PRICHARD COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

KENTUCKY EDGUIDES | 2017 EDITION

The Kentucky EdGuides are tools for engaging students, parents, teachers, and other Kentucky public education stakeholders. In two pages or less, each EdGuide explains one major element of Kentucky's public education system.

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Introduction

These *Kentucky EdGuides* are a Prichard Committee publication, designed to help students, parents, and other Kentuckians learn about our public school system and join us in advocating for excellence in education for every Kentucky child. The 2017 edition is our third release of the *EdGuides*, reflecting changes in law, data, and policy over the last year.

Each *EdGuide* addresses a single major topic in two pages or less, sharing basics of Kentucky's education law, information on recent results, and sources for additional information. For easy access, you are welcome to select any one topic to read as an electronic document or to print out, and you can also download the entire set as a single file.

The *EdGuides* are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. So long you give the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence appropriate credit, you are welcome to use or adapt this work for non-commercial purposes. To learn more about this license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/us/

Susan Perkins Weston, a Prichard consultant, has done the main research and writing for the 2017 edition. We thank her and the many colleagues who provided information, clarification and feedback, including staff members at the Kentucky Department of Education, the Center for School Safety, the Legislative Research Commission, the Kentucky Association of School Councils, the Kentucky Education Association, and the Kentucky School Boards Association. Appreciation is also extended to Michelle Whitaker for proofreading the entire document, preparing the final copy and making them accessible on-line, and to Cory Curl for her important contributions to the development of the 2015 *EdGuides.*

Informed and involved parents and citizens are critical to school success. The simple truth is that educators cannot help all students reach college and/or career readiness without the support of families and communities. Your interest and support are important. We hope EdGuides will provide the information you need to become more involved in your local schools. We also hope you will share any questions, comments or suggestions by emailing admin@prichardcommittee.org.

Brigitte Blom Ramsey
Executive Director
January 2017

THE PRICHARD COMMITTEE AND ITS WORK

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence is an independent, non-profit, nonpartisan group of volunteers who have worked since 1983 to improve education at all levels. It is named for an attorney, the late Edward F. Prichard, who in 1980 led a citizens' committee on improving Kentucky's universities.

The Committee is not affiliated with Kentucky state government. The Committee informs educators, policymakers and citizens across the state, advocating for excellence in student achievement and public school education.

The Prichard Committee provides an independent citizens' voice advocating for improved education for all Kentuckians. In doing so, we help set the agenda for education improvement. To deliver on our mission, we:

- *Research* key education issues from early childhood through postsecondary in order to formulate policy positions

- *Inform* the public and policymakers with clear, trusted, accessible explanations of education issues

- *Advocate* with public, parents, opinion leaders, and policymakers for improved education in Kentucky

- *Engage* parents and citizens in exploring challenges, identifying solutions, and *empowering* them to lead in their schools and communities on education issues, *mobilizing* them to press for important reforms to be made and sustained long enough to produce meaningful results and *convening* stakeholders

- *Sustain* relationships with advocates and state leaders to help develop solutions and improve understanding of issues.

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Three Key Texts

These words frame the work of Kentucky public schools and all the efforts described in these Kentucky EdGuides.

SOURCE	DEFINING TEXT
The Kentucky Constitution in Section 183	The General Assembly shall, by appropriate legislation, provide for an efficient system of common schools throughout the State.
The Kentucky Supreme Court in *Rose v. Council for Better Education*	An efficient system of education must have as its goal to provide each and every child with at least the seven following capacities: (i) sufficient oral and written communication skills to enable students to function in a complex and rapidly changing civilization; (ii) sufficient knowledge of economic, social, and political systems to enable the student to make informed choices; (iii) sufficient understanding of governmental processes to enable the student to understand the issues that affect his or her community, state, and nation; (iv) sufficient self-knowledge and knowledge of his or her mental and physical wellness; (v) sufficient grounding in the arts to enable each student to appreciate his or her cultural and historical heritage; (vi) sufficient training or preparation for advanced training in either academic or vocational fields so as to enable each child to choose and pursue life work intelligently; and (vii) sufficient levels of academic or vocational skills to enable public school students to compete favorably with their counterparts in surrounding states, in academics or in the job market.
The Kentucky General Assembly in KRS 158.6451	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.

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Kentucky Academic Standards

Academic standards specify what students should know and be able to do. Standards establish the key areas where teachers should focus instruction, and they offer students, parents, and citizens a clear picture of the learning they should expect to see. The Kentucky Academic Standards provide that guidance for public schools throughout the commonwealth.

Standards are different than curriculum and assessments, two other terms often heard in conversations about education. Here's how all three work together:

■ **Standards** set goals for what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. They say what should be learned, not how it must be taught.

■ **Curriculum** includes the content (novels, textbooks, etc.) and lesson plans that teachers use in their daily instruction.

■ **Assessments** include statewide tests that align with the grade-level goals set by the standards. They measure whether the curriculum has successfully expanded the students' knowledge and let parents, teachers, and the students themselves know whether they are on track to succeed after high school. Kentucky assesses reading, mathematics, science, social studies, writing, and language mechanics. Program reviews check the quality of student learning opportunities in writing, arts & humanities, and practical living/career studies. Assessments can also include additional tests and other methods of gathering evidence about what students know and can do, including evidence that will be used to plan further learning steps.

SUBJECT	SUBDOMAINS WITHIN THAT SUBJECT
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	■ Reading literature and informational texts ■ Writing arguments, explanations, and narratives ■ Speaking and listening ■ Language skills ■ Foundational skill standards for elementary students ■ Reading and writing standards for work in middle and high school science and social studies
MATHEMATICS	■ Mathematical practices (for example, problem solving, reasoning and proof, and representation) ■ Elementary and middle school content standards organized by grade ■ High school content standards organized by central concepts (allowing local decisions about how to organize specific mathematics courses)

CREATING THE STANDARDS

For English language arts and mathematics, Kentucky has adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), a multi-state effort to define college and career readiness. Kentucky was the first state in the nation to adopt the CCSS and assess student progress toward those new standards.

The science standards reflect Next Generation Science Standards developed by 26 states to set college and career ready standards for that discipline, and the new Arts standards also reflect multi-state collaboration.

For the remaining subjects, Kentucky is currently using the 2007 Kentucky Core Content for Assessment 4.1, and also working with other states to develop revised versions.

LEARNING MORE

At www.education.ky.gov, you can find the full standards by searching for "Academic Standards." Added information on Common Core State Standards is available at www.corestandards.org, and details on the new science standards are offered at www.nextgenscience.org

At www.prichardcommittee.org, other Kentucky EdGuides explain Statewide Assessments, Results for All Students and Results for Underserved Student Groups. The EdGuide on Quality of Learning Programs explains the new program reviews and their early results.

SUBJECT	SUBDOMAINS WITHIN THAT SUBJECT
SCIENCE	■ Physical Sciences ■ Life Sciences ■ Earth and Space Sciences ■ Engineering, Technology, and Application of Science
SOCIAL STUDIES	■ Government and Civics ■ Culture and Society ■ Economics ■ Geography ■ Historical Perspective
ARTS & HUMANITIES (New standards approved by the Kentucky Board of Education in June 2015)	■ Dance ■ Media Arts ■ Music ■ Theatre ■ Visual Arts
PRACTICAL LIVING	■ Personal Wellness ■ Nutrition ■ Safety ■ Psychomotor Skills ■ Lifetime Physical Wellness
VOCATIONAL STUDIES (now called Career Studies in many other state documents)	■ Consumer Decisions ■ Financial Literacy ■ Career Awareness, Exploration, Planning ■ Employability Skills ■ Communication/Technology
TECHNOLOGY	■ Information, Communication and Productivity ■ Safety and Ethical/Social Issues ■ Research, Inquiry/Problem-Solving and Innovation

The Kentucky Early Childhood Standards address birth to age 3 and for ages 4 and 5 in separate sections and are aligned with the Kentucky Academic Standards. The Early Childhood Standards can be found at education.ky.gov by searching for "early childhood."

Statewide Assessment of Student Learning

Kentucky students participate in annual assessments that gauge progress toward the knowledge and skills called for by the Kentucky Core Academic Standards.

WHAT SUBJECTS AND GRADES ARE PART OF THE K-PREP ASSESSMENTS?

Students taking K-PREP respond to multiple choice questions, short-answer items for grade 3, short answer and extended response items for the later grades, and on-demand prompts for writing.

	GRADE							
	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	11
Reading	★	★	★	★	★	★		
Mathematics	★	★	★	★	★	★		
Science (not tested in 2015 or 2016)		★			★			
Social Studies			★			★		
Writing			★	★		★	★	★
Language Mechanics		★		★		★		

Student responses to the K-PREP items are used to provide three kinds of reports:

■ Novice, apprentice, proficient, and distinguished performance levels, with proficient indicating that students have met state standards, distinguished indicating work above state standards, and novice and apprentice meaning work below those expectations.

■ Percentile scores showing how student performance compares to the performance of a representative sample of students nationwide.

■ Growth results comparing individual students' work in reading and mathematics to the work of the students' peer groups, looking at two years of work in those subjects.

WHAT SUBJECTS ARE PART OF K-PREP END-OF-COURSE TESTS IN HIGH SCHOOL?

When students complete some high school classes, they take tests of the content and skills taught in those courses. Currently, students take the ACT QualityCore end-of-course (EOC) tests for English II, Algebra II, Biology, and U.S. History. Students' responses on the EOC multiple-choice items are used to identify novice, apprentice, proficient, and distinguished performance.

SEEING RESULTS

Statewide K-PREP results are included in the Kentucky EdGuides on Results for All Students and on Results for Underserved Student Groups, available at www.prichardcommittee.org.

School-level results are published in school report cards available at applications.education.ky.gov/SRC.

Scores for individual students are only available to their parents, teachers and school leaders, as well as 18-year-old students.

SETTING DELIVERY TARGETS FOR IMPROVING SCORES

For each subject, schools have been asked to raise the percent of proficient or distinguished halfway to 100 in five years. Those "delivery targets" are listed in school report cards and used to develop school improvement plans.

LEARNING MORE

To see sample items from Kentucky's statewide assessments, go to education.ky.gov and search for "sample items."

At www.prichardcommittee.org, additional Kentucky EdGuides address many topics, including the Kentucky Academic Standards addressed by these assessments and the School Accountability process that uses assessment results and other data to recognize strong schools, intervene in struggling schools, and set Annual Measureable Objectives for schools to improve their results.

Local boards of education decide what fraction of course grades will come from the end-of-course assessments.

WHAT READINESS TESTS ARE TAKEN BY ALL STUDENTS?

The ACT test of college readiness is taken by all Kentucky students in grade 11 to receive scores in English, mathematics, reading, and science, plus a composite score combining those results. Students receive numerical results called scale scores, and those results can also be compared with readiness benchmark scores that correlate with success at the next level of education. Kentucky's Council on Postsecondary Education has set these benchmarks for the state's public institutions of higher education:

- 18 in English
- 19 in mathematics
- 20 in reading

Students who score below those benchmarks receive accelerated learning opportunities to help them move up to benchmark-level performance. By reaching benchmarks, students are assured that Kentucky public universities and Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) will allow them to enroll in credit bearing courses. Students whose scores stay below benchmark may have to pay for non-credit developmental courses before starting work toward their degrees, so students and families definitely want to work on meeting the benchmark expectations.

In 2014-15 and earlier years, students also took ACT's Explore assessment in grade 8 and ACT's Plan assessment in grade 10. Explore and Plan were not given in 2015-16, but new readiness assessments for those grades are expected to be added for future years.

OPTIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Students can also show college readiness and career readiness by meeting benchmark scores on other tests. These assessments are not required, but can be beneficial for individual students and also help schools demonstrate student success. (Industry certificates are also used as readiness indicators.) The options include:

- **ACT WorkKeys**, a test of reading for information, locating information and applied mathematics, skills needed in the workplace.

- **ASVAB**, the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery used for military recruitment.

- **KYOTE**, Kentucky Online Testing used by most Kentucky colleges and universities for course placement if a student did not meet ACT benchmarks.

- **Compass**, used to measure strengths and weaknesses and determine placement in college courses. [Compass will not be used in 2016-17 and future school years.)

- **KOSSA**, the Kentucky Occupational Skill Standards Assessment given to Career and Technical Education (CTE) students.

Advanced Placement (AP) tests allow students to show that some of their high school work should qualify for college credit.

MAP, **ThinkLink**, and some other kinds of testing are also used in some Kentucky schools and districts. These are not required state tests, but can be used to provide evidence about whether students are on track in key subjects. They are most helpful when they are used as "formative assessments" that help teachers identify student needs and plan next steps for each child's learning.

Quality of Learning Programs

Kentucky students should all have robust learning opportunities in subjects and grades that are not addressed by statewide testing. Program reviews study the quality of those opportunities to learn in:

- Kindergarten through grade 3
- Arts and humanities
- Practical living and career studies
- Writing
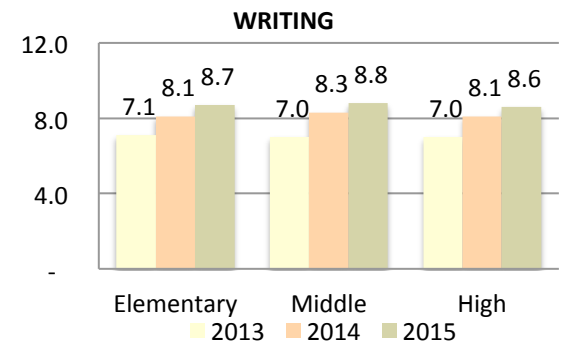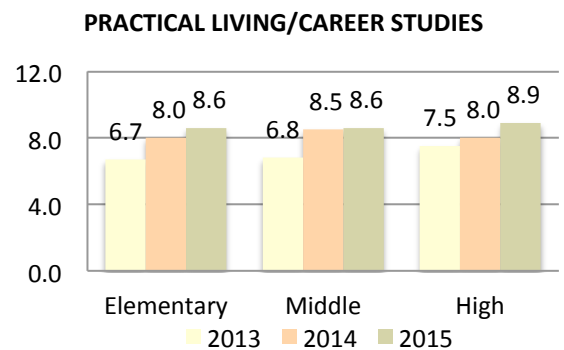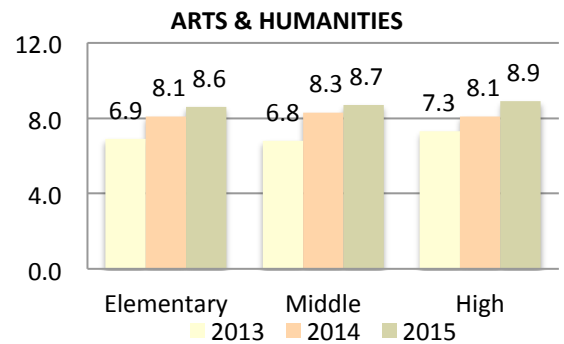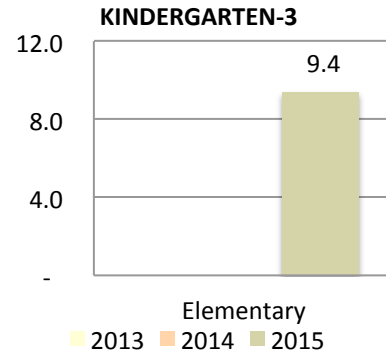- Global competency and world languages

WHAT DO PROGRAM REVIEWS LOOK FOR?

More formally, a program review is defined as "a systematic method of analyzing components of an instructional program, including instructional practices, aligned and enacted curriculum, student work samples, formative and summative assessments, professional development and support services, and administrative support and monitoring."

Each program review looks at multiple aspects of a school's program, using a rubric organized around standards for the program and "demonstrators" of strong quality on that standard. For each demonstrator, a school's program can be scored 0 (no implementation), 1 (needs improvement), 2 (proficient), or 3 (distinguished), based on more detailed characteristics found in the rubric. For example, the rubric for arts and humanities includes these demonstrators:

Standard	Demonstrators
Curriculum and Instruction	■ Student Access ■ Aligned and Rigorous Curriculum ■ Instructional Strategies ■ Student Performance
Formative and Summative Assessment	■ Assessment ■ Expectations for Student Learning ■ Assessment for Teaching
Professional Development	■ Opportunity ■ Participation
Administrative/Leadership Support and Monitoring	■ Policies and Monitoring ■ Principal Leadership

SEEING RESULTS

Program reviews use a 0-12 scale, with 8.0 indicating a proficient program.

KINDERGARTEN-3

2013 2014 2015

ARTS & HUMANITIES

2013 2014 2015

PRACTICAL LIVING/CAREER STUDIES

2013 2014 2015

WRITING

2013 2014 2015

WHO DOES THE PROGRAM REVIEWS, AND HOW OFTEN?

The law governing program reviews calls for each district to review the programs at each school annually. In practice, most districts ask school-level staff to take the lead in most program review work.

The law also calls for the Department of Education to review the programs on a two-year cycle. Under recent budgets, the Department has not been able to carry out those two-year reviews for most schools, so local judgments provide the data now available. In the spring of 2015, the Department of Education conducted a Program Review Audit Pilot, using the data schools entered for the 2013-14 school year and looking for ways to enhance consistency between ratings, rationales and evidences, and perceptions of students, parents, and faculty.

HOW ARE PROGRAM REVIEW RESULTS USED?

At each school, the school council is responsible for studying the program review findings and making decisions about what changes are needed to improve each program.

Program review results are also reported to the Kentucky Department of Education and used as part of each school's overall score for statewide accountability. More exactly:

■ Four kinds of program review results are already used to calculate overall scores for accountability decisions: arts and humanities, practical living and career studies, and writing are used at all levels, and a K-3 program review applies just to elementary schools serving those grades.

■ A Global Competency and World Language Program Review will be used by all schools in 2016-17.

LEARNING MORE

The rubrics (scoring guides) for each program review can be found at www.education.ky.gov by searching for "program reviews."

Program review results for individual schools can be found in their school report cards, available at applications.education.ky.gov/src.

Educator Growth and Effectiveness

Kentucky aims to have every student taught by an effective teacher and every school led by an effective principal. Kentucky's Professional Growth and Effectiveness System, known generally as PGES, works to develop those effective teachers and leaders, with the teacher part of the system often called TPGES and the principal part called PPGES.

LEARNING MORE

You can see the full rubrics for effective teachers and effective principals at education.ky.gov by searching for "PGES."

HOW ARE TEACHERS RATED?

First, ***professional practice*** matters, using evidence from observations of the teacher's work, student voice surveys, professional growth plans and self-reflection, and, possibly, additional district-determined sources of evidence. That evidence is used to identify each teacher's work as ***exemplary, accomplished, developing, or ineffective practice,*** based on criteria set in Kentucky's *Framework for Teaching*. The *Framework* is a scoring guide for important elements of teaching, adapted from the work of Charlotte Danielson, a well-known expert in the field. (Teachers will also observe one another to help each other improve, but those observations will not be used in teachers' official ratings.)

Second, ***student growth*** also matters, looking at how students improve from year to year in each subject. For most teachers, that evidence is all gathered locally, using student growth goals, professional judgment, and district-defined rubrics. For those who teach reading and mathematics in grades 4-8, some evidence is gathered that way and added evidence comes from state assessments of those two subjects. Depending on the evidence, each teacher's student growth will be rated at one of three levels: ***high, expected, or low growth***.

