



Ronda Harmon
Executive Director

kasc@kasc.net • 859/238-2188 (phone) • 859/238-0806 (fax)
Post Office Box 784, Danville, KY 40423

PRESS RELEASE

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SCHOOL, STATE EDUCATION PROGRESS WILL BE TRACKED

BY EDUCATION GROUPS DURING TESTING TRANSITION

DANVILLE, Ky. - School progress on state tests will be tracked by a partnership of education advocacy organizations during the next three years, while the state is suspending its accountability reports and developing a new testing system. The Council for Better Education, the Kentucky Association of School Councils, and the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence will issue a report each fall on school, district, and state progress on students' academic performance.

Kentucky is scheduled to start a new test in 2012, as required by this year's Senate Bill 1. During the 2009 to 2011 transition period, the state Department of Education will release student scores but will not provide an "accountability index" combining all results in a single snapshot of progress being made.

To fill the gap, the three organizations plan to use test results and other information to calculate a "transition index" that closely resembles the academic data published by the state in past years.

“Our transition version will leave out the writing portfolio, arts, and practical living, because they’ve been dropped from statewide testing. But otherwise it will be similar to scoring the state department has used for years,” said Bob Sexton, the Prichard Committee’s executive director. “We think we can provide a valuable annual snapshot each year.”

Speaking for the school councils’ group, executive director Ronda Harmon, points out that “An index provides the big picture on whether schools’ strategies are working with kids. We see this transition project as a way to help schools measure their progress until the new 2012 assessment begins.”

Statewide results will also be reported. “We need steady data on whether progress in our statewide school system is strong enough, and whether we’re moving quickly enough toward proficiency for all students,” said Daviess County Superintendent Tom Shelton, president of the Council for Better Education.

The Council for Better Education represents 168 of Kentucky’s 174 school districts in efforts to ensure an efficient system of public schools. The Kentucky Association of School Councils is a membership organization supporting school councils, which are responsible for key school decisions about how to improve student achievement. The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence is an independent, non-profit, citizens’ advocacy organization working to improve education for all Kentuckians.