic year as any 100 days of enrollment during the school year from the first day of school until the first day of the testing window. This definition will continue in 2010 and 2011, but the Board could change this definition for the new system in 2012. Students enrolled in a school less than a full academic year but enrolled in the district for a full academic year are included in district accountability calculations.
- **Limited English Proficient student (LEP)** scores count for AYP but on a prescribed time frame. In their first year, these students must take an English proficiency exam and that participation rate is used in place of the reading score. They must also take the math exam. In the second year, they must take all exams.
- **Students with Special Needs:** Under NCLB schools may not exclude students with disabilities from the accountability system. Most students with disabilities complete the same test as their peers. However, some are given more time or the use of technology to assist specific needs. Schools may use alternate standards and measures for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities but may identify no more than one percent of their students for these alternate standards.
- **Setting Targets:** States were required to set targets for each year as long as they reach 100 percent proficiency by 2013-14. The regulations allowed states to set starting points, measurable objectives, and intermediate goals by grade span. Kentucky chose to set different starting points for elementary, middle and high school as follows. Additionally, specific targets are available for schools and districts arranged as primary to grade 8, primary to grade 12 and grades 7 through 12.

**Kentucky's Annual Measurable Objectives in Reading and Mathematics
by School Year and School Level**

SCHOOL CONFIGURATION						
	Elementary		Middle		High	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
2001-02	47.27	22.45	45.60	16.49	19.26	19.76
2002-03	47.27	22.45	45.60	16.49	19.26	19.76
2003-04	47.27	22.45	45.60	16.49	19.26	19.76
2004-05	53.86	32.14	52.40	26.93	29.35	29.79
2005-06	53.86	32.14	52.40	26.93	29.35	29.79
2006-07	53.86	32.14	52.40	26.93	29.35	29.79
2007-08	60.45	41.84	59.20	37.37	39.45	39.82
2008-09	67.04	51.53	66.00	47.81	49.54	49.85
2009-10	73.64	61.23	72.80	58.25	59.63	59.88
2010-11	80.23	70.92	79.60	68.68	69.72	69.91
2011-12	86.82	80.61	86.40	79.12	79.82	79.94
2012-13	93.41	90.31	93.20	89.56	89.91	89.97
2013-14	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Percent of students scoring proficient or distinguished.

- **Confidence Intervals** are used in determining whether schools meet their reading and math targets. Schools falling within the 99 percent confidence interval, or margin of error band, meet their objective.
- **Reporting Timeframe:** The state must identify schools for improvement prior to the beginning of the school year so parents have time to consider school choice options. All data for NCLB is to be available in early August. This rule was waived in 2009 because so many instructional days were lost due to severe weather and delayed testing.

CONSEQUENCES UNDER NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB)

NCLB Improvement Schools: A Title I school becomes an NCLB Improvement School if it fails to make AYP two years in a row in the same content area. Title I schools identified as NCLB Improvement Schools are subject to a series of consequences. Each year a school continues to be an improvement school, additional consequences are added. NCLB Improvement Schools continue in that category until they have met AYP two years in a row.

Tier 1 (first year of consequences, two years not making AYP)

- ✓ Parent Notification: notification to parents in schools identified for NCLB improvement as to the reason for identification, what the school is doing to improve, what KDE and the district are doing to improve the school, how parents can be involved
- ✓ School Choice: all students have the option of transferring to another public school in their district that is not an NCLB improvement school, priority is given to the lowest achieving students from low income families, the district pays for transportation
- ✓ School must revise its school improvement plan and include: research-based strategies, practices to improve core subjects and parent involvement, extended school activities, use of ten percent of Title I money for professional development, teacher-mentoring

Tier 2 (three years not making AYP)

- ✓ Tier 1 consequences plus:
- ✓ Supplemental Educational Services: low income students attending a school identified as an NCLB Improvement School may receive tutoring outside of the regular school day provided by state-approved providers or the district if it is not an improvement district

Tier 3 (four years not making AYP)

- ✓ Tier 1 and 2 consequences plus:
- ✓ Corrective Action: school district must take corrective action to improve teaching and learning

Tier 4 (five years not making AYP)

- ✓ Tier 1, 2 and 3 consequences plus:
- ✓ Restructuring: district must prepare a plan for alternative governance

Tier 5 (six years not making AYP)

- ✓ Tier 1, 2, 3 and 4 consequences plus:
- ✓ Alternative Governance: districts must implement the alternative governance plan to restructure the school

States and districts have flexibility in shaping the school improvement strategies and interventions for these schools.