The matrix below shows how the two kinds of data lead to growth steps for teachers with continuing contracts (tenure):

	LOW STUDENT GROWTH	EXPECTED STUDENT GROWTH	HIGH STUDENT GROWTH
EXEMPLARY PRACTICE **ACCOMPLISHED PRACTICE**	▪ Goals set by teacher with evaluator input ▪ One goal focused on low student growth outcome ▪ Formative review each year ▪ Summative evaluation every three years	▪ Goals set by teacher with evaluator input ▪ Activities teacher-directed and implemented with colleagues ▪ Formative review every year ▪ Summative evaluation every three years	
DEVELOPING PRACTICE	▪ Goals determined by evaluator ▪ Goals focused on professional practice and student growth ▪ Formative review each year ▪ Summative evaluation at end of year	▪ Goals set by teacher with evaluator input ▪ One goal addressing professional practice or student growth ▪ Activities teacher-directed and implemented with colleagues ▪ Formative review each year ▪ Summative evaluation every three years	▪ Goals set by teacher with evaluator input ▪ Activities teacher-directed and implemented with colleagues ▪ Formative review each year ▪ Summative evaluation every three years
INEFFECTIVE PRACTICE	▪ Goals determined by evaluator ▪ Goals focused on low performance areas ▪ Summative evaluation at end of plan ▪ Plan duration determined by evaluator (up to one year)	▪ Goals determined by evaluator ▪ Goals focused on professional practice and student growth ▪ Formative review each year ▪ Summative evaluation at end of year	

Teachers with the weakest results (flagged in red above) have a plan designed by their evaluator, requiring clear improvement in a year or less. Teachers with the strongest results (marked in green) design their own plan for increasing their effectiveness. In between, the teachers closest to green have the most say in their own growth, while those closest to red will have increasing direction from their evaluators. In addition, the ratings can be used for decisions about contract renewals, promotions, and other opportunities for professional advancement.

HOW ARE PRINCIPALS RATED?

Again, professional practice matters. For principals and assistant principals, evidence about that practice comes from professional growth, self-reflection, and surveys. Evidence from site visits is used for principals, but not included for assistant principals. Districts may also select additional kinds of evidence to use. All the evidence is then considered to assign performance ratings of exemplary, accomplished, developing or ineffective in six domains:

- Instructional Leadership
- School Climate
- Human Resources Management
- Organizational Management
- Communication and Community Relations
- Professionalism

And, again, student growth matters, looking at the school's performance on the Next Generation Learners portion of state accountability (combining academic scores, gap scores, growth results, readiness results, and graduation rates for high schools), and also looking at success on student growth goals established under local rules.

HOW ARE THE RATINGS USED?

Most importantly, the ratings are used to plan further steps to help each educator become more effective. Professionals who receive strong ratings take the lead in designing their next professional growth plans, while those who do less well receive more guidance and direction from their evaluators. Helping all teachers become stronger is the first and most important goal of the system. PGES results can also be considered in personnel decisions. For example, that means the ratings can be a factor in deciding whether to renew non-tenured teachers, whether to grant tenure (continuing contract) status to fourth year teachers, and deciding who will receive promotions and leadership roles.

WILL THE RATINGS BE PUBLIC?

No. Ratings for individual teachers and principals are not released to the public. .

Graduation Rates

All Kentucky students need to complete their high school education to be ready for adult success, and each high school's graduation rate is part of the school's accountability formula.

HOW ARE GRADUATION RATES CALCULATED?

Kentucky uses a cohort rate. That means each cohort of students is tracked starting when they enter grade 9. The Infinite Campus software used to track student information allows Kentucky to keep track of students even if they transfer to other Kentucky public schools. The cohort rate can be calculated based on four years, five years, or longer, depending on whether the goal is to report on-time graduations, students who take an extra year to earn their diplomas, or students who take even longer to earn that credential.

HOW ARE GRADUATION RATES USED?

All Kentucky high schools are expected to move their graduation rates up to 98% by 2022, making a step up each year until then. Those goals were reset in 2013 to start with the new, more accurate, cohort rate results. Each school's targets can be seen on its school report card, available at education.ky.gov.

The graduation rate is also used to calculate a school's score for Next Generation Learners, which in turn is used for important state accountability decisions.

Finally, Kentucky reports on graduation progress to the federal government.

LEARNING MORE

For each school and district, graduation rate results are included in the school report cards at applications.education.ky.gov/SRC

Statewide Graduation Rate (Four-Year Cohort Rate)

Group	2014	2015	2016
All	88	88	89
English Learners	66	67	68
Disability (IEP)	71	66	72
F/R Meals	84	85	86
African American	79	80	81
Hispanic	84	83	82
Two or more races	85	84	86
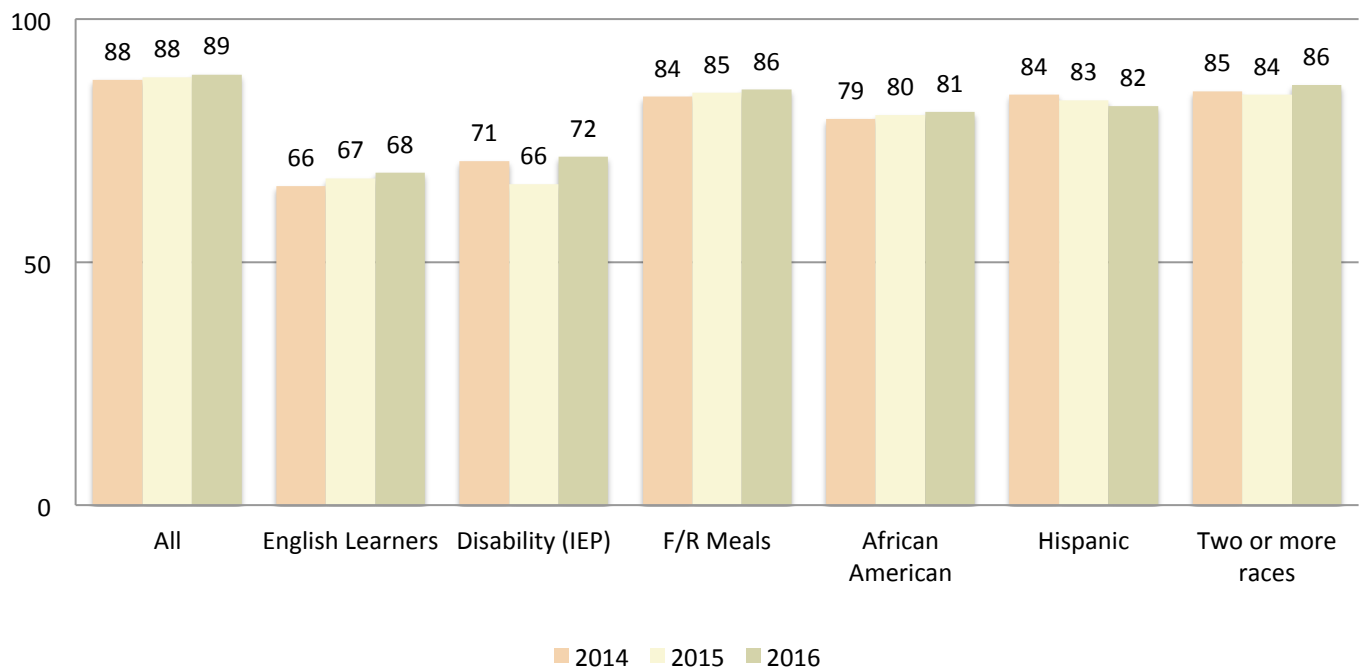
ARE STUDENTS WHO RECEIVE ALTERNATIVE DIPLOMAS INCLUDED IN THE GRADUATION RATE?

No. If an exceptional student's disability is so severe that the student cannot complete the regular high school graduation requirements, that student is offered an alternative course of study and (starting with the class of 2013) that student can earn an alternative diploma by completing that work. Under rules set by the federal government, the alternative diploma cannot be included in the graduation rate.

ARE STUDENTS WHO CHOOSE EARLY GRADUATION INCLUDED IN THE GRADUATION RATE?

Students can qualify for early graduation by scoring proficient on their high school end-of-course exams and meeting the college readiness exam benchmarks as set by the Council on Postsecondary Education for placement in credit-bearing courses without the need for remediation. Those students receive standard diplomas and are counted in the state graduation rate for their assigned cohort year. The early graduation option was introduced in 2014-15.

Accountability

Kentucky's accountability system defines the results schools need to attain, the ways they can be honored for success, and the ways the state may intervene if schools fall short. During 2016-17, state leaders are planning substantial revisions to our accountability rules, so be aware that the system described in this EdGuide is expected to change soon.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A SCHOOL'S SCORE FOR NEXT GENERATION LEARNERS?

The score for Next Generation Learners: is a single 0-100 number that combines a wide array of data about a school's student results, including:

■ Achievement based on K-PREP results for all students

■ Gap Group based on K-PREP results for students who receive free or reduced-price lunches, students with disabilities or limited English proficiency, and African American, Hispanic, and American Indian/Native American students

■ Growth results based on students' progress in reading and mathematics

■ Readiness results based on ACT and other evidence of readiness for college and career (used only for middle and high schools)

■ Graduation rates (for high schools only)

WHAT WOULD A SCORE OF 100 FOR NEXT GENERATION LEARNERS MEAN?

A score of 100 would mean that all students at a school had made expected growth and were on track to graduate from high school ready for college and career. A school with that kind of score could only have a few students scoring at the novice level, and it would be meeting all its goals for reducing the number of novices for all student groups.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A SCHOOL'S OVERALL SCORE?

The overall score combines a school's Next Generation Learner score with its program review results to produce a number on a 0-100 scale used to give schools percentile ratings and determine whether they receive some recognitions.

WHAT ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVE (AMO) IS A SCHOOL ASKED TO REACH?

For 2016, each school's AMO was customized to ask that school to move its Next Generation Learner score up from its past performance. Most schools were asked to improve by one-half point, while the schools with the lowest current scores improve one point. For schools scoring right at the statewide average, the 2016 Learner Scores and AMO goals are shown in the chart to the right.

LEARNING MORE

Next Generation Learner scores, overall scores, and AMOs for each school and district can be found in school report cards available at applications.education.ky.gov/SRC

At www.prichardcommittee.org, other Kentucky EdGuides provide detail on the elements used to calculate the Overall Score, including those on:

▪ Kentucky Statewide Assessments

▪ Graduation Rates

▪ Program Reviews

▪ Educator Growth and Effectiveness

Sample Next Generation Learner Scores and AMOs
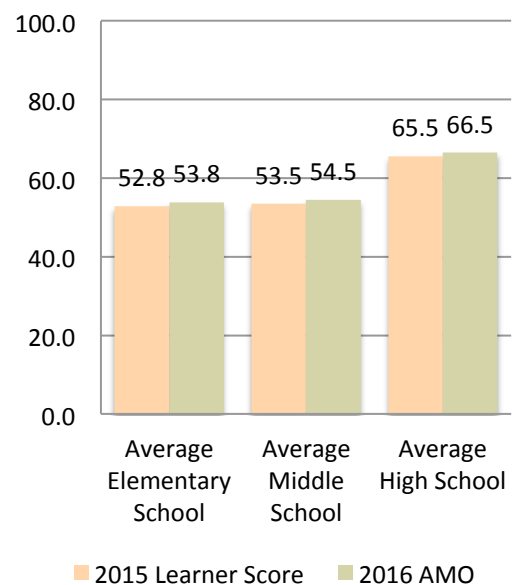
HOW ARE SCHOOLS ASSIGNED PERCENTILES, CLASSIFICATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS?

Each year's results are used to rate, classify, and recognize schools in multiple ways:

CATEGORY	DEFINITION
PROGRESSING	This classification is applied to schools that meet their Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), graduation goal, and student test participation requirements.
PERCENTILE RATING	This 0-99 number tells how a school compared to others: a 70th percentile rating means a school's score was higher than 70 percent of schools statewide.
DISTINGUISHED	This classification applies if a school's Overall Score was at or above the 90th percentile.
PROFICIENT	This classification applies if a school's Overall Score was in the 70th to 89th percentile.
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	This classification applies to schools scoring below the 70th percentile.
HIGH PERFORMING	This recognition goes to schools with Overall Scores in the top 10% of all schools, provided they also meet AMO, a test participation requirement, and (for high schools) graduation rate requirements, and provided they do not qualify as focus or priority schools.
SCHOOLS OF DISTINCTION	This recognition goes to schools with Overall Scores in the top 5% of all schools, provided they also meet AMO, a test participation requirement, and (for high schools) graduation rate requirements, and provided they do not qualify as focus or priority schools.
HIGH PROGRESS SCHOOLS	This recognition goes to schools where the year-to-year improvement was in the top 10%, either for schools that receive Title 1 funds or schools that do not.

WHAT ARE FOCUS SCHOOLS?

A school can be identified as a focus school in one of three ways:

- **Gap Group score** in the bottom 10% of schools
- **Graduation rate** below 80 for two years
- **Scores for a particular group of** students that are unusually weak.

Focus schools must revise their improvement plans to address curriculum, weak scores, non-academic factors, added student learning time, added teacher collaboration time and gaps in achievement and graduation rates between student groups. If a school is identified for Focus multiple times, additional requirements apply.

WHAT ARE PRIORITY SCHOOLS?

A priority school has an overall score in the bottom 5% of schools that miss their AMOs for three years.

Like Focus Schools, Priority Schools must revise their improvement plans. In addition, they must set monthly plans for the first 90 days of change, create teacher turnaround teams, and provide proof of "meaningful family and community involvement" in choosing the plan's strategies. If a school is identified for Priority multiple times, additional requirements apply.
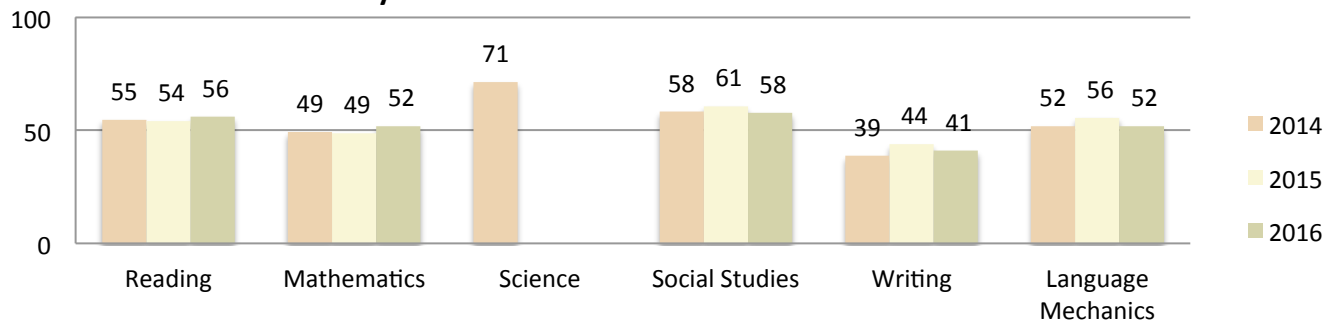
Results for All Students

Kentucky is committed to giving each and every student a full opportunity to reach the high levels of achievement needed for adult success. Under 2009's Senate Bill 1, Kentucky has set standards focused on college and career readiness and benchmarked to international expectations. In 2012, Kentucky began assessing students against those higher standards, and results for the three most recent years are shown below. These results are challenging, showing that many students are currently not achieving at the needed levels and that we will need to make deep, thoughtful changes in our schools to change those outcomes.

LEARNING MORE

School report cards, available from education.ky.gov, show results for each school and district, including results broken out for student groups. Results for individual students are sent to their parents each year but are not available to the public.

Elementary School Statewide Percent Proficient or Above

	Reading	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Writing	Language Mechanics
2014	55	49	71	58	39	52
2015	54	49		61	44	56
2016	56	52		58	41	52

Middle School Statewide Percent Proficient or Above

	Reading	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	Writing	Language Mechanics
2014	53	45	64	59	44	40
2015	54	43		59	39	46
2016	55	47		60	44	41

High School Statewide Percent Proficient or Above

	English II	Algebra II	Biology	U.S. History	Writing	Language Mechanics
2014	55	38	40	58	43	50
2015	57	38	40	57	50	52
2016	56	42	38	59	44	54
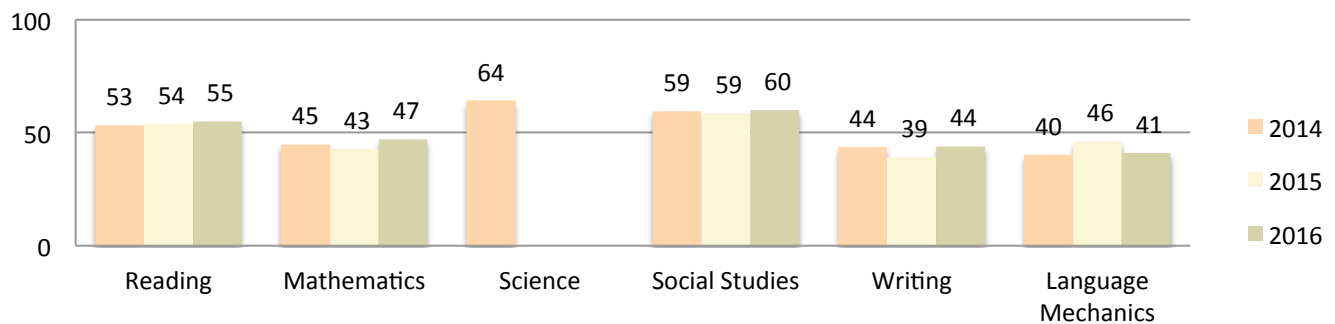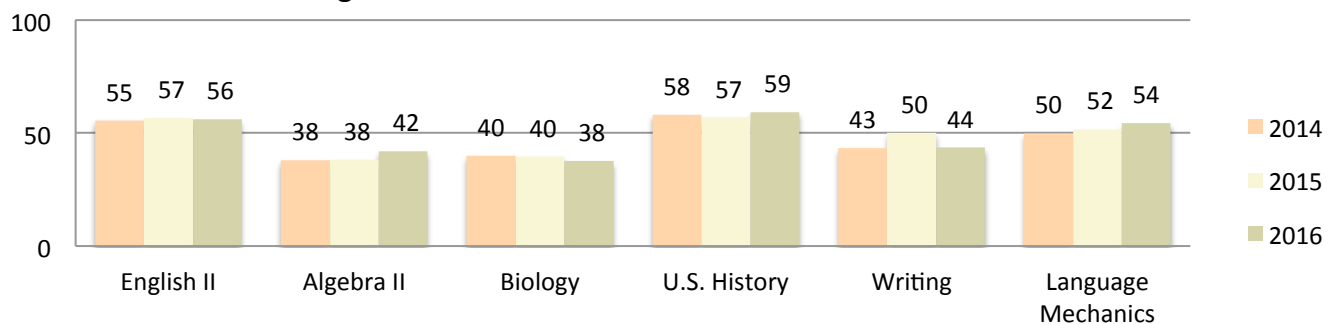
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KENTUCKY EDGUIDES | GOALS & RESULTS 1.8

Results for Students in Underserved Groups

Kentucky is committed to giving each and every student a full opportunity to reach the high levels of achievement that will prepare them for adult success. Under 2009's Senate Bill 1, Kentucky has adopted new standards focused on college and career readiness and benchmarked to international expectations.
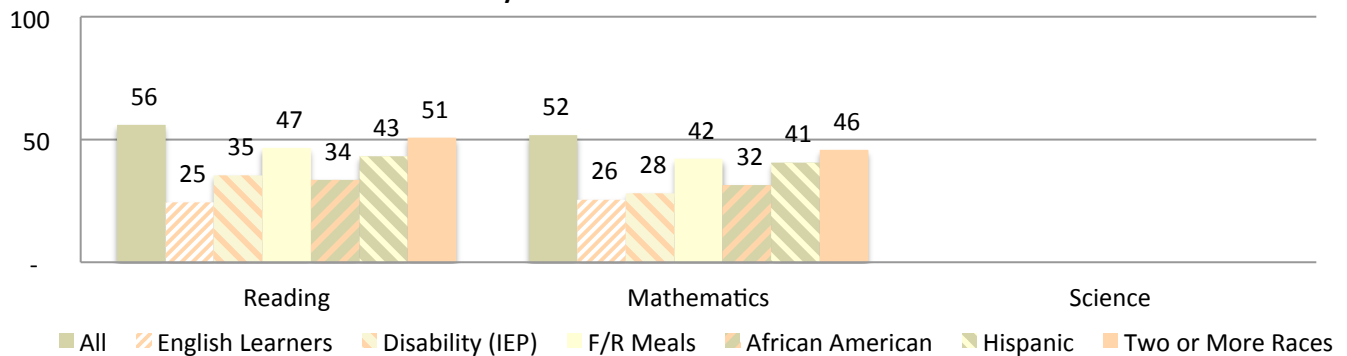
The 2016 results are challenging, showing that many students are currently not achieving at the needed levels and that we will need to make deep, thoughtful changes in our schools to change those outcomes, being sure that the changes have their largest impact on the student groups who have received the weakest support up until now.

