

**MEETING MINUTES ARE DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED AT  
JULY 2026 MEETING**



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

March 17, 2026

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Deborah Atherton, Carrie Ballinger, Chuck Fletcher, Jana Beth Francis, Frank Hall, Leslie Jefferies, Nicola Mason, Robert Tuck, Sarah Williams, Alan Young, Rosemarie Young

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Martha Emmons, Brenda McGown, Allison Tamme, Josh Trospen

**SUMMARY:** The March 17, 2026 virtual School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council (SCAAC) meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. ET by Chairperson Carrie Ballinger. The council charge and member responsibilities were shared. Chair Ballinger introduced our three new SCAAC members, Nicola Mason, Robert Tuck and Rosemarie Young, and thanked them for their commitment to the council.

Roll call was taken, and Jessica Brumley, program consultant 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:** Review Agenda and Approve Minutes from November 2025 Meeting

**Presenter:** Carrie Ballinger, Chair, SCAAC

**Summary of Discussion:** Jana Beth Francis made a motion to approve the November 2025 meeting minutes. Nicola Mason seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Agenda Item:** Greetings from the Commissioner

**Presenter:** Robbie Fletcher, Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education

**Summary of Discussion:** Commissioner Fletcher provided updates on the progress of House Bill 257 throughout the legislative session. United We Learn Model Framework 4.0 underwent

extensive stakeholder engagement, including town halls, surveys and meetings with legislators, culminating in the drafting and filing of House Bill 257.

The proposed legislation maintains reading, math, science and social studies as state accountability indicators but removes on-demand writing and editing and mechanics from state testing, reducing overall testing time. Chronic absenteeism replaces the School Climate and Safety Survey as a required indicator, aligning with federal ESSA requirements, while the color rating system remains despite initial proposals for its removal.

The bill introduces locally determined indicators of quality, emphasizing district self-assessment and growth. This uniquely local model is not meant to be comparative between districts; rather, it provides districts the freedom to encourage innovative means to service local communities and schools. A financial incentive of \$15,000 per district is provided as a one-time allotment to support the development of local accountability models, replacing the original proposal of \$10,000 and a \$3 per-student formula.

HB 257 passed out of the House on a 92-1 vote and is now moving on to the Senate. Both Dr. Fletcher and Dr. Jennifer Stafford have been contacted for a meeting with several senators to determine how the bill can progress to the Senate floor. This may be an opportunity to include previous suggestions from the Kentucky United We Learn Council (KUWL), including computer adaptive assessments and interim assessments, which were removed due to cost. The Commissioner then thanked SCAAC for their time and assured members that he was lobbying for the benefit of the Commonwealth's students.

**Feedback:** Jana Beth Francis asserted the need for ninth grade testing so that high schools could include the individual growth piece in their indicator scores. Discussion between Robert Tuck and Dr. Jennifer Stafford clarified that individual student growth will only be measured for grades 3–8. At the high school level, the model shifts from reporting both status and change to reporting only status, with indicators including state assessments, EL progress, post-secondary readiness and graduation rate.

Alan Young then posited that the School Climate and Safety Survey is a strong indicator of school success and advocates for its inclusion within the local framework. Though Chronic Absenteeism does meet the federal requirements, Young felt the survey more accurately aligned with the federal government's intentions. The Commissioner did note that several senators also advocated for the survey to remain, but that they would know more once they met with senators to determine next steps.

**Agenda Item:** KBE High School Transformation Work Group Update

**Presenter:** GlyptusAnn Grider Jones, Director of Education Policy, Office of the Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education

**Summary of Discussion:** GlyptusAnn Grider Jones then introduced the High School Transformation Work Group, chaired by Dr. Justin Pate. The work group was convened as part of the Kentucky Board of Education's annual goals and through an invitation from the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) as part of the Commonwealth's work with

United We Learn. It comprises 13 members representing state board members, superintendents, the Chamber of Commerce, postsecondary education and other stakeholders. Recent meetings have centered on personalized student learning, identifying barriers to high school transformation and exploring best practices within Kentucky. The group met at Elkhorn Crossing School in Georgetown to discuss policy proposals and strategies for fostering content and skill mastery.

Dr. Fletcher highlighted the Kentucky Innovation Guide, which profiles districts engaged in personalized learning and local accountability. The guide serves as a resource for districts to reflect on action areas and share innovative practices, with the work group examining how to scale successful models and potentially craft legislation to meet these goals. Dr. Jones shared that the next meeting dates are April 8 and June 3.

The Commissioner then spotlighted Dr. Ballinger, whose district has implemented local measures of quality. Ballinger confirmed that even if the legislators do not make this a part of Kentucky statute, her district will continue to participate because of the value of the community buy-in. Ballinger reiterated that local measures of quality truly changed their communication with Rockcastle County stakeholders, and she applauded the Commissioner. Dr. Robert Tuck echoed these sentiments.