School districts are also identified as meeting AYP or being improvement districts. NCLB improvement districts must revise their improvement plans, may request assistance from the state and may face corrective action.

Assuring a Fair System: Three committees were established in 1998 to provide guidance to the state board in developing CATS. They also provided guidance for compliance with No Child Left Behind. They include:

- **Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee (EAARS):** an eight-member subcommittee of legislators, appointed by the Legislative Research Commission. Its responsibility is to review administrative regulations, advise the state board on the assessment and accountability system, and provide oversight for the Office of Education Accountability.
- **School Curriculum, Assessment, and Accountability Council (SCAAC):** a 17-member group representing educators, local board members, parents, business leaders, and the public, recommended by constituent groups and appointed by the governor. It is charged with studying, reviewing, making recommendations to and advising the Kentucky Board of Education and Legislative Research Commission on academic standards, communication with the public, assessment, accountability, and assistance to schools to improve learning.
- **National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability (NTAPAA):** appointed by the Legislative Research Commission and composed of no fewer than three testing experts. Its charge is to advise the Legislative Research Commission, the state board, and the Department of Education regarding assessment and accountability.
- The state board must also seek the advice of the **Office of Education Accountability.**

Report Cards:

- An annual **school report card** is prepared for each school. State law and NCLB require schools and school districts to produce these reports. State law requires information on student academic achievement, attendance, retention, drop-out rates, student transition to adult life, and school learning environment including measures of parental involvement. Other items include: the school's mission statement and goals, enrollment, reports on state contests such as band, orchestra, chorus, and academic competitions, teacher qualifications, school safety information, spending per pupil, pupil/teacher ratio, and availability of technology. Indications of parent involvement include the number of parents attending parent-teacher conferences, voting in school council elections and serving on committees, and the number of parent volunteer hours. The school may report on extracurricular activities, awards, and recognitions. The names of school council members are also included. In addition, NCLB requires test scores broken out by subgroup. This data should be available on the department's Web site. (Search for "School Report Cards" at <http://www.education.ky.gov>.)
- Schools are required to mail report cards to families or get a waiver to distribute them in another way. They are also available on the parent section of the department's Web site. (See below for contact information).

- Individual student reports to parents must include:
 - ✓ reading and math skills for students in grades 3-8
 - ✓ high school or college readiness test results

These reports are designed to identify and develop learning plans for students who are falling behind or who exceed expectations.

- **School and District Report Cards** are available on the KDE website (<http://www.education.ky.gov>). Schools and districts are required to provide print copies upon request.

OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST

- Kentucky **teachers** have a significant role in designing the system. Teachers create and/or review the test items, have input on revising Core Content and the Program of Studies, were responsible for creating and recommending performance standards to the state board, and had the opportunity to comment on the development of the CATS system through electronic mail. They will be involved in approving the new common core standards.
- The Kentucky Board of Education has a Code of Ethics for Appropriate Testing Practices for School and District Personnel (**Administrative Code for Kentucky’s Educational Assessment Program**) to give teachers guidelines for administering state assessments. Copies of the code are available from schools, the district assessment coordinator, the superintendent or from the Department of Education at (502) 564-4394. Concerns about inappropriate assessment practices should be reported to the Department of Education at (502) 564-2983, or to the Office of Education Accountability at (800) 242-0520. Persons who call to report a concern do not have to give their name. However, it is more difficult for the state to follow up on anonymous reports.
- The department and state board must assist local districts in developing and using **continuous assessment strategies** that provide ongoing information for teachers to use to improve teaching and learning. The state releases test questions used in previous Kentucky Core Content Tests that schools may use for this purpose.

RESULTS

Results for No Child Left Behind (NCLB):

- Results for 2008 and 2009:

	2008	2009
KY schools that met AYP goals	70.9% or 820 schools	60.2% or 696 schools
KY schools did not meet AYP goals	29.1% or 337 schools	39.8% or 461 schools
Elementary schools that met AYP goals	89%	78%
Middle schools that met AYP goals	44.4%	37.6%
High schools that met AYP goals	33.3%	19.9%
Districts that met AYP goals	58.9% or 103 districts	42.9% or 75 districts

- For more details and for your school and district results go to <http://www.education.ky.gov> and search for NCLB reports.

New Transition Index

- A Transition Index has been developed by the Council for Better Education, the Kentucky Association of School Councils, and the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence to monitor school performance during the three years that Kentucky is moving from the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) to a system based on new state standards and testing (2009, 2010 and 2011). The new system was mandated in legislation (Senate Bill 1) enacted by the 2009 General Assembly and prohibits the state from creating a school or district index. The Transition Index uses all subjects tested and demonstrates growth in student performance. NCLB uses reading and mathematics only in a pass or fail calculation.