LEARNING MORE

School report cards, available at applications.education.ky.gov/SRC, show results for each school and district, including results broken out for student groups. Added information on how Kentucky schools serve students can be found in other Kentucky EdGuides offered at www.prichardcommittee.org, including EdGuides on:

- Students Who Need Added Support
- Students with Disabilities
- Students Ready for Added Challenge
- Poverty and Nonacademic Barriers to Learning

2016 Elementary School Statewide Percent Proficient or Above

Group	Reading	Mathematics	Science
All	56	52	
English Learners	25	26	
Disability (IEP)	35	28	
F/R Meals	47	42	
African American	34	32	
Hispanic	43	41	
Two or More Races	51	46	

2016 Elementary Statewide Percent Proficient or Above

Group	Social Studies	Writing	Language Mechanics
All	58	41	52
English Learners	15	13	19
Disability (IEP)	31	19	26
F/R Meals	48	32	43
African American	37	26	32
Hispanic	45	33	41
Two or More Races	52	35	49

2016 Middle School Statewide Percent Proficient or Above

Reading
- All Students: 55
- English Learners: 10
- Disability (IEP): 24
- F/R Meals: 45
- African American: 32
- Hispanic: 43
- Two or More Races: 49

Mathematics
- All Students: 47
- English Learners: 13
- Disability (IEP): 18
- F/R Meals: 36
- African American: 24
- Hispanic: 35
- Two or More Races: 40

Science

Legend: All Students, English Learners, Disability (IEP), F/R Meals, African American, Hispanic, Two or More Races

2016 Middle School Statewide Percent Proficient or Above

Social Studies
- All Students: 60
- English Learners: 14
- Disability (IEP): 24
- F/R Meals: 49
- African American: 35
- Hispanic: 49
- Two or More Races: 51

Writing
- All Students: 44
- English Learners: 13
- Disability (IEP): 14
- F/R Meals: 35
- African American: 26
- Hispanic: 36
- Two or More Races: 40

Language Mechanics
- All Students: 41
- English Learners: 7
- Disability (IEP): 14
- F/R Meals: 31
- African American: 21
- Hispanic: 29
- Two or More Races: 35

Legend: All Students, English Learners, Disability (IEP), F/R Meals, African American, Hispanic, Two or More Races

2016 High School Statewide Percent Proficient or Above

English II
- All Students: 56
- English Learners: 4
- Disability (IEP): 14
- F/R Meals: 45
- African American: 33
- Hispanic: 41
- Two or More Races: 54

Algebra II
- All Students: 42
- English Learners: 18
- Disability (IEP): 15
- F/R Meals: 31
- African American: 27
- Hispanic: 35
- Two or More Races: 39

Biology
- All Students: 37
- English Learners: 5
- Disability (IEP): 7
- F/R Meals: 26
- African American: 15
- Hispanic: 27
- Two or More Races: 32

Legend: All Students, English Learners, Disability (IEP), F/R Meals, African American, Hispanic, Two or More Races

2016 High School Statewide Percent Proficient or Above

U.S. History
- All Students: 59
- English Learners: 10
- Disability (IEP): 24
- F/R Meals: 48
- African American: 42
- Hispanic: 51
- Two or More Races: 56

Writing
- All Students: 44
- English Learners: 6
- Disability (IEP): 11
- F/R Meals: 33
- African American: 27
- Hispanic: 36
- Two or More Races: 40

Language Mechanics
- All Students: 54
- English Learners: 7
- Disability (IEP): 14
- F/R Meals: 41
- African American: 32
- Hispanic: 42
- Two or More Races: 51

Legend: All Students, English Learners, Disability (IEP), F/R Meals

KENTUCKY EDGUIDES | CORE PROGRAMS 2.1

Early Childhood and Preschool

All children begin life as learners, and their early abilities grow best with strong support from well-prepared parents and caregivers. Here's how Kentucky supports that growth.

HOW CAN NEW PARENTS LEARN ABOUT SUPPORTING THEIR CHILDREN'S GROWTH?

For new and expectant parents, the **HANDS program** provides voluntary home visits to support parents' efforts to help their children grow and learn. All first-time parents are eligible for a first meeting to discuss questions and share resources. Parents who are facing multiple challenges can receive regular home visits that share information, link families to health and other services, and build on the strengths of each family. HANDS is short for Health Access Nurturing Development Services. Contact your local health department to learn more or participate.

For low-income families, **Early Head Start** serves pregnant women, infants, and toddlers up to age 3, providing support for healthy births, child development, and family functioning. Early Head Start is offered by a variety of providers, with some offering support in families' homes, others working in centers, and some using combined approaches.

WHAT HELP IS AVAILABLE IF A CHILD HAS A POSSIBLE DISABILITY OR DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY?

From birth through age three, children with developmental delays are eligible for **First Steps**, a statewide early intervention system that serves those children and their families. First Steps support is also available for children with conditions that may cause delays (for example, Downs Syndrome). Depending on the child's needs, services may include varied therapies, parent training, counseling, medical assistance, and other kinds of support. Anyone can refer a child for First Steps services by sending an e-mail to chfs.firststeps@ky.gov.

Starting at age three, children with developmental delays and disabilities are eligible for free**, state-funded preschool programs** in their local school districts. Check with your local schools for information on how to enroll children in your local program.

HOW CAN CHILD CARE CONTRIBUTE TO CHILDREN'S GROWTH?

Children benefit deeply from high quality childcare, developing greater thinking skills and attention, better relationships with parents and peers, and enhanced academic performance.

Kentucky All STARS is Kentucky's expanded five-star quality ratIng and improvement system for early care and education programs. It

KENTUCKY EARLY CHILDHOOD STANDARDS

Our standards for Kentucky's youngest learners are "designed as a framework to assist parents, early care, intervention, and education professionals, administrators, and others in understanding what children are able to know and do from birth through four years of age." Aligned with the Kentucky Academic standards, they address the key areas shown below.

BIRTH TO THREE YEARS OF AGE
- Cognitive
- Communication
- Creative Expression
- Motor
- Social Emotional

THREE AND FOUR YEARS OF AGE
- Arts and Humanities
- English/Language Arts (Early Literacy)
- Health Education (Health/Mental Wellness)
- Mathematics
- Physical Education (Gross and Fine Motor Skills)
- Science
- Social Studies

At education.ky.gov, you can find the full standards by searching for "early childhood."

LEARNING MORE

The Child Care Council of Kentucky shares information on child care, All STARS ratings and other supports at childcarecouncilofky.com

Early Childhood Profiles for each county offer data on childcare quality, kindergarten screening results, and participation in publicly funded preschool, Head Start and childcare. Find them at Kentucky Center for Education and Workforce Statistics website (kcews.ky.gov) by searching for "childhood profile."

To connect with your local Community Early Childhood Council, visit kidsnow.ky.gov and search for "CECC."

recognizes programs that have made a commitment to continuous quality improvement. The system helps families make informed decisions by evaluating the quality of care. The unified system serves programs that receive public funding including child care centers, Head Start and public preschool. More information can be found at www.kentuckyallstars.org.

The Child Care Assistance Program helps low-income working families afford quality childcare for their children. Visit childcarecouncilofky.com for more information.

WHAT LEARNING PROGRAMS CAN HELP YOUNG CHILDREN BE READY FOR SCHOOL?

Before they start kindergarten, many children benefit from a year or more of preschool, learning to socialize with other children, participate in planned activities, and begin learning about letters, numbers, and other lasting skills.

For low-income children who turn four by August 1, Kentucky school districts provide free *state-funded preschool* programs. Starting in 2015-16, four-year-olds are eligible for state preschool if their family incomes are 160% of poverty: that is a change from the past 150% cut off and has the potential to allow another 5,000 children to benefit each year. Three-year-old and four-year-old children with identified disabilities are also eligible for state-funded preschool. In some districts, state-funded preschool programs also have openings for children who are not from low-income homes and who do not have disabilities. Check with your local schools for information on available options.

Children from low-income families can also benefit from *Head Start*, a federally funded program that promotes school readiness by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development.
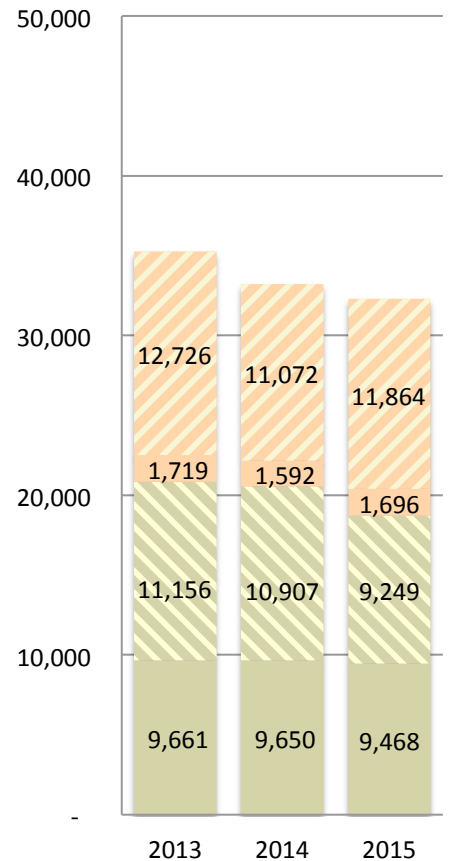
Many Kentucky children also participate in *private preschools*, offered by many different organizations within their communities, usually charging fees and sometimes also offering scholarships or fee reductions to children who would otherwise not be able to attend.

Kentucky's *public libraries* also promote school readiness with resources, activities and early childhood programming, and the Kentucky Governor's Office of Early Childhood offers *Parent Guides* and *Monthly Messages* with insights into how to support young children at www.kidsnowky.gov.

SEEING RESULTS

Head Start Low Income Enrollment
Head Start Disability Enrollment
Preschool Low Income Enrollment
Preschool Disability Enrollment

Source: 2015 data from Early Childhood Profile reports www.kcews.ky.gov

HOW DOES KENTUCKY FUND ITS STATEWIDE EARLY CHILDHOOD SUPPORTS?

As noted above, state tax dollars support preschool and federal dollars support Head Start. Kentucky also funds some important early childhood investments using dollars from the master tobacco settlement fund, including the HANDS program, childcare quality efforts, and childcare scholarships for early care and education personnel, along with other investments in children's health.

Elementary Schools

Most Kentucky elementary schools serve students in kindergarten through grade 5, with some including preschool students and students through grade 6 or grade 8.

WHEN DO KENTUCKY CHILDREN START SCHOOL?

Kentucky defines school readiness as meaning that "each child enters school ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences that best promote the child's success and ability to be **ready to grow, ready to learn & ready to succeed**."

Starting with the 2017-18 school year, students may start school if they will be five by August 1, and they are required to attend if they will be six by August 1. In addition, parents may petition to allow a younger child to start school if an evaluation determines the child's school readiness.
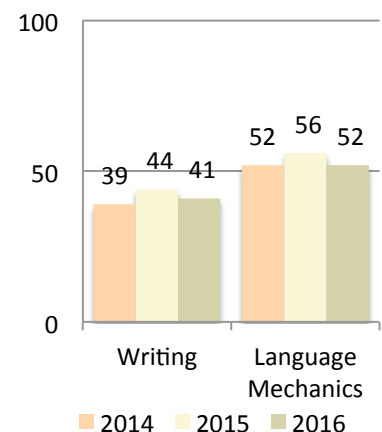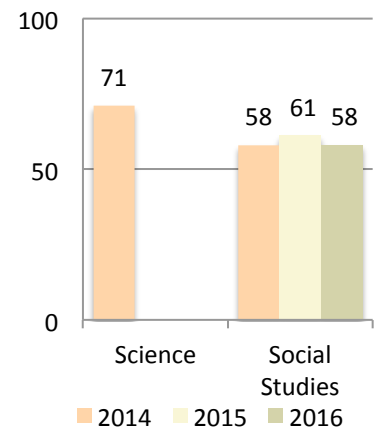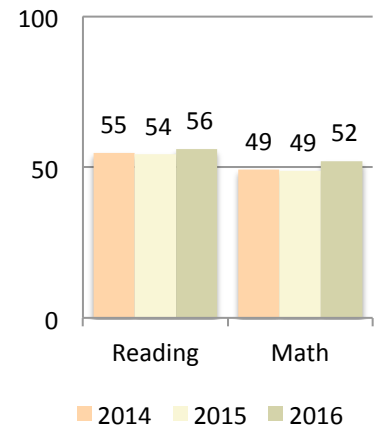
HOW DOES THE PRIMARY PROGRAM SERVE STUDENTS IN GRADES K-3?

Until students are ready for fourth grade, they participate in the state's *primary program.* While many schools find it convenient to describe children as being in kindergarten or grades 1, 2, and 3 during those years, students should be able to develop at the pace that fits each child's unique learning needs. State law lists the following critical attributes of primary school:

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTE	WHICH MEANS….
DEVELOPMENTALLY-APPROPRIATE PRACTICES	Teaching in ways children learn best according to their age and development
MULTIAGE AND MULTIABILITY CLASSROOMS	Having children of different ages and abilities work together, being grouped and regrouped as needed to help them all grow and learn
CONTINUOUS PROGRESS	Allowing children to work and progress at their own pace
AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT	Documenting what students actually learn and do in their day-to-day activities
QUALITATIVE REPORTING METHODS	Letting parents know what students know and can do in a way that focuses on the growth and development of the whole child
PROFESSIONAL TEAMWORK	Ensuring that teachers and other staff members collaborate to help students learn
POSITIVE PARENT INVOLVEMENT	Involving parents in positive ways to support student learning

SEEING RESULTS

These graphs show the percent of students scoring proficient or higher on recent K-PREP assessments.

Reading: 2014 = 55, 2015 = 54, 2016 = 56
Math: 2014 = 49, 2015 = 49, 2016 = 52

Science: 2014 = 71
Social Studies: 2014 = 58, 2015 = 61, 2016 = 58

Writing: 2014 = 39, 2015 = 44, 2016 = 41
Language Mechanics: 2014 = 52, 2015 = 56, 2016 = 52

For five-year-olds, *half-day programs or full-day programs* may be available: the state provides half-day funding but some districts find ways to fund a longer program. If an individual five-year-old has developed the academic and social skills taught in kindergarten, that child can move to a full-day program and the district can receive full-day funding to help with the resulting costs.

Reading, mathematics, and writing are foundational subjects in these early years, and students also learn *science, social studies, arts and humanities, career studies, practical living* (including health and physical education), and *technology*. *Global competency and world languages* are receiving increasing attention, including a program review that checks each school's offerings each year.

Response to Intervention or "RTI" is a statewide strategy required for the primary years. Response to intervention calls for schools to organize instruction by setting up tiers of response that start with a core program that will be effective for most students. Students' work in the core program is monitored continuously, and if evidence shows that a particular student needs different or additional approaches, teachers provide supplemental support and then intensive intervention if needed. For example, a student who consistently struggles with the core program (tier 1) may receive some added opportunities (tier 2) and then if that support is not enough, move to more intensive support (tier 3). ("Kentucky System of Intervention" and "KSI" are related terms, describing an approach to RTI implementation shared by the Kentucky Department of Education.)

During their primary school years, students may be checked for possible learning disabilities, inclusion in the Primary Talent Pool, or both. The EdGuides on Students with Disabilities and on Gifted and Talented Students provide more information on these possibilities.

At the end of primary, students take K-PREP statewide assessments that check their progress toward meeting state standards in reading and mathematics. The Statewide Assessment EdGuide offers more detail.

WHAT CHANGES WHEN STUDENTS MOVE TO GRADES 4 AND 5?

In the upper elementary grades, students continue to develop their knowledge and skills. Reading increasingly becomes a skill they use to learn other subjects, and writing increasingly becomes a process they use to develop their understanding and share it with others. Mathematics, science, social studies, arts and humanities, practical living, and career studies continue to be part of the curriculum.

Continuous progress is not a legal requirement once students reach fourth grade, but most schools and districts have policies that call for differentiated instruction, which means varied approaches to meet the varied learning needs of a full range of students. Many now describe their approaches as fitting Response to Intervention or Kentucky System of Interventions (RSI or KSI) approaches. Students can be identified as gifted and talented starting in fourth grade.

Students in these grades take K-PREP statewide reading and math assessments. Fourth graders are also assessed in science and language mechanics and fifth graders are assessed in social studies and writing.

HOW ARE KENTUCKY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS FUNDED?

Kentucky has no funds designated specifically for elementary schools, but the statewide SEEK fund combines state and local dollars to cover the major costs, and the work of elementary schools is also supported by targeted state and federal funding: see the EdGuides on SEEK and on State Funding for more information. In 2014, Kentucky schools had an average of $9,321 in state and local revenue per student, clearly below the national average of $11,681.

Middle Schools

Most Kentucky students in grades 6, 7, and 8 attend middle schools designed just for those years, but some schools combine other grades, like 5-8 or just 7 and 8, and some districts still offer K-8 schools that may be called elementary schools. The grade configurations in different schools are decided by local boards of education. This EdGuide focuses more on the age of the students than on the exact way their schools are divided up.

HOW IS MIDDLE SCHOOL LIKELY TO DIFFER FROM ELEMENTARY?

Starting in the middle grades, students usually change classrooms multiple times each day, going to a different teacher for each subject. For students, that means new challenges in following schedules, navigating hallways, managing lockers with keys or combinations, and keeping track of multiple homework assignments each night. Parents encounter the challenges of helping with all that, and also may need new strategies for staying in touch with a larger group of teachers for each child.

