

MEETING MINUTES ARE DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED AT SEPTEMBER 2026 MEETING



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

July 21, 2026

MEMBERS PRESENT: Carrie Ballinger, Martha Emmons, Chuck Fletcher, Jana Beth Francis, Leslie Jefferies, Brenda McGown, Jennifer Pusateri, Robert Tuck, Sarah Williams, Alan Young, Rosemarie Young

MEMBERS ABSENT: Frank Hall, Nicola Mason, Allison Tamme, Josh Trosper

SUMMARY: The July 21, 2026 virtual School Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability Council (SCAAC) meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m. ET by Chairperson Carrie Ballinger. The council charge and member responsibilities were shared.

Roll call was taken, and Jessica Brumley, a 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 March 2026 Meeting

Presenter: Carrie Ballinger, Chair, SCAAC

Summary of Discussion: Rosemarie Young made a motion to approve the March 2026 meeting minutes. Chuck Fletcher seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Agenda Item: Greetings from the Commissioner

Presenter: Robbie Fletcher, Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Commissioner Robbie Fletcher expressed his excitement for the very full agenda and his hope that each council member was able to take some time to spend with their family over the summer break.

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: Dr. GlyptusAnn Grider Jones provided an update on the fourth and final meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) High School Transformation work group. In the work group's June meeting, members identified the five most pressing issues of this work: disrupting the status quo; equitable access and funding; trust; vibrant learning systems and teacher training, certification and development. Dr. Jones discussed each issue and proposed recommendations by the work group in detail, including a call for the development of frameworks to advance and implement innovation, exploration of improved high school transcript models that focus on a broader set of outcomes that reflect the transformed high school experience and ways to offer mastery and performance-based credits as a widespread option rather than for select schools. Dr. Jones stated that the work group referred their recommendations to the Kentucky United We Learn (KUWL) Council for continued research and discussion. The KUWL Council will meet on Friday, July 24 to consider these issues further.

Commissioner Fletcher stated that these pressing issues are not tied to any formal recommendations but are highlighted avenues through which districts may be able to identify unconventional ways of procuring funds or creating local accountability systems that work for them.

Feedback: Alan Young praised the good work accomplished through this work group, particularly the focus on changing paradigms and the ways we view success. He suggested thinking of a competency-based system of measuring student achievement, a shift away from the Carnegie credit model that has dominated public education. Dr. Fletcher and Dr. Jones both affirmed the importance of performance-based credits for this purpose.

Rosemarie Young, as a representative of higher education, emphasized the importance of involving higher education in these steps. Dr. Jones said one of the work group's recommendations included convening a post-workforce discussion among additional higher education partners and stakeholder groups to add additional insight to this work.

Agenda Item: Revised Kentucky Academic Standards for Technology

Presenters: Marty Park, Chief Digital Officer, Office of Educational Technology, Kentucky Department of Education; Laura Raganas, Digital Learning Coach, Office of Educational Technology, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Dr. Marty Park presented the revised Kentucky Academic Standards for Technology, describing the revision cycle and the alignment of the technology standards with minimum graduation requirements. He also emphasized the importance of scaffolding technology competencies from K-12, not just focusing on high school performance.

Laura Raganas explained that the writing team intentionally aligned technology standards with other content areas, ensuring that technology demonstrators are student-focused and can be embedded within lessons across academic subjects. Raganas reported the overwhelming positive

feedback from the public review, with a 99% percent approval, and highlighted the inclusion of artificial intelligence within the revised standards based on the feedback received from public comment. She additionally emphasized the close alignment of technology standards to the Portrait of a Learner and the leveraging of digital competencies to meet the Portrait of a Learner requirements.

Dr. Park then noted that this revision process provided an opportunity to engage in discussions on screen use vs. screen time, leading to the production of a screen use guide tied to technology standards that is intended to support effective technology integration into instruction and schools.

Feedback: Rosmarie Young expresses thanks for the thoughtful structuring of the technology standards and the coherence across subjects.