The Transition Index is based on a formula similar to the one used in past years by the Kentucky Department of Education to track school progress. A formula using state reading, mathematics, science, social studies and on demand writing scores will compare 2009, 2010 and 2012 scores with 2007 and 2008 to gauge school progress. Disaggregated data will also be calculated to highlight progress or lack of progress in closing achievement gaps. For 2009 the index shows:

- Improvement on elementary and middle school mathematics and high school writing
- Flat or declining reading scores
- Slight improvement, flat or declining scores in other subjects

Looking at trends in **combined results** for all subjects:

- 56 percent of elementary schools have reached proficiency or are improving at a rate that would take them to that mark by 2014.
- 44 percent of middle schools have reached proficiency or would reach it by 2014 at the current pace of growth.
- 15 percent of high schools would reach proficiency by 2014 if recent trends continue.

Looking at **disaggregated data**, or results by race, income, gender and other factors, all groups of students have improved. However, gaps in achievement persist.

- Of all groups studied, only gifted students have reached proficiency at all three levels: elementary, middle, and high school.
- Asian students have reached proficiency at the elementary and middle school levels.
- African-American, Hispanic, low-income, migrant and limited English students showed improvement at all levels, but the rate of improvement since 2007 has been too slow to put them on track for proficiency by 2014.
- White students at the elementary level are on track to reach proficiency by 2014. At the middle school level, white students scores are improving too slowly, and in high school, white student scores have not increased over the 2007 level.
- On the 0-140 scale used in the analysis, gaps of 15 points or more separate African-American students and students with limited English proficiency from their classmates at every level.

A full report and data for each school and district is available at <http://www.kasc.net>.

Nonacademic results:

- In 2008, 6,729 students in grades 9-12 dropped out of school, a rate of 3.30 percent, significantly less than the 5.53 percent in 1995 but more than the 3.17 percent rate the previous year and the gaps between white, African-American and Hispanic students is widening. The data reported by gender and race for 1998-99, 2006-07 and 2007-08 is:

	<u>1998-99</u>	<u>2006-07</u>	<u>2007-08</u>
Male	5.86	3.69	3.78
Female	4.09	2.64	2.79
White	4.81	2.94	2.88
African American	7.00	4.77	6.14
Hispanic	7.20	5.46	6.10

- The high school graduation rate has steadily increased from 79.71% to 84.5%.
- In 2006-07, 12,915 students in grades 4 through 12 were retained, or failed to pass on to the next grade. The rate of 2.55% decreased from 4.03% in 1998-99 and 3.00% in 2007. Ninth grade students had the highest retention rate at 8.44 percent. See the nonacademic briefing packet on the department of education website for more details. (Search for nonacademic indicators at <http://www.education.ky.gov>)
- The percent of students enrolling in Kentucky colleges immediately following high school graduation increased from 44.1 percent in 1993 to 49.7 percent in 2008. Out-of-state college enrollment decreased from 5.7 percent in 1993 to 5.4 percent in 2008. Between 1993 and 2008 the percent going to vocational/technical schools increased from 4.1 to 5.0

Other national tests:

- The **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)** is a standards-based test that provides national comparisons. It has been administered to a sample of Kentucky students in fourth and eighth grade reading, writing, mathematics, and science. On the most recent tests Kentucky students scored:
 - ✓ above the national average in reading in grades 4 and 8 (2007)
 - ✓ above the national average in science in grades 4 and 8 (2005)
 - ✓ equal to the national average in grade 4 in mathematics (2009)
 - ✓ above the national average in writing in grade 4 (2002) and below the national average in mathematics grade 8 (2009)

Kentucky students have made strong progress in elementary reading and mathematics, and elementary and middle school science and although below the national average in mathematics in middle school, have made gains. Significant achievement gaps persist based on poverty and race. For more information check the National Center for Education Statistics Web site at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/>.

- Increasing numbers of Kentucky students are taking **advanced placement** classes and exams and are scoring at higher levels. In 2009, Kentucky high school students took 27,170 AP exams compared to 6,680 in 1990 and 15,319 in 2004. That includes some students who took more than one exam. Kentucky students earned a score of 3 or higher (on a 5-point scale) on 49 percent of the tests they took in 2009.

	Number of AP Test-Takers	Number of Tests	Number of Scores 3-5
2004	9,775	15,319	7,060
2005	10,478	16,465	7,636
2006	11,589	18,608	8,962
2007	13,246	20,787	9,913
2008	14,687	23,308	10,941
2009	16,991	27,170	13,195

- Beginning in fall 2006, EXPLORE was given in grade 8, PLAN in grade 10 and ACT in grade 11. Kentucky results for 2006, 2007 and 2008 follow.