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), focused on planning for careers and post-high school education, begin at this age. Kentucky requires each student to develop a first ILP in sixth grade, looking at possible careers and at coursework to prepare for those options. ILPs can and should be revised many times through the middle and high school years as students clarify their interests and develop their skills.

For exceptional children, Individual Education Programs (IEPs) continue to be developed and implemented for students with disabilities along with Gifted Student Service Plans (GSSPs) for gifted and talented students.

If K-PREP testing shows that a student is not on track to be ready for college and career, the school must offer *accelerated learning opportunities*. Accelerated learning is "an organized way of helping students meet individual academic goals by providing direct instruction to eliminate student performance deficiencies or enable students to move more quickly through course requirements and pursue higher level skill development." (Kentucky is expected to adopt a new readiness test for grade 8, replacing the Explore test last given in 2014-15. Until that new test is in place, KPREP scores will be used for these decisions.)

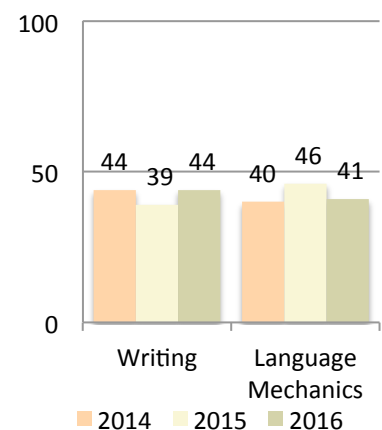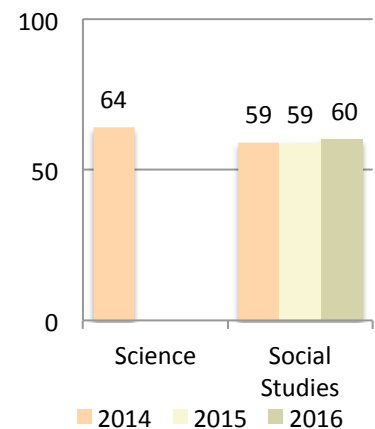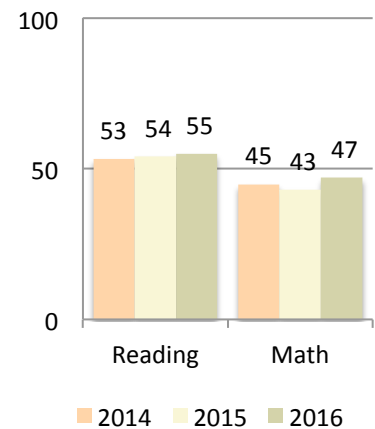## WHAT OPTIONS DO STUDENTS HAVE IN THE MIDDLE GRADES?

Many (though not all) middle schools allow students to rotate through a series of exploratory classes that let them try out art, instrumental music, industrial arts, foreign languages, and other fields before deciding whether to study those topics more deeply in high school.

Algebra may be offered to students in grade 8 or even grade 7, as may more formal study of foreign languages.

School teams that compete in athletics, debate, and other fields may be available along with a variety of clubs for student interests and service projects. These extracurricular programs allow students to develop skills, practice cooperation and

SEEING RESULTS

These graphs show the percent of middle school students scoring proficient or higher on recent K-PREP assessments.

Reading: 2014 = 53, 2015 = 54, 2016 = 55
Math: 2014 = 45, 2015 = 43, 2016 = 47

Science: 2014 = 64
Social Studies: 2014 = 59, 2015 = 59, 2016 = 60

Writing: 2014 = 44, 2015 = 39, 2016 = 44
Language Mechanics: 2014 = 40, 2015 = 46, 2016 = 41

leadership, and contribute to their schools and communities.

HOW ARE KENTUCKY MIDDLE SCHOOLS FUNDED?

Kentucky has no funds designated specifically for middle schools, but the statewide SEEK fund combines state and local dollars to cover the major costs, and the work of middle schools is also supported by targeted state and federal funding: see the EdGuides on State Funding and on the SEEK Formula for more information. In 2014, Kentucky schools had an average of $9,321 in state and local revenue per student, clearly below the national average of $11,681.

LEARNING MORE

Learn more about Individual Learning Plans by visiting www.education.ky.gov and searching for "ILP."

Added information on how Kentucky schools serve students can be found in other Kentucky EdGuides offered at www.prichardcommittee.org, including those on:

- Students Who Need Added Support
- Students with Disabilities
- Students Ready for Added Challenge
- Poverty and Nonacademic Barriers to Learning
- Digital Learning and School Technology
- Student Conduct and Discipline
- School Safety

High Schools

Nearly all Kentucky high schools serve grades 9-12: just a few start with earlier grades. The exact choice is up to the local board of education.

HOW IS HIGH SCHOOL LIKELY TO DIFFER FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL?

The biggest change is that students choose their classes from a school's master schedule, working to earn the credits they need for graduation and implement their Individual Learning Plans (ILP). State regulation requires 22 credits:

SUBJECTS	MINIMUM CREDITS
Language Arts	4
Mathematics	3
Science	3
Social Studies	3
Arts & Humanities	1
Health	1/2
Physical Education	1/2
Electives Linked to Career Interests and ILP	4
Other Electives	3
Total	22

Local school districts can require additional credits beyond the minimum of 22, and students who want to go on to a Kentucky public university will need 2 credits of world language. In addition, though students only need 3 math credits, they are required to take a math course in every year of high school. In Kentucky's eleven districts of innovation, there may be alternate ways for students to earn these required credits.

Some other elements of high school are quite similar to middle school, including:
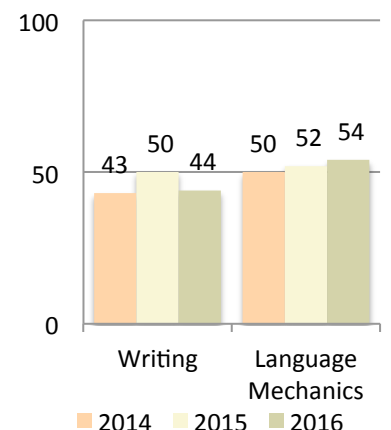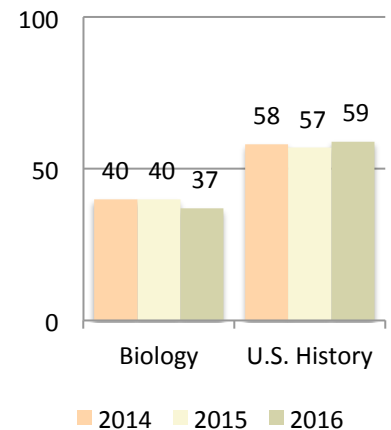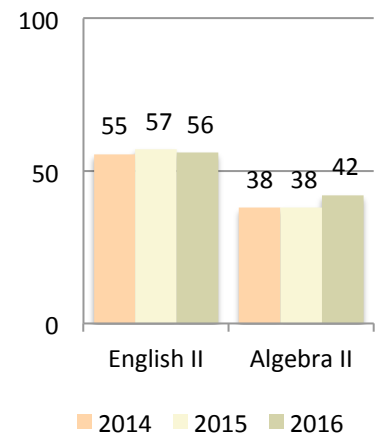
■ Keeping and updating an Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

■ Special education services for students with disabilities based on each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP)

■ Support for gifted and talented students based on each student's Gifted Student Service Plan (GSSP)

■ Extended School Services (ESS) for struggling students

■ Accelerated learning for students who score below needed benchmarks on the ACT. (Kentucky is expected to adopt a grade 10 readiness assessment for use in future years. Until that new test is in place, KPREP scores will also be used for these decisions.)

HOW CAN STUDENTS EARN HIGH SCHOOL CREDITS?

Increasingly, students have choices about how they will earn those needed credits:

SEEING RESULTS

These graphs show the percent of high school students scoring proficient or higher on recent K-PREP assessments:

English II: 2014 = 55, 2015 = 57, 2016 = 56
Algebra II: 2014 = 38, 2015 = 38, 2016 = 42

Biology: 2014 = 40, 2015 = 40, 2016 = 37
U.S. History: 2014 = 58, 2015 = 57, 2016 = 59

Writing: 2014 = 43, 2015 = 50, 2016 = 44
Language Mechanics: 2014 = 50, 2015 = 52, 2016 = 54

For example:

■ Most high schools still define a credit by the time spent in class: passing a course that takes 120 hours of class-time counts as one "Carnegie Unit" and earns one credit. However, some high schools are now implementing performance-based credits, in which students earn credits based on mastery of the content and skills defined in the course standards, not just seat time or time in the classroom.

■ Some credits that count for high school can also count for college. State law requires that every district offer at least four such courses. Those may be Advanced Placement courses with a year-end test to show college-level understanding. They may also be courses taken at nearby colleges or given at the high school by teachers who meet college-level requirements.

■ Digital learning is another option. Students can take courses taught solely by on-line teachers or hybrid courses that combine on-line work with face-to-face teaching. The Kentucky Virtual Campus for K-12 Students (www.kyvc4k12.org) allows students to register for courses offered by Kentucky Educational Television, JCPSeSchool, or the Barren Academy of Virtual and Expanded Learning (BAVEL).

■ Technical centers offer high school courses for their district or a multi-district area (see the Career Technical Students EdGuide for more information).

■ The Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science and the Craft Academy for Excellence in Science and Mathematics offer residential programs where students spend their junior and senior years taking college classes in mathematics, science, and other subjects. Gatton is located at Western Kentucky University and offers more information at wku.edu/academy. Craft, at Morehead State University, shares further information at www.moreheadstate.edu/craft-academy.

LEARNING MORE

Learn more about Individual Learning Plans by visiting education.ky.gov and searching for "ILP."

Added information on how Kentucky schools serve students can be found in other Kentucky EdGuides offered at www.prichardcommittee.org, including those on:

- Students Who Need Added Support
- Students with Disabilities
- Students Ready for Added Challenge
- Poverty and Nonacademic Barriers to Learning
- Digital learning and School Technology
- Student Conduct and Discipline
- School Safety

ARE STUDENTS REQUIRED TO FINISH HIGH SCHOOL?

No, though a high school diploma is an important step for success in careers and other adult activities. However, students must stay in school until age 18.

CAN STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL EARLY?

Yes, students can graduate early if they earn proficient scores on the four K-PREP end-of-course tests and Kentucky college-readiness benchmark scores on the ACT. Students who choose this option can receive a one-time scholarship for part of their college costs and receive KEES funding equivalent to what they would have earned over four years of high school. For more information, ask questions at your local high school or go to www.education.ky.gov and search for "early graduation."

HOW ARE KENTUCKY HIGH SCHOOLS FUNDED?

Kentucky has no funds designated specifically for high schools, but the statewide SEEK fund combines state and local dollars to cover the major costs, and the work of high schools is also supported by targeted state and federal funding: see the EdGuides on State Funding and on the SEEK Formula for more information. In 2014, Kentucky schools had an average of $9,321 in state and local revenue per student, clearly below the national average of $11,681.

KENTUCKY EDGUIDES | CORE PROGRAMS 2.5

Alternative Education Programs

For some students, the approaches used in a district's main schools may not be the right fit, and alternative programs in most Kentucky districts may provide a good option. In 2014-15, 28,657 Kentucky students participated in 277 alternative programs for at least part of the school year.

WHAT ARE ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS?

Alternative programs "meet the needs of students that cannot be addressed in a traditional classroom setting" by assigning them to classrooms, centers, or campuses designed to "remediate academic performance, improve behavior, or provide an enhanced learning experience." Each alternative program addresses the same college and career readiness outcomes as other schools, but they use different approaches to instructional strategies, curriculum, student schedules, and other features to promote greater success for their students.

HOW DO STUDENTS ENTER ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS?

Local school boards set the eligibility requirements for their districts' alternative programs. Students who meet those requirements can enter alternative programs voluntarily based on a request from a parent or an emancipated student, or they may also be placed in an alternative program involuntarily. Involuntary placement must be to meet the student's educational needs, to transition the student to placement as a state agency child, or to ensure safety for that student, other students, or staff.

HOW DO INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN ADDENDUMS WORK IN ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS?

An Individual Learning Plan Addendum (ILPA) is developed before the student enters the alternative program to address that individual student's changed educational needs. The ILPA addresses factors like:

■ Academic and behavioral needs of the student,

■ Provisions for regular review of the student's progress in an alternative education program,

■ Criteria for the student's re-entry into the traditional program.

For a student with a disability, the ILPA must be consistent with the student's IEP.

A team develops the plan for each student, and that student's parents must be invited to participate on the team. Where appropriate, the student must also be invited. For a student with a disability, the placement decision must be made through that student's Admission and Release Committee.

HOW ARE KENTUCKY ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS FUNDED?

Alternative programs draw part of their support from state funding for Safe Schools. That funding suffered major declines during the recent recession, dropping from $10.4 million in 2008 to just $4.2 million in 2014. The 2015 state budget restored some of those dollars, and the 2016, 2017, and 2018 budgets return to the $10.4 million 2008 level—though without any adjustment for rising prices. Alternative programs are also supported by SEEK funding that

SEEING RESULTS

Alternative programs now have their own school report cards, sharing assessment results and other data, available at education.ky.gov by choosing the school report card link on the home page.

Individual score reports for individual students are available to their parents, students who are 18 or older, teachers, and school leaders.

LEARNING MORE

The Kentucky Center for School Safety shares information on research-based best practices in alternative education at www.kycss.org/clear/best/best.php.

Additional information, including key regulations and guidelines can be found at education.ky.gov by searching for "alternative education."

combines state and local dollars, and students and teachers in those programs are also served by state dollars earmarked for specific needs.

Technical Centers

As students move toward college and career readiness, some of them seek a program that allows them to master significant technical skills as well as academics before graduation.

WHAT ARE TECHNICAL CENTERS?

Kentucky's 95 technology centers offer high school students opportunities to prepare for skilled jobs, developing technical knowledge and skills while continuing their academic studies and working toward a high school diploma. 53 of Kentucky's centers serve students from multiple school systems and are known as Area Technology Centers (ATCs) directed by the Kentucky Department of Education. 42 others are locally operated.

WHAT CAN STUDENTS STUDY AT KENTUCKY TECHNICAL CENTERS?

Kentucky's career and technical education programs are course sequences that focus on a specific career cluster. The statewide Program of Studies addresses 11 program areas, and each technical center provides some of those areas:

- Agriculture Education
- Architecture and Construction
- Business and Marketing Education
- Engineering and Technology
- Family and Consumer Science
- Health Science
- Information Technology
- Law and Public Safety
- Manufacturing Technology
- Transportation
- Visual Media

CAN TECHNICAL STUDENTS ALSO EARN COLLEGE CREDITS IN TECHNICAL FIELDS?

Yes. Dual credit can be offered, giving students both high school and Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) credit for classes taught at the technical centers. Dual credit classes must be taught by teachers who meet KCTCS standards and include the same learning as the KCTCS equivalent course.

CAN TECHNICAL STUDENTS COMBINE STUDIES AND WORK ON AN APPRENTICESHIP?

Yes. The Tech-Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky (TRACK) allows an employer and a technical center work out a sequence for student learning that includes at least four courses, one of which is a cooperative education placement. For students who complete the program, their on-the-job hours count toward a longer apprenticeship program in a skilled trade, and the student receives an industry certificate as well.

HOW ARE TECHNICAL CENTERS FUNDED?

Kentucky provides state funding for both the state-operated and the locally-operated technical centers. Federal funds and local revenues also support technical education.

LEARNING MORE

Kentucky Report: From Two Systems to One World-Class System of Technical Centers is an in-depth analysis from the Southern Regional Education Board. The report and other career technical information are at www.education.ky.gov search for "career technical."

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KENTUCKY EDGUIDES | VARIED NEEDS 3.1

Students Who Need Added Support

Each child is unique, and some students will need added support as they learn. Kentucky schools have a number of resources in place to help struggling students succeed.

WHAT KINDS OF SUPPORT ARE AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS WHO NEED ADDED SUPPORT IN KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3?

The *K-SCREEN kindergarten readiness screener* is given to all students entering kindergarten. The screening results give schools some early insight into which students may need different or added support to succeed. Parents are notified of results for their own children, and school-wide results are available in school report cards (applications.education.ky.gov/SRC) under the assessment tab.

The *continuous progress* feature of the primary program means that all children should receive support to move steadily forward, without being penalized if their pace is a bit different from their classmates.

Response to Intervention or "RTI" is a state initiative required for the primary years. Response to Intervention calls for schools to organize instruction by setting up tiers of learning supports that start with a core program that will be effective for most students and then add supplemental support and then intensive intervention when evidence shows which students need different or additional support. For example, a student who consistently struggles with the core program (tier 1) may receive some added opportunities (tier 2) and then if that support is not enough, move to more intensive support (tier 3). In parent-teacher discussions, it may help to ask what "tier" of services a child is receiving and then for details about how that tier works. ("Kentucky System of Intervention" and "KSI" are related terms, describing an approach to RTI implementation shared by the Kentucky Department of Education.)

Extended school services (usually called ESS) can provide additional instructional time *for students* who might otherwise not reach Kentucky's learning goals for all students. ESS can be provided before or after school, on weekends, or over the summer: each district designs its own program. The state provides some funding support for ESS. When those targeted dollars are not enough, districts may need to spend SEEK dollars to meet students' needs. With Kentucky Board of Education approval, districts may also use some ESS dollars for some added instruction during the school day. Ideally, ESS and RTI will work seamlessly as part of a student-centered strategy to help each child learn and grow.

WHAT KINDS OF SUPPORT ARE AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS WHO NEED ADDED SUPPORT IN GRADES 4-12?

ESS added instructional time continues as a statewide requirement for students who need it.

Continuous progress and RTI are no longer required across the state after the end of primary (though some schools and districts voluntarily continue to use those approaches).

SEEING RESULTS

Statewide, the current school report cards do not report results separately for students who receive extended school services or accelerated learning supports. At the local level, you may want to ask teachers and administrators what evidence they are gathering and what trends they see in your local schools for these students.

LEARNING MORE

Learn more about the Kentucky System of Interventions by visiting education.ky.gov and searching for "KSI".

Added information on how Kentucky schools serve students can be found in other Kentucky EdGuides offered at www.prichardcommittee.org, including those on:

- Early Childhood and Preschool
- Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, and High Schools
- Students Ready for Added Challenge
- Poverty and Nonacademic Barriers to Learning
- Digital Learning and School Technology

Instead, ***accelerated learning*** is the statewide approach for students whose test scores show that students are not on track. Accelerated learning is defined as "providing direct instruction to eliminate student performance deficiencies or enable students to move more quickly through course requirements and pursue higher level skill development." Each year from grade 3 to grade 8, parents receive reports on their individual students' performance, including information on any identified deficiencies—and accelerated learning is offered to respond to those weaknesses.

Accelerated learning is also offered if students fall short of ***readiness benchmarks*** on the ACT. For those students, the accelerated learning strategies are incorporated into the student's learning plan. State law says that students who participate in accelerated learning will be able to take the ACT a second time at state expense, but the state budget has never included enough funding to make that possible. (In 2014-15 and earlier years, accelerated learning was also provided to students who missed benchmarks on the Explore and Plan readiness assessments, but those tests are no longer being given. New readiness assessments for grade 8 and grade 10 are expected to be added in the future and used to determine whether students need accelerated learning supports.)