**Feedback:** Alan Young thanked the presenter for the work being done and then stressed the importance of the School Climate and Safety Survey to Jefferson County schools as a way of elevating the school-level focus beyond test scores. The Commissioner agreed that local measures of quality can increase student buy-in and also suggested that intentional grade-level content is the best methodology when addressing test scores, as evidenced by personal anecdotes.

**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; Christen Roseberry, Program Consultant, Office of Assessment and Accountability, Kentucky Department of Education

**Summary of Discussion:** Dr. Jennifer Stafford outlined that, pending passage of House Bill 257, changes to assessments and accountability would not affect the 2025–26 school year. On-demand writing and editing and mechanics will remain in assessments for spring 2026, with changes taking effect in spring 2027 and reflected in fall 2027 accountability reporting. At this point, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) does not have one particular individual growth model that they plan to implement, and KDE is open to stakeholder discussion in choosing the model. KDE plans to contact advisory councils, SCAAC in particular, in preparation for submitting a proposal to the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE).

After a brief redirect in the meeting agenda, Shara Savage reported on the various assessment pieces affecting the students of our Commonwealth. ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing

concluded for over 42,000 students, with preparations underway for data validation and the next testing window. The kindergarten screener material order window is open, and KSA administration scripts and resources have been posted, with three office hours scheduled for district coordinators, the first being on March 25.

Christen Roseberry then provided an update on the SAT administration, noting eight successful training sessions at educational cooperatives, office hours and the use of free College Board resources. As of week two, approximately 60% of juniors had completed the SAT, with almost 18,000 tests submitted. Roseberry reported that both the State Data Management System (SDMS) and Test Day Toolkit (TDTK) are open, and there are still three weeks remaining in the testing window.

**Feedback:** Alan Young offered strong approval for leveraging writing across the curriculum and the local measures for writing within this new model. Writing as a skill may not be as successfully tested in a traditional environment and may better be assessed in the local accountability system. Dr. Stafford reiterated that the site-based decision-making (SBDM) councils would convene to create local measures of accountability for writing assessment and clarified that the other assessments that will remain within the accountability model have written response questions. Writing within state assessments is not going away, just shifting with the continued inclusion of writing in other content area assessments.

After Roseberry's presentation, Jana Beth Francis commented on the successful administration of the SAT within her district and remarked positively regarding the platform's ease of use. Carrie Ballinger also stated that her district tested last week, and their high school was very pleased with the smooth administration. Dr. Stafford agreed that KDE has received several position comments relating to this transition.

**Agenda Item:** Strategic Dashboard Update

**Presenter:** Susan Strange, KBE/KDE Ed Academic Program Manager, Office of the Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education

**Summary of Discussion:** Susan Strange then demonstrated the KDE Strategic Dashboard, highlighting its features, data sources and goals, and solicited feedback on its utility, desired enhancements and integration with district and school-level reporting. Strange explained that the dashboard, hosted on Tableau, provides an overview of KDE's strategic goals, including reimagining assessment and accountability, reducing chronic absenteeism, improving early literacy and numeracy and expanding educator recruitment. Users can view key performance indicators, demographic breakdowns and operational goals. The dashboard aggregates data from multiple sources, including the school report card, regional innovation specialists and KDE surveys. It presents both quantitative metrics and, in future iterations, plans to include district spotlights and storytelling elements to showcase exemplary practices.

**Feedback:** Jana Beth Francis suggested adding district-level mini dashboards so that districts could see where they stand in supporting the goals of KDE. Sarah Williams added that it would be nice to see where a school falls in relation to statewide metrics and that she appreciated the

inclusion of step-by-step calculations to maintain consistent understanding of these calculations across districts. Rosemarie Young stated that, from a teacher preparatory program perspective, it is important to have this information readily available so that instructors and potential teachers have knowledge of expectations. Nicola Mason echoed this.

Alan Young emphasized the importance of including qualitative measures, such as Portrait of a Learner competencies, vibrant learning experiences and the School Climate and Safety Survey, to provide a more holistic view of district progress. Spotlighting these features will remind districts of their value.

Rosemarie Young inquired about the interface between the strategic dashboard and the school report card, suggesting that consolidating information would benefit users. Strange clarified that while data is sourced from various platforms, KDE aims to link resources across platforms for easier access.

Susan Strange then invited ongoing feedback and highlighted plans to update the dashboard with additional resources, district spotlights and best practices, ensuring it remains a relevant tool for districts, schools and educator preparation programs. Strange highlighted work done in Shelby County to commit to the storytelling process, an aspect that KDE hopes to incorporate in future iterations.

Jana Beth Francis made a motion to adjourn. Nicola Mason seconded the motion. Motion carried. The next SCAAC meeting is scheduled for July 21, 2026.