In 2008, 48,653 Kentucky students in 8th grade took the EXPLORE assessment. The scoring scale for the assessment is from 1 to 25.

EXPLORE RESULTS

SUBJECT	AVERAGE SCORES			
	KENTUCKY			NATION
	2006	2007	2008	Norms set in 2005
English	13.6	13.7	13.8	14.2
Mathematics	14.2	14.4	14.6	15.1
Reading	13.8	13.7	13.9	13.8
Science	15.8	15.8	16.0	15.9
Composite	14.5	14.5	14.7	14.9

Source: Kentucky Department of Education

In 2008, 50,531 10th grade Kentucky students took the PLAN assessment. The scoring scale for the assessment is from 1 to 32.

PLAN RESULTS

SUBJECT	AVERAGE SCORES			
	KENTUCKY			NATION
	2006	2007	2008	Norms set in 2005
English	15.6	15.3	15.9	16.9
Mathematics	16.3	16.2	16.4	17.4
Reading	16.0	16.1	16.0	16.9
Science	17.3	17.2	17.4	18.2
Composite	16.4	16.3	16.6	17.5

Source: Kentucky Department of Education

- Beginning in 2008, all Kentucky 11th grade students (graduating class of 2009) were required to take the ACT. Scores in previous years had risen from 20.2 in 2005 to 20.6 in 2008. With the addition of 14,000 students who would not normally have taken the test, scores dropped to 19.1 which is not surprising. The challenge is to help all students be college and work ready. The results below are from the Graduating Class reports released annually by ACT.

ACT RESULTS

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
KY PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS TESTED	25,087	24,930	25,988	26,610	41,099
PERCENT OF GRADUATES TESTED	65.8%	64.7%	65.5%	64.5%	100% (expected)
ENGLISH AVERAGE SCORE	19.7	20.0	20.0	20.2	18.3
MATHEMATICS AVERAGE SCORE	19.6	19.8	19.9	20.0	18.7
READING AVERAGE SCORE	20.7	20.9	21.0	21.3	19.4
SCIENCE AVERAGE SCORE	20.3	20.4	20.5	20.6	19.4
COMPOSITE	20.2	20.4	20.5	20.6	19.1





Source: Kentucky Department of Education

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

- The Kentucky Department of Education has reported that in general school audits show effective schools with strong student assessment scores follow these practices:
 - ✓ Teachers and principals from different grade levels and between schools talk to each other about curriculum.
 - ✓ The school staff and council carefully review student achievement data to identify gaps in learning in curricular areas and gaps in achievement between different groups of students.
 - ✓ Teachers assess students in several different ways to review student work to identify learning gaps.
 - ✓ Teachers work together to align curriculum with core content to be sure all the core content is taught.
 - ✓ Schools work to be sure every student has equal access to a rich curriculum and schedules are flexible enough to support this policy.
 - ✓ Extended school services, federal programs, and family resource and youth services centers work together in effective ways to support student achievement.
 - ✓ School and district budgets are targeted in effective ways to support student learning.
 - ✓ Professional development is targeted toward student and school learning goals.
 - ✓ Staff evaluations focus on improved teaching.
 - ✓ School leadership is strong.
 - ✓ Schools take consolidated planning seriously, taking school data in consideration.


- On the opposite end of the scale, schools with low performance have the following characteristics:
 - ✓ Ineffective school councils
 - ✓ Gaps in lesson planning and instruction
 - ✓ Assessments that do not align with Kentucky goals
 - ✓ Ineffective planning
 - ✓ An inability to use assessment data
 - ✓ No alignment of curriculum
 - ✓ Professional development unrelated to the school plan
 - ✓ Weak use of technology
 - ✓ Weak leadership
 - ✓ Low expectations for students and adults
 - ✓ A lack of parent involvement

WHAT TO EXPECT

-  NCLB test results are given to schools and districts in early August. There was an exception in 2009 because of weather related school closings.
-  Expect ongoing conversations about how to **close achievement gaps** between different groups of students along with discussions about setting targets for and plans for reducing those gaps.
-  **School report cards** are available each January.
-  Future testing dates are:

EXPLORE PLAN On-Demand Writing (grade 12)	September 14-25, 2009
ACT	March 9, 2010
Kentucky Core Content Testing	April 19-30, 2010*
Reports to schools	July 2010
To Be Decided	2011
Last 14 instructional days of school 5 days may be used for testing	2012 and beyond

*schools may use six days for testing and four makeup days.