WHEN SHOULD A STRUGGLING STUDENT BE EVALUATED FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORTS AND SERVICES?

When a student has significant difficulty, the school should first try providing instructional services in the regular classroom and gathering data to see if the student makes needed progress. If the student still has difficulty, then an evaluation may be appropriate. A teacher, a parent, or someone else who is concerned can refer the child for attention. The EdGuide on Students with Disabilities provides more information.

WHAT EVIDENCE SHOWS THE IMPACT OF SUPPORTS FOR STRUGGLING STUDENTS?
HOW IS SUPPORT FOR STRUGGLING STUDENTS FUNDED?

At the basic level, the combined state and local dollars that make up SEEK, Kentucky's main school funding formula, are meant to support all students making sustained progress toward being college and career ready. In addition, Kentucky provides targeted state dollars for ESS. That funding dropped steeply during the recent recession, from $31.9 million in FY 2008 to just $12.3 million in FY 2014. For FY 2016, 2017, and 2018, state budgets have provided $25.5 million for ESS support.

KENTUCKY EDGUIDES | VARIED NEEDS 3.2

Student With Disabilities

Some children differ from their peers enough to need specialized educational services to meet Kentucky's learning goals. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines those children's education rights. Kentucky provides specialized services if a disability has an adverse effect on a child's academic success. In Kentucky regulations, adverse affect means that the student's educational performance is significantly and consistently below the level of similar-age peers.

HOW ARE STUDENTS WITH POSSIBLE DISABILITIES IDENTIFIED?

A **Child Find** process is used by school districts to identify and evaluate children ages 3 to 21 who may need special services. **Referrals** are a second way children can be identified, allowing those who know the child (parents, teachers, or others) to request an evaluation. A referred student first receives appropriate instruction and intervention services in a regular classroom, with data being collected to see if the student makes adequate progress. If the student does not make adequate progress, an evaluation for disabilities may occur if the child's parent consents.

WHO DETERMINES IF A STUDENT HAS A DISABILITY?
WHO PLANS THE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOR THAT STUDENT?

An **Admission and Release Committee (ARC)** is convened, including:

■ The child's parents

■ A regular education teacher who works with the child

■ A special education teacher who works with the child or has knowledge about the child's disability

■ A district person with knowledge of special education and local resources

■ Someone who can interpret the evaluation results

■ Other people who can help, identified by the school or the parents

■ The child, if appropriate (At least a year before students turn 18, they are informed about their special education rights and told that at age 18, they can take over from their parents in making decisions about their own educations.)

The ARC's first roles are to refer the child for evaluation and determine eligibility. If the child is found eligible for IDEA services, the ARC addresses the child's needs with an **Individual Education Program (IEP)** and reviews and revises the IEP at least annually (and more often if needed). The IEP includes:

■ Information on the child's present levels of achievement and performance

■ Annual goals and how the child's progress toward the goals will be measured and reported

■ A placement decision assigning the child to the **least restrictive environment** that can meet the child's needs. Depending on the child, that can be a regular classroom, a regular classroom plus help from an aide or special education teacher, a regular classroom plus pullout services, or another arrangement

■ Plans for instruction, services, and assessments, including **accommodations and modifications** (meaning changes made in the way materials are presented and in the setting, timing and scheduling for instruction)

DEFINING DISABILITY

Kentucky defines a child with a disability to include those with:

■ Autism

■ Deaf-blindness

■ Hearing impairment

■ Visual impairment

■ Developmental delay

■ Emotional-behavior disability

■ Mental disability

■ Multiple disabilities

■ Orthopedic impairment

■ Other health impairment (includes ADHD)

■ Specific learning disability (includes dyslexia)

■ Speech or language impairment

■ Traumatic brain injury

RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS

To solve disputes involving a student with a disability, it is best to start locally, contacting the school principal or the district's director of special education. There are also formal processes for resolving disputes related to students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), including mediation, formal complaints and administrative due process hearings. Request forms for those processes may be found at education.ky.gov by searching for "Dispute Resolution."

LEARNING MORE

Federal requirements for serving students with disabilities are explained at idea.ed.gov.

The State Advisory Panel on Exceptional Children gives policy guidance to state leaders and holds regular hearings where parents and others can be heard. Contact them by going to education.ky.gov and searching for "SAPEC."

■ For students 16 and over, goals for post-secondary training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills, along with transition services to help the child reach those goals.

HOW DOES HAVING A DISABILITY AFFECT RULES FOR STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE?

The EdGuide on Student Conduct and Discipline addresses this question at www.prichardcommittee.org. Physical restraints and seclusion are only allowed to address imminent physical danger to the student or other people, never as a consequence for misbehavior: search for "restraints" at education.ky.gov for those rules.
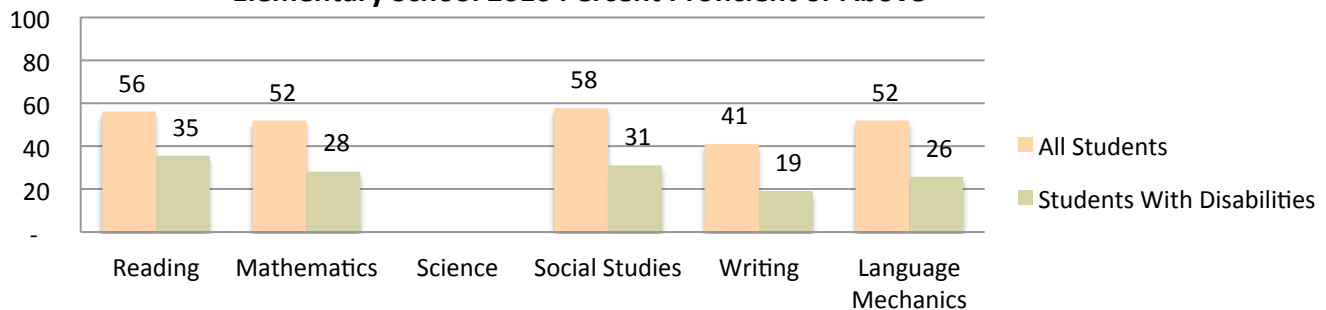
HOW DO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES PARTICIPATE IN STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS?

Most students with disabilities take the same assessments as their classmates, either in the same way or with the same accommodations they receive during regular schoolwork. A small number of students with severe disabilities participate in an *alternate assessment* based on alternate achievement standards. Those students may receive an *alternative high school diploma* after completing a modified curriculum and an individualized course of study.

HOW ARE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES FUNDED?

The federal government provides partial funding for special education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The SEEK formula also provides an "add on" amount based on students with disabilities.

Elementary School 2016 Percent Proficient or Above

Subject	All Students	Students With Disabilities
Reading	56	35
Mathematics	52	28
Science		
Social Studies	58	31
Writing	41	19
Language Mechanics	52	26

Middle School 2016 Percent Proficient or Above

Subject	All Students	Students with Disabilities
Reading	55	24
Mathematics	47	18
Science		
Social Studies	60	24
Writing	44	14
Language Mechanics	41	14

High School 2016 Percent Proficient or Above

Subject	All Students	Students with Disabilities
English II	56	14
Algebra II	42	15
Biology	37	7
U.S. History	59	24
Writing	44	11
Language Mechanics	54	14
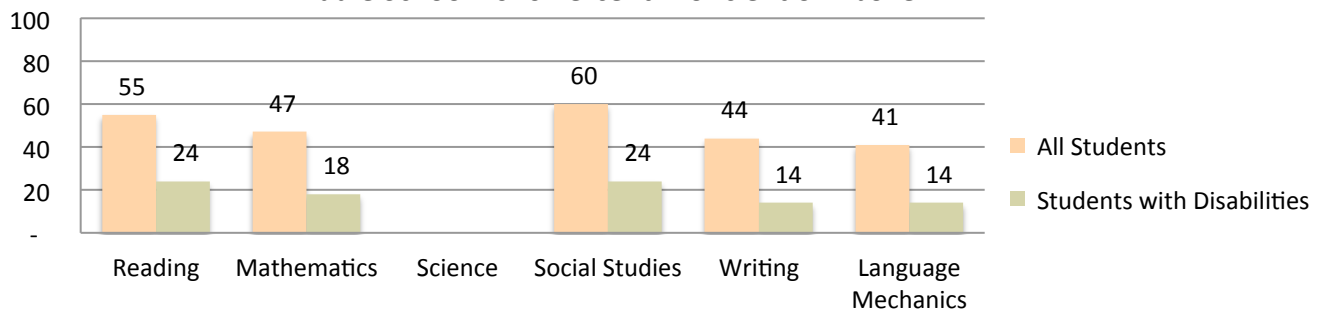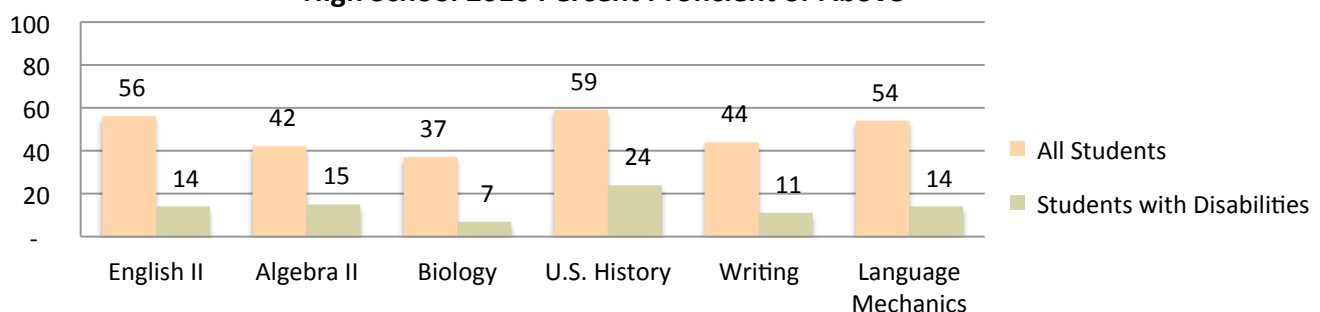
Students Ready for Added Challenge

All students benefit from engaging in work that gives them achievable challenges to meet and opportunities to stretch and grow. Some students are ready for bigger or deeper challenges than others, and Kentucky schools have a number of ways to serve those students.

HOW CAN CHALLENGE BE ADDED IN A PRIMARY CLASSROOM (KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3)?

The *continuous progress* feature of the primary program means that all children should receive support to move steadily forward, including opportunities to do deeper or faster work in primary subjects if they show that they are ready.

School districts provide a ***Primary Talent Pool*** for students who are informally selected as having characteristics and behaviors of high potential learners and further diagnosed using a series of informal and formal measures. Those students may receive differentiated service delivery needs during their stay in the primary program. For example, some may receive accelerated instruction in one or more subjects in their regular classroom or work with students in a different grade on their subjects of distinctive strength. Others may participate in a specialized program for music, art, leadership or another specific area in which they have been identified as having specific strengths. Each school is expected to have multiple service options to respond to the varied talents their students bring to school.

Response to Intervention or "RTI" is a statewide initiative in the primary years. Response to intervention calls for schools to organize instruction by setting up tiers of response that start with a core program that will be effective for most students and then add supplemental support and then intensive intervention when evidence shows which students need different or additional support. For example, a student who is easily mastering the core program (tier 1) may receive some added opportunities (tier 2) and then if that support is not enough, move to more intensive support (tier 3). In parent-teacher discussions, it may help to ask what "tier" of services a child is receiving and then for details about how that tier works. It may also be helpful to ask what kinds of evidence the school is using for RTI decisions. ("Kentucky System of Intervention" and "KSI" are related terms, describing an approach to RTI implementation shared by the Kentucky Department of Education.)

Individual student needs should also be considered in deciding when students ***start school***: parents may petition to allow a younger child to start school if an evaluation determines the child's school readiness.

HOW CAN CHALLENGE BE ADDED IN GRADES 4-12?

Most schools have a policy commitment to helping all students achieve their potential, especially if parents or teachers point out that a particular student is quickly finishing work or showing signs of boredom with current assignments. While continuous progress and RTI are not required across the state after the end of primary, many schools and districts choose to continue using those terms and approaches in serving students.

In grades 3 through 8, parents receive individualized reports on their children's reading and mathematics skills. If those reports identify student strengths, the school's staff is to develop an ***accelerated learning plan*** for that student. Similarly, for high school students, if readiness tests show that a student is ready for advanced work, intervention strategies for accelerated learning are to be incorporated into those students' individual learning plans. (Note: Explore and Plan readiness tests are no longer being given, but Kentucky expects to adopt new readiness tests for grades 8 and 10 and use those results for future accelerated learning decisions. K-PREP results are being used in the interim.)

LEARNING MORE

The Kentucky Association for Gifted Education offers helpful resources at kagegifted.org

Learn more about the Kentucky System of Interventions by visiting education.ky.gov and searching for "KSI"

Added information on how Kentucky schools serve students can be found in other Kentucky EdGuides offered at www.prichardcommittee.org, including those on:

- Early Childhood and Preschool
- Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, and High Schools
- Students Who Need Added Support
- Students With Disabilities
- Barriers to Learning

Challenge can be added in multiple ways, including:

■ Planning more demanding readings, problems, or topics for appropriate assignments

■ Regrouping a student to do some work in a different class that is closer to a student's skill level in a particular subject

■ Using digital learning options that can add challenges as soon as a student is ready

■ Taking some high school courses in middle school, especially algebra and geometry

■ Taking some college level courses in high school, either as Advanced Placement classes or through dual enrollment or dual credit arrangements with a college or university

■ Applying to the Craft Academy for Excellence in Science and Mathematics at Morehead State University or the Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science at Western Kentucky University ((www.moreheadstate.edu/craft-academy or wku.edu/academy).

■ Early graduation (discussed in more detail in the EdGuide on High Schools)

■ Other systematic options to ensure that the student is moving steadily forward

HOW CAN A STUDENT BE IDENTIFIED AS GIFTED AND TALENTED?

Kentucky's definition of exceptional children includes gifted and talented students, defined as those who possess demonstrated or potential ability to perform at exceptionally high levels in one or more of the following categories: general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, creative or divergent thinking, psychosocial or leadership skills, and/or visual or performing arts.

Until grade 4, students are eligible for inclusion in the primary talent pool, but not for formal gifted and talented identification. Beginning in grade 4, each district has a system for diagnostic screening that can identify students at any time. Parents may also petition to have their children screened. To learn more, ask your school or district for information on the local policies.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A STUDENT IS IDENTIFIED AS GIFTED AND TALENTED?

Each identified gifted and talented student has an individual education plan, often called a Gifted Student Services Plan or GSSP. That plan is developed using information about the student, including information from parents and guardians about students' individual interests, needs and abilities. Because each GSSP is differentiated and customized for that student, the included services will vary from child to child. During regular school hours, the services may include studying some subjects at a higher grade level, taking Advanced Placement and honors courses, specialized counseling, differentiated study experiences for individuals and cluster groups in the regular classroom, independent study, mentorships, resource services delivered in a pullout classroom or other appropriate instructional setting, and a variety of other possibilities. Academic competitions and optional extracurricular options may also be included, and those can occur outside the regular school day. Parents receive reports about what is included in a child's GSSP at least once a year and reports on the child's progress under the plan at least once a semester. In providing gifted and talented services, each school is expected to have multiple service options to respond to the varied talents their students bring to school.

HOW ARE GIFTED AND TALENTED SERVICES FUNDED?

Kentucky provides a limited amount of funding specifically for serving gifted and talented students. The other costs of meeting student needs, including those of gifted and talented students and others who are ready for accelerated learning, are covered with SEEK state and local dollars.

English Language Learners

Some students come to Kentucky schools with limited proficiency in the English language. Equipping those students to succeed at the same high levels as their classmates requires some distinctive supports.

HOW ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IDENTIFIED?

All local school districts are required to administer a home language survey to students enrolled in the district as a first screening process to identify students with limited English proficiency. Based on that initial survey, students may take a screening test named W-APT that allows schools to:

■ Identify students who may be candidates for English language learner and/or bilingual services

■ Determine the academic English language proficiency levels of students new to a school or to the United States school system in order to determine appropriate levels and amount of instructional services

■ Assign students identified as English language learners to appropriate classes and supports.

HOW ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS SERVED?

Once a student is identified as an English language learner, a Program Services Plan (PSP) is developed for that student. The PSP includes:

■ The reasons a student has been identified (results of the W-APT screener and possibly other assessments)

■ Information on the student's current level of English proficiency

■ Information on the student's academic background and experience, cultural and language history

■ Service delivery models for English language instruction

■ Appropriate instructional and assessment accommodations and modifications for the rest of a student's studies, including work to meet Kentucky Academic Standards in all subjects.

HOW ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS ASSESSED?

Students with limited English proficiency take K-PREP and readiness tests along with their classmates and also take the ACCESS for ELLs® proficiency to gauge their progress toward mastering English.

HOW DO STUDENTS MOVE OUT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER SERVICES?

Those services end when a student's ACCESS scores meet state criteria for fluency in English. Once students exit the English Language Learner program, they are monitored for the next two academic years.

LEARNING MORE

Added information on how Kentucky schools serve students can be found in other Kentucky Education Guides offered at www.prichardcommittee.org, including those on:

■ Early Childhood and Preschool

■ Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, and High Schools

■ Students Who Need Added Support

■ Students Ready for Added Challenge

■ Poverty and Nonacademic Barriers to Learning

■ Digital Learning and School Technology

PLANNING DISTRICT SERVICES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

To learn more about local service to English language learners, check out your district's Title III/English Learner Plan for educating limited English proficient students. The plan will show:

■ Objectives for increasing the percent of students making progress in learning English and the percent attaining English language proficiency

■ Objectives for closing gaps between English language learners and other students

■ The district's plans for instruction and other services to meet those objectives

■ The budget that supports those plans

Those district plans are to be developed annually in consultation with teachers, school administrators, parents, researchers, and if appropriate, with education-related community groups, nonprofit organizations, and institutions of higher education.
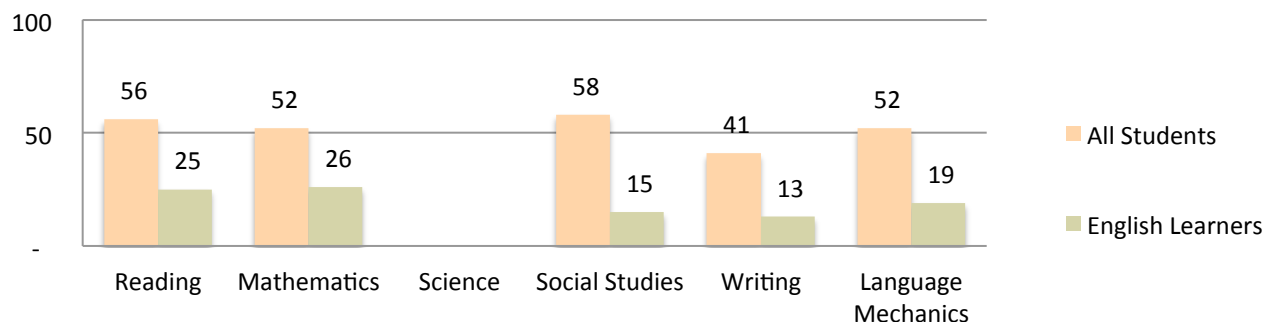
HOW ARE SERVICES TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS FUNDED?

