

MEETING MINUTES ARE DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED AT MARCH 2026 MEETING



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (KDE) SCHOOL CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY COUNCIL (SCAAC) MEETING SUMMARY

November 18, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Deborah Atherton, Carrie Ballinger, Martha Emmons, Chuck Fletcher, Jana Beth Francis, Leslie Jeffries, Brenda McGown, Sarah Williams, Alan Young

MEMBERS ABSENT: Houston Barber, Renee Boss, Frank Hall, Jason Reeves, Allison Tamme, Josh Trosper

SUMMARY: The Nov. 18, 2025 virtual School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council (SCAAC) meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. ET by Chairperson Jana Beth Francis. The council charge and member responsibilities were shared. Roll call was taken, and Melissa Chandler, program manager in KDE's Office of Assessment and Accountability (OAA), informed the council of the public meeting protocol.

A quorum of members was present. The open meeting was recorded and made available for viewing on the [KDE Media Portal](#).

All materials were made available in the SCAAC Members Google Folder.

Agenda Item: Greetings from the Commissioner

Presenter: Robbie Fletcher, Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Commissioner Fletcher provided updates on the release of accountability data to districts and the School Report Card, as well as state and federal score distinctions and resolving an issue with GovDelivery's Embargo email to some superintendents.

Agenda Item: SCAAC Chair and Vice-Chair Election

Presenter: Melissa Chandler, Program Manager, Office of Assessment and Accountability, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Carrie Ballinger was nominated as the SCAAC Chair. Jana Beth

Francis made a motion to approve the slate and elect Ballinger as Chair of SCAAC. Brenda McGown seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Alan Young was nominated as the SCAAC Vice Chair. Chuck Fletcher made a motion to approve the slate and elect Young as Vice Chair of SCAAC. Brenda McGown seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Agenda Item: Review Agenda and Approve Minutes from September 2025 Meeting

Presenter: Carrie Ballinger, Chair, SCAAC

Summary of Discussion: Jana Beth Francis made a motion to approve the September 2025 meeting minutes. Chuck Fletcher seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Agenda Item: Numeracy Counts HB 162 Update

Presenter: Chelsey Tingle, Director of Mathematics Education, Office of Teaching and Learning, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Tingle presented on the implementation of House Bill 162, The Numeracy Counts Act. She detailed requirements for math screeners, diagnostic testing, intervention plans and academies collaborating with districts to facilitate this work. As of January 1, 2026, districts are required to adopt one KDE-approved mathematics screener to be administered to grades K-3, one diagnostic to be used within Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for grades K-3, and ensure that all teachers of students in K-3 are trained on these assessments. A list of KDE-approved screeners was provided. Tingle also outlined a timeline for testing: the screener must be administered within the first 30 calendar days of the school year to each student K-3. Students identified as at risk by the screener should be given the diagnostic within the first 45 calendar days of the school year. A math improvement plan will be developed for each individual student needing interventions by the districts, who are provided with a template that they can modify to fit the local context. Tingle explains that KDE is charged with providing quality professional learning to support teachers in implementing this process, including the four Numeracy Academies: AdvanceKY Access to Algebra, EPIC Numeracy Alliance, KCM Numeracy Academy and PIMSER Numeracy Counts Administrator Academy. KDE also provided a Mathematics Instructional Resources Consumer Guide and a 2025 Approved K-12 High-Quality Instructional Resources for Mathematics to assist with this process.

Feedback: Brenda McGown asked a question regarding the written instructions and reading concerns impacting performance. Tingle clarified that the reading of instructions would be dependent on each district's administration, but Jana Beth Francis added that her district chooses to read the instructions to younger grades.

Agenda Item: Assessment and Accountability Update

Presenters: Jennifer Stafford, Associate Commissioner, Office of Assessment and Accountability, Kentucky Department of Education; Shara Savage, Director, Office of Assessment and Accountability, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: First, Stafford updated SCAAC on the SAT. CollegeBoard won the competitive bidding process to provide KY students with a high-quality assessment that aligns with Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS), has already-established benchmarks and fulfills Postsecondary Readiness. This test, the SAT, is an online adaptive test with a six-week testing window from March 2 through April 10, 2026. Stafford also outlined the numerous accommodations that are available to students with disabilities and English learners, with both college-reportable and non-college-reportable options, and the many resources provided to educators, students and families as KY transitions to a new College Admissions Exam, including seven full-length practice exams free of charge. The test contains two content areas (reading/writing and math), with two modules each, but the test also supports a Science Analysis score, which was explained by Savage.