-  **Students with disabilities**, who meet certain requirements, participate in the alternate portfolio program or are given special assistance, as long as that assistance is prescribed in their individual education plan and used in instruction. For example, a student with an orthopedic handicap who physically cannot write or type but who has the mental capacity to take the test could have a scribe write answers dictated by the student.

- ✍ Expect students to be writing in all grades and subjects. Writing must be part of the curriculum in all grades to spread the responsibility for teaching writing to all teachers. Watch for new program reviews of writing instruction in the next three years.
- ✍ Students will continue to get individual **report cards**. State law does not require state assessment scores to affect students' grades or ability to graduate, but local school boards may adopt policies requiring completion of these assessments for high school graduation. Some teachers may include portfolio or state assessment items in grading their students. Some colleges are using portfolios for placement in writing classes.
- ✍ Watch for discussions about significant **changes in assessments** including electronic or online test-taking and end-of-course exams at high schools.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- ★ **Carefully review your school report card.** If there are gaps in achievement between different groups of students, volunteer to help as the school establishes targets for and plans to reduce those gaps.
- ★ **Review** your **Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP)** to check your school goals and strategies for improving academic achievement for all students. Look to see how school assessment data has been used to plan for improved student learning.
- ★ **Make an appointment** with your child's teacher to discuss your child's progress on these assessments. **Remember**, one test is not sufficient to tell you how your child is doing. Ask to see results of all tests, samples of homework, portfolio items, and classroom work. Ask what strengths and weaknesses your child demonstrates in the classroom and what you can do to help.
- ★ **Talk** with students and teachers about the writing program. Ask if writing is being incorporated throughout the curriculum in all grades, how portfolios are used and how you can help your child become a better writer.
- ★ If your school has a PTA/PTO/PTSA, **request** a program on assessment, curriculum and instruction, core content, or writing portfolios to help parents understand what to expect and how to help. If you do not have a PTA/PTO, form one. Call the Kentucky PTA office at (502) 226-6607.
- ★ **Recognize the contributions** of teachers and administrators. Let them know you appreciate the amount of work it takes to adjust instruction and curriculum to help students acquire the skills needed for Kentucky's assessments. Changing classroom practices requires teachers and administrators to think differently about what they do, and it takes time and effort.
- ★ **Read** the Prichard Committee's blog for up-to-date information about education in Kentucky (<http://www.prichardcommittee.org> or <http://prichblog.blogspot.com/>)
- ★ **Write** to your elected officials with specific examples of successes or difficulties with the state assessment program. See Chapter on Parent Involvement to learn how to contact state legislators.
- ★ **Attend** local school council and school board meetings and ask about plans to address achievement gaps between different groups of students.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

- **Kentucky Association of School Councils**, (859) 238-2188 or www.kasc.net for Transition Index Reports and good information in the free downloads section
- **Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Assessment and Accountability**, (502) 564-2256 or visit the Web site at <http://www.education.ky.gov>
- **Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence**, P.O. Box 1658, Lexington, KY 40588-1658; (859) 233-9849, Lexington area or (800) 928-2111; email: admin@prichardcommittee.org or visit the Web site at <http://www.prichardcommittee.org/>.

NOTES:

Goals for Kentucky Schools

- (a) Schools shall expect a high level of achievements of all students.
- (b) Schools shall develop their students' ability to:
1. Use basic communication and mathematics skills for purposes and situations they will encounter throughout their lives;
 2. Apply core concepts and principles from mathematics, the sciences, the arts, the humanities, social studies, and practical living studies to situations they will encounter throughout their lives;
 3. Become self-sufficient individuals of good character exhibiting the qualities of altruism, citizenship, courtesy, hard work, honesty, human worth, justice, knowledge, patriotism, respect, responsibility, and self-discipline;*
 4. Become responsible members of a family, work group, or community, including demonstrating effectiveness in community service;*
 5. Think and solve problems in school situations and in a variety of situations they will encounter in life;
 6. Connect and integrate experiences and new knowledge from all subject matter fields with what they have previously learned and build on past learning experiences to acquire new information through various media sources; and
 7. Express their creative talents and interests in visual arts, music, dance and dramatic arts.
- (c) Schools shall increase their students' rate of school attendance.
- (d) Schools shall reduce their students' dropout and retention rates.
- (e) Schools shall reduce physical and mental health barriers to learning.
- (f) Schools shall be measured on the proportion of students who make a successful transition to work, post-secondary education, and the military.

*Goals 3 and 4 are not included in Kentucky's assessment and accountability system.

Source: Kentucky Revised Statutes, Section 158.6451.