The SEEK formula provides an "add on" amount based on each district's count of students with limited English proficiency. The federal government provides supplemental funding for educating English language learners under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to qualifying districts. Districts that do not meet the federal qualification requirement as a stand-alone district can join with other districts to form a consortium to receive Title III funds.
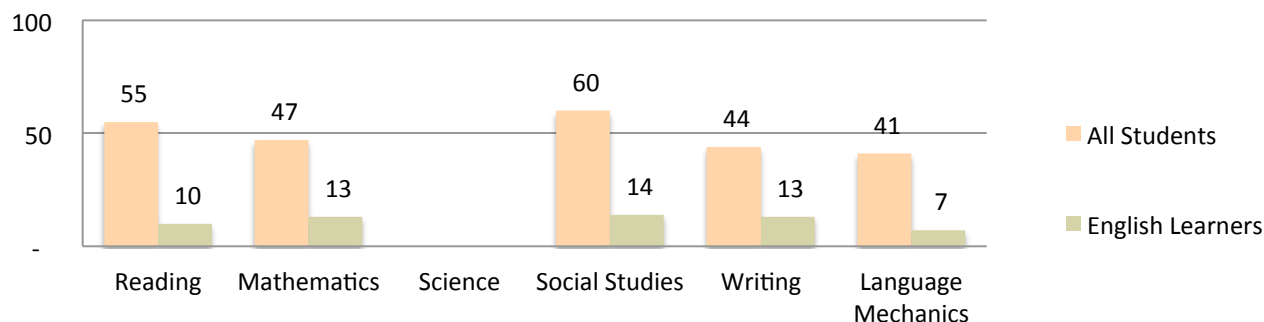
WHAT EVIDENCE SHOWS RESULTS FOR STUDENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY?

The results from K-PREP assessments shown below confirm that substantial further efforts are needed to strengthen learning for this group of students. Scores for limited English proficiency students at individual schools can be found at www.education.ky.gov by going to the School Report Card link on the home page.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 2016 PERCENT PROFICIENT OR ABOVE

	All Students	English Learners
Reading	56	25
Mathematics	52	26
Science		
Social Studies	58	15
Writing	41	13
Language Mechanics	52	19

MIDDLE SCHOOL 2016 PERCENT PROFICIENT OR ABOVE

	All Students	English Learners
Reading	55	10
Mathematics	47	13
Science		
Social Studies	60	14
Writing	44	13
Language Mechanics	41	7

HIGH SCHOOL 2016 PERCENT PROFICIENT OR ABOVE

	All Students	English Learners
English II	56	4
Algebra II	42	18
Biology	37	5
U.S. History	59	10
Writing	44	6
Language Mechanics	54	7
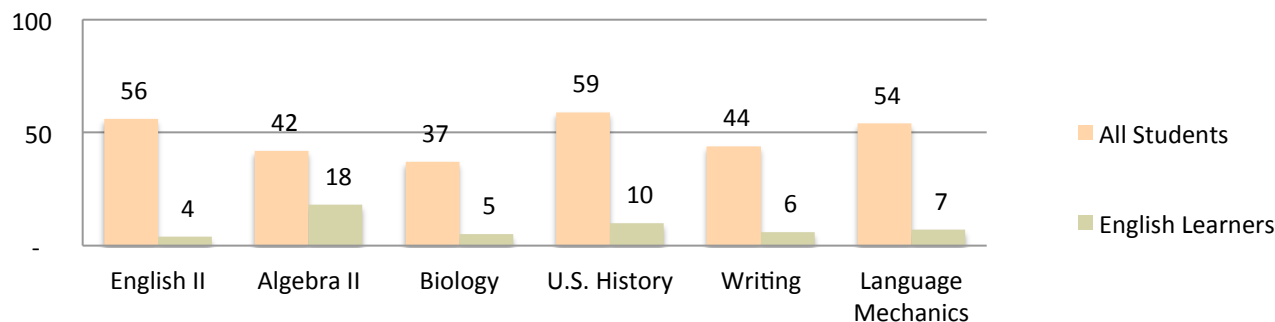
Poverty and Non-Academic Barriers to Learning

For some children, learning can be more difficult because other factors in their lives create barriers that slow them down. This EdGuide introduces some key ways Kentucky schools work on helping students succeed in spite of those added challenges.

WHAT SUPPORT CAN STUDENTS RECEIVE FROM FAMILY RESOURCE & YOUTH SERVICES CENTERS?

Family resource and youth services centers (FRYSCs, informally pronounced as "Friskies") help students and their families who face social, economic, or health difficulties that may interfere with learning. The coordinators at the centers identify problems and link students and families to local resources that help students be more ready to learn. **Family Resource Centers** serve children from birth through grade 5 and coordinate preschool child care, after-school child day care, families in training, family literacy services, and health services and referrals. **Youth Services Centers** serve students in middle and high school and coordinate referrals to health and social services, career exploration and development, summer and part-time job development (high school only), substance abuse education and counseling, and family crisis and mental health counseling. The centers are guided by **local advisory councils,** which include parent representatives of the school population, community partners, and educators. At least two students serve on councils for youth services centers. The **Cabinet for Health and Family Services** oversees the Division of Family Resource and Youth Services Centers.

WHAT HELP CAN STUDENTS RECEIVE THROUGH THE KENTUCKY EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE FOR STATE AGENCY CHILDREN (KECSAC)?

Some Kentucky students receive their educations in settings like group homes, juvenile justice detention centers, mental health day treatments, residential treatment programs, community-based shelter programs or hospital settings after being assigned to state custody or supervision. Often, these students' history includes difficulties like low school performance, substance abuse in the family, abuse and neglect, behavioral and emotional issues, and poverty. KECSAC coordinates (and funds) work to make sure these students receive a quality education comparable to other Kentucky students. For example, KECSAC programs provide a 210-day instructional year and ratios of one teacher for ten students or a teacher and an aide for fifteen students. They also develop transition plans for each student, oversee budgets, program improvement plans, and negotiate (or mediate) cooperative agreements with treatment providers and other agencies. There are 86 KECSAC-funded programs located in 52 school districts throughout the Commonwealth.

HOW CAN A STUDENT QUALIFY FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS?

In most schools, families apply for those meals by completing a short form with information on family size and income. In some schools, those forms are no longer needed: schools with community eligibility programs provide meals to all students at no charge, which is permitted when at least 40% of students qualify for free meals based on data gathered by other support programs for low-income families.

SEEING THE NUMBERS

More than 390,000 Kentucky students qualified for free or reduced-price meals in 2015-16, and that figure does not include students in schools that have moved to a community eligibility program approach that feeds all students without charge.

Over the course of a year, many students move in and out of KECSAC services. In 2014-15, 13,015 students were served over the course of the year, with 2,379 students being served on the single day used for the most detailed KECSAC census.

LEARNING MORE

Added information on how Kentucky schools serve students can be found in other Kentucky EdGuides offered at www.prichardcommittee.org, including those on:

- Early Childhood and Preschool
- Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, and High Schools
- Students Who Need Added Support
- Students With Disabilities
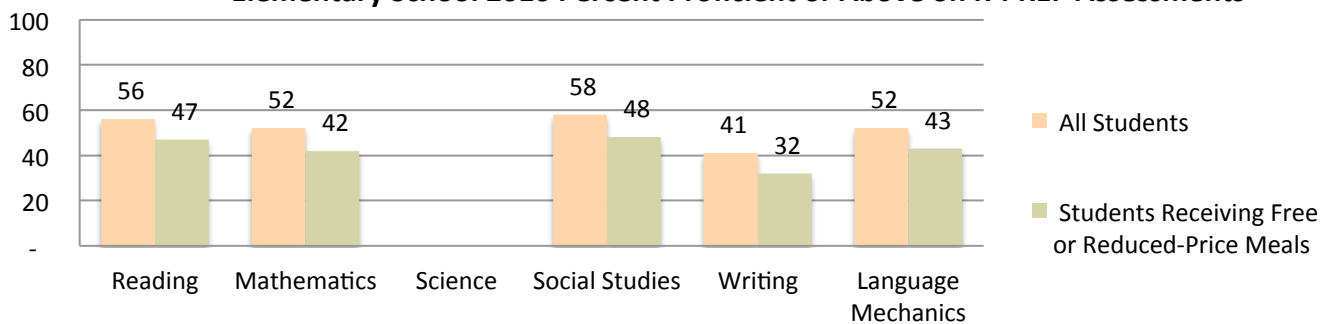- Students Ready for Added Challenge

WHAT HAPPENS IF A STUDENT CANNOT PAY A SCHOOL FEE?

If a student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district must waive nearly all fees that they charge to students, including charges for textbooks, workbooks, field trips, and most other items. The only exceptions are for activities completely outside the school day that do not count for graduation or course credit and for materials that students do not need to earn credit and meet student performance objectives.
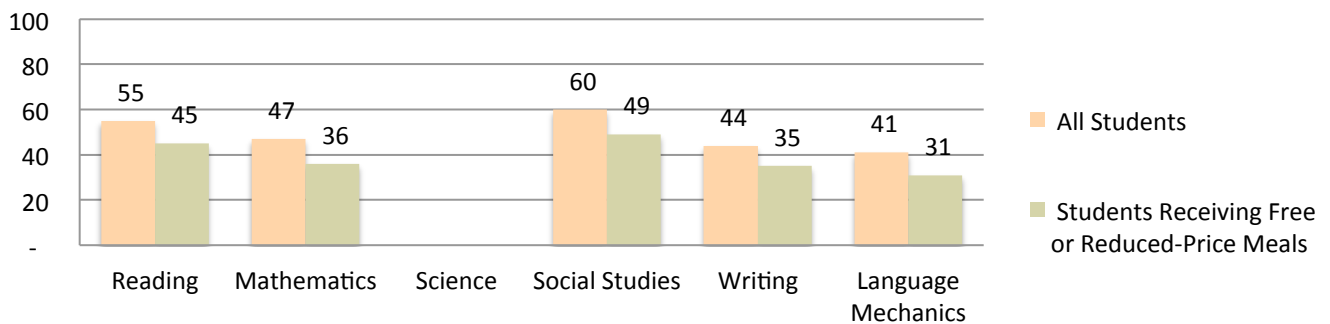
WHAT FUNDING SUPPORTS WORK WITH STUDENTS WHO FACE BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Federal Title I funding is allocated to schools and districts based on their low-income enrollment, with each school responsible for planning use of those dollars to meet the resulting student needs. Kentucky's SEEK formula adds 15% to the base guarantee for each student who qualifies for the federal free lunch program (though not those who qualify for reduced-price meals); districts are not required to use those exact dollars for the added student needs, but schools are required to address achievement gaps for low income students. FRYSC and KECSAC have their own line items in the state budget.

Elementary School 2016 Percent Proficient or Above on K-PREP Assessments

Subject	All Students	Students Receiving Free or Reduced-Price Meals
Reading	56	47
Mathematics	52	42
Science		
Social Studies	58	48
Writing	41	32
Language Mechanics	52	43

Middle School 2016 Percent Proficient or Above on K-PREP Assessments

Subject	All Students	Students Receiving Free or Reduced-Price Meals
Reading	55	45
Mathematics	47	36
Science		
Social Studies	60	49
Writing	44	35
Language Mechanics	41	31

High School 2016 Percent Proficient or Above on K-PREP Assessments

Subject	All Students	Students Receiving Free or Reduced-Price Meals
English II	56	45
Algebra II	42	31
Biology	37	26
U.S. History	59	48
Writing	44	33
Language Mechanics	54	41
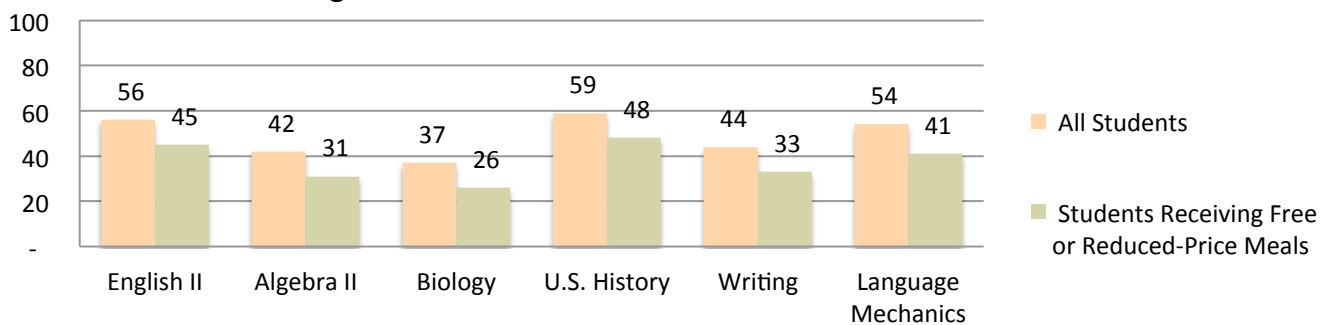
School Technology and Digital Learning

Today's technology offers new options for students to control part of their learning, maybe studying a subject their schools do not offer, or learning at a different pace or a different time of day or in a different way than is possible within their school's current schedule.

HOW DOES KENTUCKY SUPPORT ACTIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION?

Since 1990, Kentucky has been committed to strong technology implementation under a series of statewide Kentucky Education Technology System (KETS) master plans. KETS sets standards for school technology purposes, provides technical services, ensures high-speed network access, and funds technology strategies to support the learning environment. Because technology innovation is so rapid, that system needs regular upgrades to allow students and teachers to use current software and applications. Annually, Kentucky also offers matching funds to help school districts make purchases to keep up with those rising standards.

KETS also provides key support platforms for school system operations, including:

■ Infinite Campus, a student information system that tracks students' grades, test scores and other information

■ The Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS, often pronounced "sits"), which gives educators access to a wide array of teaching tools and opportunities to develop and share their own curriculum approaches

■ ASSIST, which provides an on-line approach to school improvement planning and to submitting required documentation to the Kentucky Department of Education

■ MUNIS, which handles district accounting and fiscal reporting.

WHAT IS DIGITAL LEARNING?

Digital learning uses technology to give students new learning options including "some element of control over time, place, path and/or pace," according to www.digitallearningnow.com. That can include classes conducted entirely on-line as well as blended or hybrid courses with some learning in a conventional classroom along with some on-line learning. It can also include on-demand or "just in time" learning available at any time of day or night. Read broadly, digital learning also includes all personal paths of study that students tackle on their own without seeking school credit—but this EdGuide is limited to digital learning that is part of a student's Kentucky public school education.

SEEING THE NUMBERS

The chart below shows the number of students and student instructional devices in Kentucky schools, plus the number of those devices that students can use to take state required assessments. In districts with "bring your own device" policies," students can also make use of their smart phones and other devices for in-school learning.

2014-15 Students and Devices
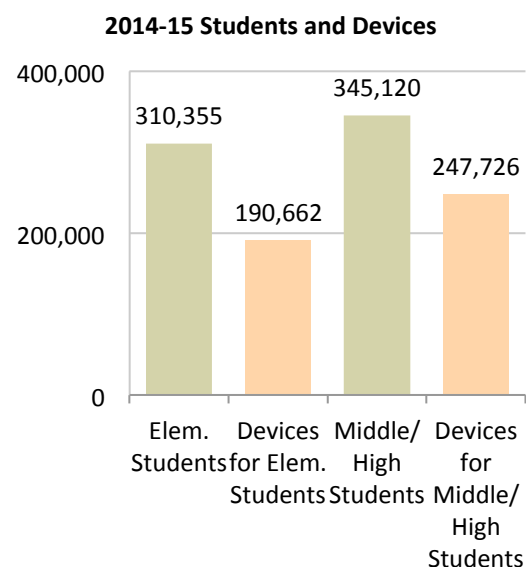
Source note: student membership comes from http://applications.education.ky.gov/SRC/ and device counts from Technology Readiness Survey data available at www.education.ky.gov.

LEARNING MORE

Added information on how Kentucky schools serve students can be found in other Kentucky EdGuides at www.prichardcommittee.org, including those on:

▪ Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, and High Schools

▪ Career Technical Education

▪ Students Who Need Added Support

▪ Students With Disabilities

▪ Students Ready for Added Challenge

WHAT KINDS OF DIGITAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?

Districts and schools may create digital learning courses or select courses that are offered by other providers, provided they "align explicitly to the Kentucky approved academic standards appropriate for each course and be endorsed by a highly qualified content teacher." To learn about local options, ask at your school or district board of education office.
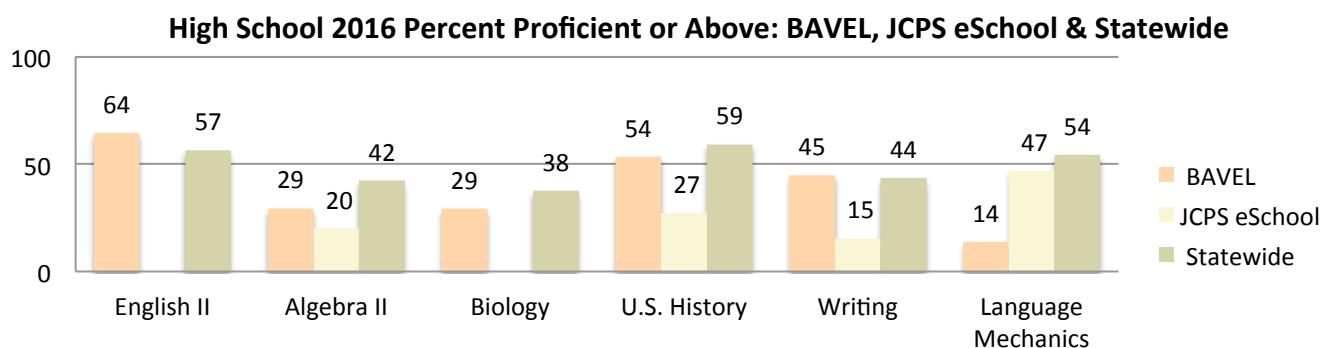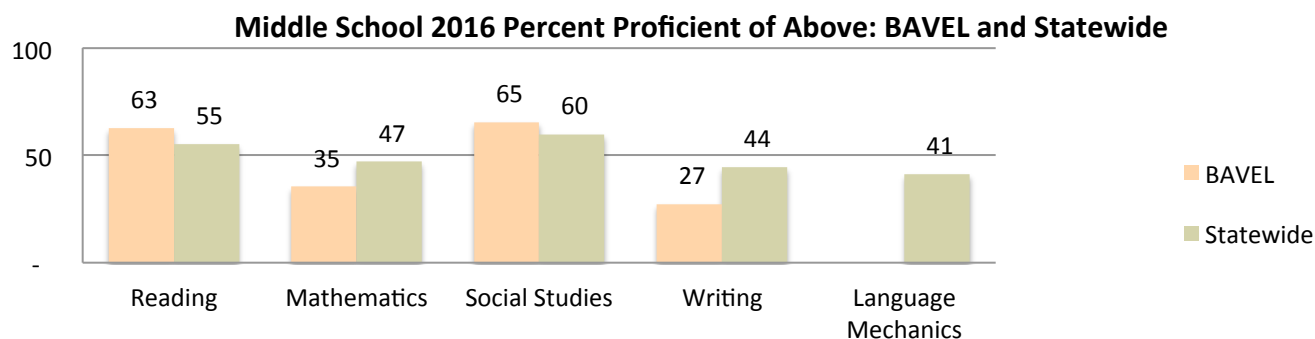
The Kentucky Virtual Campus for K-12 Students (www.kyvc4k12.org) allows students to register for courses from three providers: Kentucky Educational Television, JCPSeSchool, offered by the Jefferson County Public Schools, and the Barren Academy of Virtual and Expanded Learning (BAVEL), offered by the Barren County school system. The offerings include middle and high school courses in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, and other fields.