Savage illustrated that, although there is no specific science assessment, the SAT marks embedded questions related to critical thinking and scientific reasoning in both the reading/writing and math sections to create the Science Analysis Score. This change is set to reduce test time by 35-40 minutes.

Following this, Commissioner Fletcher clarified that the protest made in our bidding process was proven to have no merit, and that there has been a generally positive response to SAT trainings and the transition preparedness of our team.

Savage then introduced the differences between state and federal accountability calculations, reminding council members that federal scores are those that are used to classify schools as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) or Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI). These distinctions are determined based on three years of federal change, and this is the first year that these three years have been available, allowing KDE to fully apply this information to the accountability system. Additionally, Savage explained that starting in 2025, federal identification will occur annually. Stafford added that this was also an identification year for CSI, meaning that the number of schools identified as CSI in 2024 and those in 2025 are not truly comparable.

Stafford then transitioned to the next topic, the New Science Kentucky Summative Assessment. KDE updated the summative science assessment in 2024–2025 based on the 2023 revised Science academic content standards and an effort to reduce the reading load for students. Committees of educators then worked to update the Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) as well as conduct a formal standard-setting. These groups ultimately provided cut scores as well as the PLDs themselves, a useful tool for teachers' instructional practice. Because of this process, the Science scores were delayed but were released on October 21. Stafford also commended Francis, who presented on the practicality of using PLDs to inform instruction at the Scott Trimble conference this past month.

The presentation then transitioned back to Savage, who outlined the KDE released information provided to districts as a resource. KSA released items can be found through mypearsonsupport.com and AKSA released items are posted on the KDE Sample test items webpage. Data files are also available and released for both KSA and AKSA.

Feedback: Jana Beth Francis mentioned that she was appreciative of the regional meeting provided by CollegeBoard and KDE as we transition to the SAT. Once the entire presentation concluded, Alan Young asked a question regarding the upcoming legislative session. Commissioner Fletcher responded that KDE will be proposing an adaptive reading and math exam that will not only determine Novice, Apprentice, Proficient and Distinguished (NAPD) distinctions for students, but will also determine grade-level equivalency for each student. Fletcher notes that this will be more expensive, but from his discussion with legislative liaisons, there is not much pushback, as legislators are interested in this grade-based equivalency piece.

Additionally, Commissioner Fletcher outlined that KDE will suggest that instead of change, our accountability data should use individual student growth, which seems to have momentum with our legislators as well. Specifically for our EL population, Commissioner Fletcher introduced a new model where there is no accountability in the first year, but accountability to growth in the second year and both status and growth factoring into accountability in the third year of EL status.

In regards to the Local Accountability Model, Commissioner Fletcher continued, some exciting work is starting. KDE is asking that the state pay for interim tests that will align with the summative assessments at the end of the year. There is also the option for districts to create their own social studies and writing assessments, though districts also have the option to opt-in to state-created exams like usual. One of the largest pieces of the Local Accountability Model is the Vibrant Learning experiences that districts will create. But some flexibility, like the possibility of off-grade science testing to determine growth, is also welcomed within this new model.

Commissioner Fletcher asserted that this is not a package deal, that the legislators could approve whichever parts they deem important, given that the budget may be tight. He encouraged each member of SCAAC to contact legislators and recommend this model, if they are in favor of it. He spotlighted Dr. Ballinger, who has local representatives as a part of their local accountability committee in family engagement.

Ballinger confirmed that even if the legislators do not make the Local Accountability Model part of KY statute, her district will continue to participate because of the value of the community buy-in. From the incident on I-75, her community voiced a desire to have an SRO in each school, and when the obstacle of funding was mentioned, the community problem-solved so that they could achieve this goal.

Sarah Williams asked about grade-level administration of the social studies and writing assessments within this new model, and Commissioner Fletcher responded that there would be some flexibility, depending upon the type of assessment that the district wishes to put forth.

Young then asked how we might raise awareness to the broad system that is at play and not just individual parts, and Commissioner Fletcher responded that the meetings he conducts with legislators convey this exact message. He stressed the importance of conversing with legislators and representatives on the work being done.

Agenda Item: Vote to Approve 2026 SCAAC Meeting Dates

Presenter: Carrie Ballinger, Chair, School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council

Summary of Discussion: The dates of March 17, 2026; July 21, 2026; September 15, 2026 and November 17, 2026 were proposed to the council for consideration in the September 2025 meeting. Martha Emmons made a motion to approve the 2026 meeting dates. Brenda McGown seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Jana Beth Francis made a motion to adjourn. Sarah Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried. The next SCAAC meeting is scheduled for March 17, 2026.

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