Digital learning can also be used when weather conditions and other emergencies make it impossible for students to come to school. School districts can make digital options part of an alternative instruction plan that can count for up to ten student attendance days if the Commissioner of Education approves. More than 70 districts will be participating in the non-traditional instructional time program during the 2016-17 school year.

Kentucky's Microsoft IT Academy allows high school students to pursue industry-recognized certifications in productivity tools, programming, information technology administration, and computer science. Schools can provide courses guided by teachers, or students can use the curriculum resources.

WHAT EVIDENCE SHOWS DIGITAL LEARNING RESULTS FOR KENTUCKY STUDENTS?

Of the three providers at the Kentucky Virtual Campus for K-12 Students, only BAVEL has reported middle school data, while BAVEL and JCPS eSchool have high school reports. The chart below shows how their recent K-PREP scores compare to statewide average.

Middle School 2016 Percent Proficient of Above: BAVEL and Statewide

	Reading	Mathematics	Social Studies	Writing	Language Mechanics
BAVEL	63	35	65	27	
Statewide	55	47	60	44	41

High School 2016 Percent Proficient or Above: BAVEL, JCPS eSchool & Statewide

	English II	Algebra II	Biology	U.S. History	Writing	Language Mechanics
BAVEL	64	29	29	54	45	14
JCPS eSchool		20		27	15	47
Statewide	57	42	38	59	44	54

Student Behavior and Discipline

WHAT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES APPLY ACROSS A SCHOOL DISTRICT?

Each local board of education sets a code of acceptable behavior and discipline for students, which includes:

■ The type of behavior expected from each student

■ The consequences of failure to obey the standards

■ Procedures for handling violations, including keeping records and sharing information with parents and legal guardians.

All school employees and all students' parents and guardians must receive copies of the code.

HOW DO STUDENTS LEARN TO FOLLOW THOSE RULES?

Each school council sets a discipline and classroom management policy. Reading that policy and talking with the principal and teachers about how it is being implemented are two important ways to learn about behavior successes, strategies, and challenges at any specific school.

Two state initiatives provide added support for positive, learning-focused student behavior:

■ For primary students (kindergarten to grade 3), a "Response to Intervention" approach provides a first tier of behavior instruction for all students and then adds tiers of supplemental support and more intensive help for individual students if needed to help each one behave appropriately.

■ For teachers, the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System values "Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport" as a component of classroom success. Teachers will receive individualized feedback on what they are doing well and professional development support to become more effective as needed.

WHAT STUDENT BEHAVIOR CAN LEAD TO SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION?

Kentucky law allows students to be suspended or expelled for:

■ Willfully disobeying or defying teachers or administrators

■ Using profanity or vulgarity

■ Committing assault or battery or abuse of students or school personnel

■ Threatening to use force or violence

■ Using or possessing alcohol or drugs

■ Stealing, destroying or defacing property belonging to the school, students, or school personnel

■ Carrying or using weapons or dangerous instruments

■ Committing other incorrigible bad conduct on school property or at school-sponsored activities.

Board policy must require expulsion for at least a year if a student brings a weapon to a school, and it must require disciplinary action if a student physically assaults or batters another person at school or brings drugs to school planning to sell or distribute them.

LEARNING MORE

Learn more about the Kentucky System of Interventions by visiting education.ky.gov and searching for "KSI."

Added information on how Kentucky schools serve students can be found in other Kentucky EdGuides offered at www.prichardcommittee.org, including those on:

▪ Student Safety

▪ Educator Growth and Effectiveness

▪ Early Childhood and Preschool

▪ Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, and High Schools

▪ Alternative Schools

▪ Students Who Need Added Support

▪ Students With Disabilities

▪ Students Ready for Added Challenge

▪ Poverty and Nonacademic Barriers to Learning

For primary students (kindergarten to grade 3) suspension is only an option "in exceptional cases where there are safety issues for the child or others."

WHAT PROCESS MUST BE FOLLOWED FOR SUSPENSION?

The superintendent, principal, or assistant principal makes the suspension decision. Students must be told what they are charged with having done, be told the evidence against them, and be given a chance to present their own version of events. Usually, that must happen before the student is suspended. However, the student can be suspended first and receive the due process steps up to three school days later if "immediate suspension is essential to protect persons or property or to avoid disruption of the ongoing academic process." The superintendent and parent or guardian must receive immediate written notice when a student is suspended.

WHAT PROCESS MUST BE FOLLOWED FOR EXPULSION?

The board of education makes the expulsion decision after giving the student's parent or guardian an opportunity to have a hearing before the board. In almost all cases, an expelled student must receive educational services in an appropriate alternative program or setting. An exception to that requirement is allowed only if the board determines, based on evidence, that the student is a threat to the safety of other students or school staff and placement in a "state-funded agency program" is not possible.

WHAT ADDED REQUIREMENTS APPLY IF A STUDENT HAS A DISABILITY?

If a student with a disability is suspended for 10 consecutive days or 10 separate days that add up to a pattern within a single school year, that student's Admission and Release Committee (ARC) must meet. The ARC then determines whether the student's behavior problem is related to the child's disability. If the behavior is disability related, the student cannot be suspended any further or expelled, except that if "the current placement could result in injury to the child, other children, or the educational personnel, in which case an appropriate alternative placement shall be provided that will provide for the child's educational needs and will provide a safe learning and teaching environment for all." If the behavior is not disability related, the district may follow its regular rules for suspension or expulsion if warranted by the student's behavior, but educational services must continue even if a student is expelled or suspended.

CAN PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OR SECLUSION BE USED AS STUDENT PUNISHMENTS?

No. Under rare circumstances, a student can be restrained or secluded to address an "imminent danger of physical harm to self or others," as discussed in the Kentucky EdGuide on School Safety, but state regulations do not ever allow physical restraint or seclusion to be used as a consequence for student misbehavior.

IS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ALLOWED IN KENTUCKY SCHOOLS?

State law does not forbid corporal punishment, though many school board policies do prohibit it and the risk of school liability makes it quite rare. With more than 650,000 students enrolled during the 2015-16 school year, corporal punishment was applied to just over 500 students according to statewide school report card data.

DEFINING BULLYING

In 2016, Kentucky adopted a new definition of bullying:

(a) As used in this section, "bullying" means any unwanted verbal, physical, or social behavior among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is repeated or has the potential to be repeated:

> *1. That occurs on school premises, on school-sponsored transportation, or at a school-sponsored event; or*

> *2. That disrupts the education process.*

(b) This definition shall not be interpreted to prohibit civil exchange of opinions or debate or cultural practices protected under the state or federal Constitution where the opinion expressed does not otherwise materially or substantially disrupt the education process.

KENTUCKY EDGUIDES | VARIED NEEDS 3.8

School Safety

Schools should be safe places for every student and every adult. This EdGuide provides quick information on some key rules that are in place to protect against possible dangers. In addition, a separate Kentucky EdGuide addresses student behavior and discipline.

HOW DO SCHOOLS PREPARE FOR SAFETY IN CASE OF FIRE, EARTHQUAKE, SEVERE WEATHER, AND DANGERS THAT MAY REQUIRE A SCHOOL LOCKDOWN?

All schools must have emergency plans for fire, severe weather, and earthquakes, and also for situations that require a building lockdown. In developing the plan, the school must seek out collaboration on the plan from local first responders, fire marshals, and law enforcement. The school council must approve the emergency plan and then review it every year. To practice the emergency procedures, schools must conduct drills for earthquakes, severe weather, and lockdowns during the first month of school and again in January, with fire drills held each month.

HOW CAN PARENTS AND GUARDIANS HELP WITH SCHOOL SAFETY IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS?

Parents and guardians can help by waiting for information before heading to the school when they hear of a possible emergency. Going there immediately may block the path for emergency vehicles and make it harder for the school to check that all students have been located. The school may share directions by phone call, text, email, website announcement, television announcement or radio announcement.

HOW DO SCHOOLS PROTECT AGAINST ADULTS WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS?

School districts cannot employ people who have been convicted of a violent crime or a sex crime classified as a felony. State and national criminal records checks are required for new certified school and district employees (meaning those whose jobs require state certificates, like teachers, principals, librarians, superintendents, and some others), as well as student teachers. A state criminal records check is required for new classified employees (meaning those whose jobs do not require certificates, including aides, bus drivers, clerks, and some others).

State and national checks are also required for parent members of the school council and volunteers who have contact with students on a regularly scheduled or continuous basis, or who have supervisory responsibility for students at school or on school-sponsored trips.

HOW DO SCHOOLS PROTECT AGAINST STUDENTS WHO HAVE COMMITTED CRIMES?

People at school (students, teachers, and so on) have the same right to physical safety as people in any other location.

If one student may have committed a felony against another, school employees must make sure that is reported to the school principal once they know or have "reasonable cause to believe" the crime has occurred. The principal, in turn, must notify the parent or guardian of the harmed student and file a written report with the local school board and law enforcement within 48 hours.

If a student has a history of physically abusing school employees or carrying concealed weapons in school or at school functions, teachers must receive written notice about that behavior before that teacher is assigned to work with or be in contact with the student.

SEEING THE NUMBERS

The State Report Card for the 2014-15 school year shows that with more than 650,000 statewide, there were:

- 35 incidents of first degree assault

- 1,292 incidents of other assaults and violence

- 406 weapons incidents

- 18,842 harassment incidents (including bullying)

- 13,446 drug incidents (including tobacco)

- 767 alcohol incidents

Data for individual schools and districts can be found in the school report cards available at applications.education.ky.gov/src.

CAN SCHOOLS REMOVE STUDENTS WHO ARE A DANGER TO THEMSELVES AND OTHERS?

Yes, students who are a danger to themselves or other people may be removed immediately. The procedure for expelling and suspending students is laid out in the EdGuide on Student Behavior and Discipline, but note that those same rules provide for immediate removal before those procedures when needed to protect human safety.

HOW ARE STUDENTS PROTECTED FROM DANGEROUS PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION?

Physical restraint and seclusion of students are almost never allowed in Kentucky schools. An exception may be made when the student's behavior "poses an imminent danger of physical harm to self or others," and even then, the student must be visually monitored the entire time and other protective restrictions listed in state regulation must also be followed. Unless the student is over 18 or an emancipated minor, parents must be notified within 24 hours any time restraint or seclusion is used. You can read the full regulation at www.lrc.ky.gov/kar/704/007/160.htm.

HOW ARE STUDENTS PROTECTED AGAINST BULLYING AND HARASSMENT?

No student should be bullied or harassed. Obviously, students should be free from physical, social, and emotional mistreatment. In addition, while they are at school, on school-sponsored transportation, and at school-sponsored events, students should never face behavior by other students that counts legally as harassment, including actions that create "a hostile environment by means of any gestures, written communications, oral statements, or physical acts that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know would cause another student to suffer fear of physical harm, intimidation, humiliation, or embarrassment." Harassment incidents must be included in schools' regular reports to the Kentucky Department of Education and are included (without information that could identify individual students) in annual school report cards available at www.education.ky.gov. To learn what your school and district are doing proactively to prevent bullying and help students work together constructively, check with your local school officials.

DEFINING BULLYING

In 2016, Kentucky adopted a new definition of bullying:

(a) As used in this section, "bullying" means any unwanted verbal, physical, or social behavior among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is repeated or has the potential to be repeated:

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> *2. That disrupts the education process.*

(b) This definition shall not be interpreted to prohibit civil exchange of opinions or debate or cultural practices protected under the state or federal Constitution where the opinion expressed does not otherwise materially or substantially disrupt the education process.

Local School Governance

The hands-on work of equipping each student for adult success is done at the local level, led by local school boards, superintendents, school councils, and principals.

WHAT DOES A LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION DO?

Each school board sets policy and provides resources to help the students in all the district's schools learn and grow. For example, the board sets tax rates and school attendance boundaries and approves the district's annual budget. Boards usually have five members elected by the voters of their communities to serve four-year terms. Boards make their decisions by voting in public meetings.

HOW DOES A BOARD WORK WITH A SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT?

The superintendent is the district's top executive, responsible for leading its ongoing work on a full-time basis. The school board selects and evaluates the superintendent and sets the overall policy and planning direction for the superintendent's work. The superintendent implements those decisions, including making most personnel decisions and managing the school's system's day-to-day operations.

WHAT DO SCHOOL COUNCILS DO?

School councils set policy and make plans to strengthen student achievement at a single school. For example, council policies govern a school's curriculum, its instruction, and how students are assigned to classes and programs. Those policies are implemented on a day-to-day basis by the principal and school staff. Councils work with the district superintendent to select the school's principal, and they are consulted before the principal selects people to be hired for other vacancies. Most councils consist of three teachers elected by teachers, two parents elected by parents, and the school principal as chair. If 8% or more of a school's students have minority backgrounds, the council must include minority representation. Many councils establish committees of teachers, parents, and others to develop recommendations on major issues. Councils make their decisions in public meetings, often by consensus (a process for developing decisions that all can support, rather than by majority rule). School councils are also sometimes called site councils, school-based decision-making councils, or SBDM councils.

HOW DOES A COUNCIL WORK WITH THE PRINCIPAL?

The principal is a member of the council and participates in its decisions on improvement plans and policies. Outside council meetings, the principal is responsible for implementing those decisions, including working out how rules set by the council should be applied to decisions in individual situations. When it is time to hire new staff for the school, the principal consults the council and then makes the final choice.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN BOARD AND COUNCIL MEETINGS?

School boards and school councils follow the Open Meetings Law, including provisions on when and how they meet, and when the public can be present. Committees appointed by boards and councils must also follow those rules, which are explained in more detail in the Kentucky EdGuide on Open Meetings and Records. Each body makes its own rules about when and how audience members may speak during the meeting.

LEARNING MORE

The Kentucky School Boards Association offers helpful information about school board work at www.ksba.org.

The Kentucky Association of School Councils offers public information along with publications, workshops and other services at www.kasc.net.

Members of the board and councils at your schools can also answer questions about how they conduct their work and about current efforts to ensure that all students are moving toward graduating ready to succeed in college, career, and community.

The laws and regulations governing all this work can be searched and studied at www.lrc.ky.gov/Law.htm.

The state Office of Education Accountability can help clarify roles and resolve conflicts at (800) 242-0520 or www.lrc.ky.gov/oea

IS THERE MORE DETAIL ON HOW SPECIFIC ISSUES ARE HANDLED?

The chart below adds more specifics, but does not attempt to cover all questions and details.

ISSUE	SCHOOL BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT	SCHOOL COUNCILS AND PRINCIPALS
Buildings	The board decides to build, renovate, or close buildings and decides which students go to which schools.	The council sets policy (written rules) on how school space will be used during the school day. The principal implements that policy in making day-to-day space decisions.
Taxes	The board votes to raise or lower tax rates.	
Spending	The board votes on the budget for the whole district. The superintendent decides on central office spending, transportation, utilities, building repairs, and other needs that are not council responsibilities.	The school council, using an allocation of money from the district, decides how many people to employ and what books and other instructional materials to buy. (Often, the council decides to set a budget for the available money and allow the principal, committees, or individual teachers to choose specific purchases.)
Employees	The board sets the salary schedule and qualifications for all jobs. It hires and evaluates the superintendent and school board attorney. The superintendent works with school councils to select principals. The superintendent evaluates the principals and selects and evaluates employees who are not assigned to a single school (or supervises those who do).	The council works with the superintendent to select the principal. For other vacancies at the school, the council is consulted by the principal. The principal chooses the people who will be hired to fill school vacancies after consulting the council. The principal evaluates those employees.
Calendars and schedules	The board sets the calendar for the school year and the starting and ending times for the school day. The superintendent decides to cancel or delay school on a particular day based on weather problems.	The council sets policy (written rules) on the schedule of the school day, the use of staff time, and the ways students are assigned to classes. The principal implements the policy, deciding which teachers and students will be in each class and when each will occur.
Curriculum and Instruction	While the state requires 22 credits for high school graduation, the board can set policy requiring a higher number of credits to graduate from local schools.	The council sets policy (written rules) on what will be taught and the teaching methods that will be used. The principal applies that policy in making day-to-day decisions about the school's work.
Conduct and Discipline	The board sets the district wide code of behavior, including allowed consequences. The board decides on student expulsions.	The council sets policy (written rules) on how classrooms will be managed and discipline maintained. The principal applies that policy in handling situations with individuals.
Planning and Achievement Gaps	The board votes on the districtwide improvement plan and the school board chair signs an assurances document confirming that the plan follows state and federal legal requirements. The superintendent also signs the assurances and usually coordinates the work of gathering evidence used to develop the district plan and check whether it is working.	The council reviews student achievement data and decides on the school-level plan for raising achievement and reducing achievement gaps. The principal leads the implementation of the plan and coordinates the work of gathering evidence used to develop the plan and check whether it is working.

Open Meetings

For students, parents, voters, taxpayers, and anyone else who is interested in public education, Kentucky's Open Meetings rules ensure important opportunities to observe public agency decisions.

WHO MUST FOLLOW THE OPEN MEETINGS LAW?

The Open Meetings law applies to "public agencies." Good local examples are school boards and school councils, while important state examples are the Kentucky Board of Education, Education Professional Standards Board, and Council on Postsecondary Education. More broadly, bodies created by state law or executive order are subject to Open Meetings, including the State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children, Gifted Advisory Council, National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment and Accountability, and many others. Plus, if an agency subject to the law appoints a committee, that new committee must also follow the law. (The "Linking the Law" box explains how to find each part of Kentucky's Open Meetings Law, including the definition of "public agency in KRS 61.805.)

WHEN ARE MEETINGS HELD?

All meetings must be held at times and places convenient to the public, with arrangements that allow everyone to see and hear the discussion.

LINKING THE LAW

To see the exact legal rules, go to www.lrc.ky.gov/Statutes/index.aspx, and choose Chapter 61.

For Open Meetings, scroll down to find these sections:

- 61.800 Legislative statement of policy
- 61.805 Definitions
- 61.810 Exceptions to open meetings
- 61.815 Requirements for conducting closed sessions
- 61.820 Schedule of regular meetings
- 61.823 Special meetings
- 61.826 Video teleconferencing
- 61.835 Minutes to be recorded
- 61.840 Conditions for attendance
- 61.846 Enforcement by administrative procedure
- 61.848 Enforcement by judicial action

Regular meetings are listed on a schedule that each agency sets for itself and makes available to the public. If that regular schedule is not easy to find on the agency's website, ask in person or by phone or e-mail at the agency's office.

Special meetings can be held outside the regular schedule, if called by the chair or a majority of members. For special meetings, the date, time, place, and agenda for the meeting must be shared at least 24 hours before the meeting by:

■ Delivering written notice to every member of the public agency and to each media organization that has asked in writing to be notified

■ Posting written notice in a conspicuous place at the agency's headquarters and the building where the meeting will be held (if different).

During a special meeting, the agency can only consider the items that were listed in the agenda sent out with the notice of the meeting.

Work sessions where the agency plans to discuss upcoming business without making decisions are still meetings: they must be open to the public and either on the regular schedule or called as special meetings.

Video-teleconferences are allowed if individuals can see and hear each other by means of video and audio equipment.

WHO CAN ATTEND PUBLIC AGENCY MEETINGS?

Everyone can attend all parts of every meeting, except when closed session discussions are allowed by law.

Closed sessions that exclude the public are allowed only to discuss topics listed in KRS 61.810, which include:

■ "Proposed or pending litigation"

■ "Future acquisition or sale of real property"

■ "Appointment, discipline, or dismissal of an individual employee, member, or student"

■ Ten other issues that come up less often: the "Linking the Law" box explains how to find them in section 810.

Closed sessions can only be held if the right procedures are followed, including:

■ Starting out in a properly called regular or special session

■ Announcing that a closed session is needed, describing the general topic to be discussed and saying which subsection of the law allows a closed session for that issue

■ Having a motion and majority vote to go into closed session

■ Going into closed session for <u>discussion</u> of the announced issue, but coming back into open session to make any official <u>decision</u> or to adjourn.

WHEN CAN THE PUBLIC SEE THE MINUTES OF AN AGENCY'S MEETINGS?

The minutes, providing a record of votes and actions taken at each meeting, must be available no later than the close of the agency's next meeting. (This rule gives the agency members a chance to review, amend, and approve the minutes before they are released.)

WHAT HAPPENS IF AN AGENCY SEEMS TO BREAK OPEN MEETINGS RULES?

It is always good practice to communicate with the agency itself in writing, describing the rule and how it seems to have been broken. That may allow for a quick and quiet resolution of the problem. If that does not work, the relevant laws provide a process for asking the Attorney General to rule quickly on whether the rules have been followed. In the "Linking the Law" box, KRS 61.846 explains how to start those procedures if needed.

Open Records

For students, parents, voters, taxpayers, and anyone else who is interested in public education, Kentucky's Open Records laws ensure important opportunities to learn about the work of all public agencies.

WHO MUST FOLLOW THE OPEN RECORDS LAW?

The Open Records law applies to "public agencies." That includes nearly all bodies that must follow the Open Meetings law, including local school boards and school councils, and state bodies like the Kentucky Board of Education, Education Professional Standards Board, and Council on Postsecondary Education. More broadly, the law applies to any agency created by state law or executive order. In addition, the Open Records law applies to those who work for executive departments and courts, such as local school superintendents and the Kentucky Department of Education. Open Records rules also apply to bodies that get at least 25% of their funding from state or local authorities—except those who earn that money by selling goods and services under a public competitive procurement. Plus, if an agency subject to the law appoints a committee, that new committee must also follow the law. (The "Linking the Law" box to the right explains how to find the exact wording of the Open Records Law, including the Open Records definition of "public agency.")

WHO CAN INSPECT AND COPY PUBLIC RECORDS?

Anyone can inspect public records by submitting a written request, defined as including "all books, papers, maps, photographs, cards, tapes, discs, diskettes, recordings, software, or other documentation regardless of physical form or characteristics, which are prepared, owned, used, in the possession of or retained by a public agency" unless a specific Open Records exemption applies.

Anyone can get copies, by making a written request and paying the actual costs of reproduction, not including the costs of staff required to make the copies, plus mailing costs if the copies are to be mailed—but do know that there are now limits on getting copies to use for commercial purposes.

WHAT RECORDS ARE EXEMPT?

There are thirteen exemption categories, listed in KRS 61.878, which include:

■ "Information of a personal nature where the public disclosure thereof would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy"

■ "Test questions, scoring keys, and other examination data … before the exam is given or if it is to be given again"

■ "Preliminary drafts, notes, correspondence with private individuals, other than correspondence which is intended to give notice of final action of a public agency"

■ "All public records or information the disclosure of which is prohibited by federal law or regulation"

■ Nine other categories that you can see by checking the Linking the Law box and going to section 61.878.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE RECORDS ARE NOT EASILY AVAILABLE?

Sometimes public records are "in active use, in storage or not otherwise available." In those cases, the official custodian must "set a later date for inspection, not more than three days from receipt of the application <u>or</u> give a detailed explanation of the cause for further delay and name the place, time, and earliest date on which the public record will be available." (The quoted language comes from KRS 61.872.)

LINKING THE LAW

To see the exact legal rules, go to www.lrc.ky.gov/Statutes/index.aspx, and choose Chapter 61.

For Open Records, scroll down to find these sections:

- 61.870 Definitions
- 61.871 Policy of KRS 61.870 to 61.884
- 61.8715 Legislative findings.
- 61.872 Right to inspection -- Limitation
- 61.874 Abstracts, memoranda, copies
- 61.8745 Damages recoverable by public agency
- 61.876 Agency to adopt rules and regulations
- 61.878 Certain public records exempted
- 61.880 Denial of inspection
- 61.882 Jurisdiction of Circuit Court in action seeking right of inspection
- 61.884 Person's access to record relating to him

WHAT HAPPENS IF AN AGENCY SEEMS TO BREAK OPEN RECORDS RULES?

It is always good practice to communicate with the agency itself in writing, describing the rule and how it seems to have been broken. That may allow for a quick and quiet resolution of the problem. If that does not work, the relevant laws provide a process for asking the Attorney General to rule quickly on whether the rules have been followed. In the "Linking the Law" box, KRS 61.880 explains how to start those procedures if needed.

WHAT RECORDS MUST AN AGENCY KEEP, AND FOR HOW LONG?

In Kentucky, the main rules on keeping documents are set by the Department of Libraries and Archives and included in records retention schedules. The schedule for public school districts includes all parts of the district, including schools, school councils, central office, school board, and other parts of the districts' work. For example, the schedule specifies that council and board minutes are permanent records, while the ballots for school council elections must be kept for three years and then can be destroyed. The schedule is available at kdla.ky.gov/records/recretentionschedules.

State Funding for P-12 Education

Kentucky public education from preschool through high school costs around $7 billion per year, with $4 billion of that coming from the state General Fund for the 2014-15 fiscal year.

HOW IS STATE EDUCATION FUNDING USED?

The graph to the right gives the big picture for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years, with information on 2015-16 included to give a sense of recent changes. SEEK funding is more than half of the total, with another quarter of the funding paying for educators' health and retirement benefits. Funding for school facilities, major targeted programs, and other costs make up the remainder.

HOW IS SEEK FUNDING USED?

SEEK is Kentucky's main formula for funding public education, providing dollars that districts can use for any educational need. For more information on SEEK, see the separate Kentucky EdGuide on SEEK Funding at www.prichardcommittee.org.
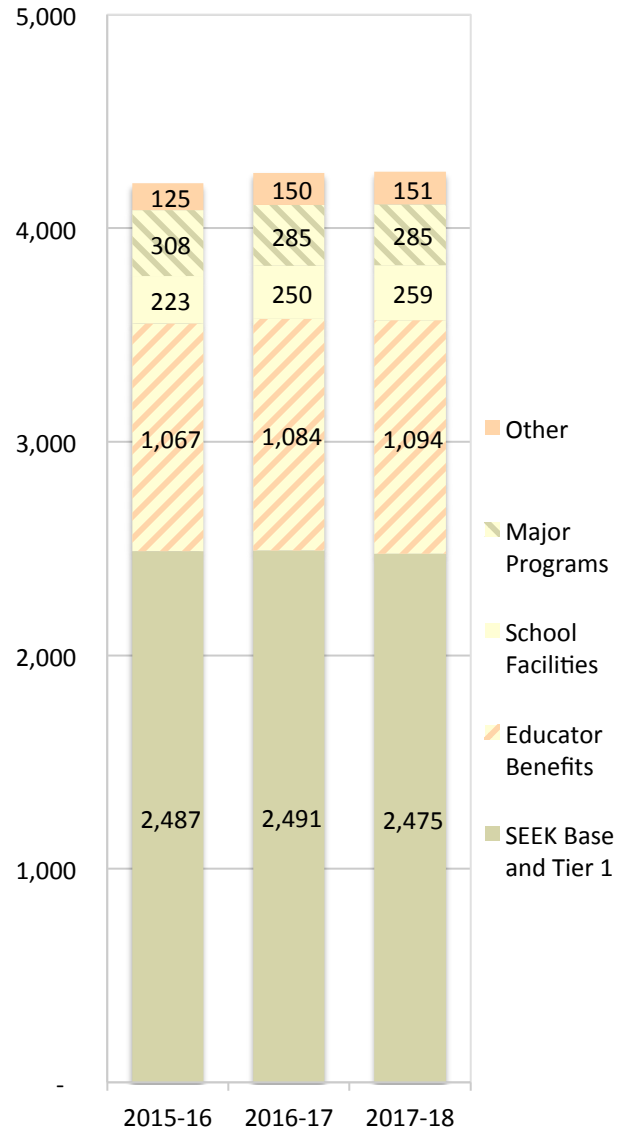
WHAT EDUCATOR BENEFITS DOES THE STATE FUND?

For all Kentucky school districts, Kentucky pays the employer share of health insurance costs for all employees and the employer share of retirement costs for all certified employees (meaning teachers, principals, and others whose jobs require state certificates). Those benefits are an important part of the compensation packages for those who do the main work of educating Kentucky's students.

HOW DOES THE STATE CONTRIBUTE TO THE COSTS OF BUILDING AND RENOVATING SCHOOL FACILITIES?

Part of the money (almost $102 million for 2016-17) goes to the School Facilities Construction Commission, a state agency that supports school district construction and major renovations by issuing bonds. The other dollars go to school districts to be set aside for facilities work. To receive the state dollars, districts must also make a local effort by setting aside a portion of their local tax revenue to meet facilities needs.

KENTUCKY'S EDUCATION BUDGET (IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Other	125	150	151
Major Programs	308	285	285
School Facilities	223	250	259
Educator Benefits	1,067	1,084	1,094
SEEK Base and Tier 1	2,487	2,491	2,475

LEARNING MORE

To see the amounts allocated to a particular school district, visit education.ky.gov and search for "SEEK" and for "state grants"

For added details on how SEEK dollars are distributed, see the Kentucky EdGuide on the SEEK Formula at www.prichardcommittee.org.

WHAT MAJOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS RECEIVE STATE FUNDING?

Kentucky makes grants to school districts for a number of targeted programs, subject to rules about how each grant can be used. That sort of funding is widely called "categorical funding." Kentucky also funds some schools directly, including a set of state-run area technical centers, the Kentucky School for the Blind, and the Kentucky School for the Deaf, as well as the Kentucky Educational Consortium for State Agency Children. Here's a summary of the funding for each program costing $5 million or more:

Major Program	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Education Technology	$23.0	$0.0	$0.0
Extended School Services	$25.5	$25.5	$25.5
Family Resource and Youth Services Centers Program	$52.1	$52.1	$52.1
Gifted and Talented	$6.6	$6.6	$6.6
Instructional Resources (Textbooks)	$16.7	$16.7	$16.7
Kentucky School for the Blind	$6.7	$6.7	$6.8
Kentucky School for the Deaf	$9.8	$9.9	$9.9
Mathematics Achievement Fund	$5.4	$5.4	$5.4
Preschool	$90.1	$90.1	$90.1
Professional Development	$11.9	$11.9	$11.9
Read to Achieve	$17.0	$17.0	$17.0
Safe Schools	$10.4	$10.4	$10.4
State Agency Children	$10.1	$10.1	$10.1
Vocational Education (State Operated Programs)	$22.9	$22.9	$22.9
Total	$308.2	$285.4	$285.4

HOW ARE THE OTHER DOLLARS BUDGETED FOR EDUCATION USED?

Those funds pay for the work of the Kentucky Department of Education and the Education Professional Standards Board, maintain an advanced statewide technology network used by all districts, and fund a number of smaller programs and grants.

The SEEK Formula

The SEEK formula is the main source of K-12 education funding for Kentucky students. SEEK is short for Support Education Excellence in Kentucky, and it works by combining state and local dollars.

WHAT IS THE SEEK BASE GUARANTEE AMOUNT?

The General Assembly sets a base amount for each year when it adopts its two-year budget bills. For 2016-17, the state budget sets the base guarantee at $3,981 for each student in average daily attendance.

WHO PAYS THE BASE AMOUNT?

Districts pay part of it: the local share is 30¢ for each $100 in taxable property in the district. The state pays the rest. For districts with very little taxable property, the state share is large. For districts with more property subject to tax, the state share is smaller.

ARE THERE ADDED DOLLARS FOR STUDENTS WITH ADDED NEEDS?

Yes. The formula adds dollars for students with six kinds of added needs: at-risk (eligible for free lunches), exceptional children (those with communications disabilities, moderate disabilities, or severe disabilities), limited English proficiency, and home and hospital services. SEEK also provides some funding for school transportation, using a separate formula that considers factors like numbers of students, district size, and how far apart the students live.

CAN DISTRICTS RAISE ADDITIONAL DOLLARS? CAN THOSE DOLLARS BE EQUALIZED?
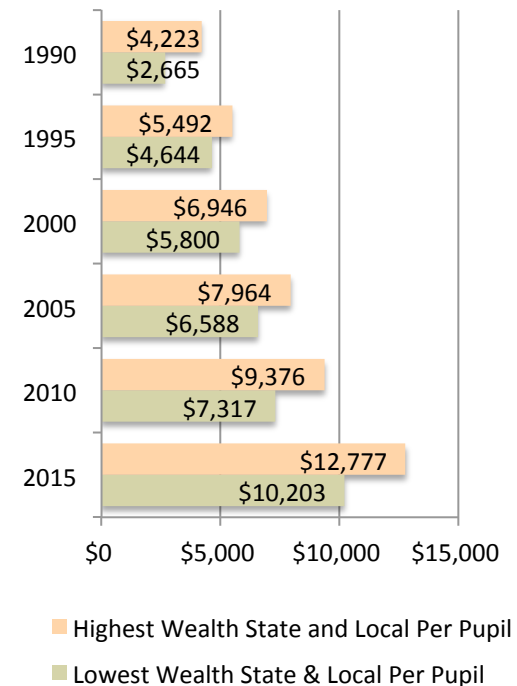
Yes. All Kentucky districts have chosen to set taxes above the SEEK 30¢ minimum.

Up to a point, if a district makes an extra effort, the state adds further SEEK dollars known as Tier 1, to make sure that districts with different levels of taxable wealth can raise similar amounts of money. For example, if two districts each set their property rates 10¢ higher than the state minimum, they will both end up with around $750 dollars more per pupil. One district may get $200 of that from local tax collection and $550 from state equalization, while the other receives $500 from local taxes and $250 from state equalization. However, the maximum any district can receive (combining local and state portions) is limited to 15% of what that district receives from SEEK base and add-ons for student needs (again combining local and state contributions).

Above the Tier 1 limit, districts do not receive equalization from the state. If two districts set the same tax rate, the one with less taxable property gets less money than the one with more property to tax. This unequalized funding is known as Tier 2. State law limits each district's Tier 2 total to 30% more than the district's base, add-on, and Tier 1 funding.

SEEING RESULTS

The SEEK formula reduces the funding gap between districts with the least property wealth and those with the most. The lowest wealth districts moved from 63% of the per pupil state and local funding in the highest wealth districts in 1990 up to 85% by 1995. In recent years, the gap has expanded a bit, with lowest wealth districts having 80% of the highest wealth districts' state and local resources per student in 2015.

Year	Highest Wealth State and Local Per Pupil	Lowest Wealth State & Local Per Pupil
1990	$4,223	$2,665
1995	$5,492	$4,644
2000	$6,946	$5,800
2005	$7,964	$6,588
2010	$9,376	$7,317
2015	$12,777	$10,203

■ Highest Wealth State and Local Per Pupil
■ Lowest Wealth State & Local Per Pupil

LEARNING MORE

To see the amounts allocated to a particular school district, visit education.ky.gov and search for "SEEK."

For information on other categories of state education dollars and recent funding trends see the EdGuide on State Funding, available at www.prichardcommittee.org.

CAN DISTRICTS ALSO GET SEEK DOLLARS TO BUILD OR RENOVATE FACILITIES?

Yes. Local districts must raise an additional 5 cents for each $100 of taxable property in order to receive added equalization dollars from the *Facilities Support Program of Kentucky (FSPK)* program and be eligible to borrow money using School Facilities Construction Commission bonding authority. Some districts also qualify for state equalization of additional facilities "nickel" taxes, based on rules added to state budgets in different years.

A MORE DETAILED EXAMPLE OF HOW SEEK WORKS, USING ROUNDED NUMBERS FOR EASIER READING

MAIN IDEA	EXPLANATION	ILLUSTRATION
SEEK Base guarantees a basic amount per student.	Districts contribute local revenue of 30¢ per $100 of taxable property. The state adds enough more money to reach the SEEK guarantee amount per student.	If the base guarantee is $4,000: ■ In a district with $300,000 in taxable property per student, $900 is raised locally, and the state contributes $3,100 ■ In a district with $500,000 in taxable property per student, $1,500 is raised locally, and the state contributes $2,500 ■ In a district with $700,000 in taxable property per student, $2,100 is raised locally, and the state contributes $1,900
SEEK Add-Ons provide added funding for additional student needs.	For at-risk, exceptional, home/hospital, and limited English proficiency students, the state adds a percent of the SEEK guarantee per pupil. Transportation is funded by a more complex formula.	If the base guarantee is $4,000, a district can obtain an extra: ■ $600 for each at-risk student eligible for free lunches (15% of base) ■ $960 for each student with communications disabilities (24% of base) ■ $4,680 for each student with moderate disabilities (117% of base) ■ $9,400 for each student with severe disabilities (235% of base) ■ $384 for each limited English proficiency student (9.6% of base) ■ $3,900 for each home/hospital services student (base minus $100) ■ A transportation amount based on analysis of transportation costs.
SEEK Tier 1 can provide up to 15% more than base and add-on amount.	If districts set taxes higher than the 30¢ minimum, the state equalizes that at 150% of statewide average property per pupil, up to the 15% limit.	If the base guarantee is $4,000 and a district's add-ons average $1,000 per student, that district can obtain $750 per student from Tier 1. If statewide average taxable property is $500,000 per student, 150% of that is $750,000 and $750 can be raised with an added 10¢ tax. So: ■ In a district with $300,000 in taxable property per student, $300 is raised locally, and the state contributes $450 ■ In a district with $500,000 in taxable property per student, $500 is raised locally, and the state contributes $250 ■ In a district with $700,000 in taxable property per student, $700 is raised locally, and the state contributes $50.
SEEK Tier 2 can provide another 30% above base, add-ons, and tier 1 amount.	If districts set taxes higher still, they receive no equalization, but they can supplement the other SEEK funds up to the 30% limit.	If the base guarantee is $4,000, a district's add-ons average $1,000, and its Tier 1 is $750 per student, that district can raise $1,725 per student from Tier 2. A 20¢ increase in the tax rate will add: ■ $600 in a district with $300,000 in taxable property per student ■ $1,000 in a district with $500,000 in taxable property per student ■ $1,400 in a district with $700,000 per student.

PRICHARD COMMITTEE
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