Agenda Item: Read to Succeed Updates

Presenters: Christie Biggerstaff, Director of Early Literacy, Office of Teaching and Learning, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Christie Biggerstaff provided a comprehensive update on Kentucky's Read to Succeed initiative, detailing the statewide access to evidence-based professional learning. This includes LETRS training, AIM Institute for Learning & Research Pathways courses and asynchronous Science of Reading courses, all at no cost to Kentucky educators. From the Reading academies research and data, there were significant documented increases in educator knowledge and positive impacts on student outcomes on KSA scores across multiple student subgroups.

Biggerstaff also described a statewide literacy coaching model that provides ongoing support to educators from State Regional Literacy Directors and Principal Support Leaders. The number of partnership schools has nearly doubled in three years, and 94% of coached teachers surveyed found coaching effective for improving their literacy instruction and positively influencing student literacy development.

Next, Biggerstaff identified the Kentucky Early Literacy Leadership Network (KyELLN) as a leadership network and district support. Survey data from the over 80 participating districts shows substantial growth in leadership confidence and the ability to monitor high quality instructional resource implementation.

Plans were also shared to expand family engagement by providing access to at-home literacy resources, amplifying success stories and building a repository of K-12 reading and writing resources as next steps. These measures aim to reduce district costs and increase adoption of KDE materials, which are evidence-based.

Feedback: Martha Emmons praised the work of these reading academies and asked about what plans KDE had for working with college students who are training to be teachers. Christie Biggerstaff outlined the current directives targeted towards college students and teachers in training, including work groups formed to revise collegiate curriculum and college professors

who have participated in the Science of Reading training themselves. Commissioner Fletcher also mentioned that the Office of Licensure and Effectiveness has hired additional staff to work with universities on syllabi alignment.

Rosemarie Young added that, as part of Kentucky law, colleges and universities are required to have their education programs evaluated, and programs are revised according to what an incoming Kentucky teacher needs to succeed.

Chuck Fletcher attempted to ask a question but had microphone issues. He was assisted by Jessica Brumley, who forwarded his question to presenters.

Alan Young then voiced his concerns over test score data and asked for authentic measures of student success beyond test scores. Christie Biggerstaff and Micki Ray Marinelli directed him to case studies and feedback from educators that has been collected through this process. Marinelli forwarded this information to SCAAC facilitator Jessica Brumley, who later included it in the SCAAC Members Google Folder.

Thomas Woods-Tucker expressed his thanks to the council for thinking about developing students beyond test scores and applauded the progress Kentucky has made with the Science of Reading initiative in such a short amount of time. Chair Carrie Ballinger additionally praised the work being done to develop a love of reading within students and the program's success in Rockcastle County.

Agenda Item: Accountability Regulation First Read

Presenters: Jennifer Stafford, Associate Commissioner, Office of Assessment and Accountability, Kentucky Department of Education; Jenni Larkins, Policy Advisor, Office of Assessment and Accountability, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Dr. Jennifer Stafford and Jenni Larkins presented the proposed changes to Kentucky's accountability model regulation. Dr. Stafford outlined the statutory changes from House Bill 257, including the removal of Editing and Mechanics, On-Demand Writing and the Quality of School Climate and Safety Survey and the addition of Individual Student Growth and Chronic Absenteeism as new indicators. Jenni Larkins described the changes made to the regulation as a result, namely clarifying definitions and methodologies for the new accountability model. Dr. Stafford asked for feedback from SCAAC to present to the Kentucky Board of Education upon their first read of the regulation in August.

Feedback: The growth value table was then introduced and explained as a categorical model, with points awarded based on year-to-year performance changes for individual student scores. Jana Beth Francis raised concerns about fairness for low-achieving schools, noting the zero-point score for Novice Low to Novice Low and the 50-point score for Novice High to Novice High, when Proficient High to Proficient High earned 100 points. This, she said, seems like a false measure of growth that applies the Status mindset to low-achieving districts.

Jana Beth Francis also suggested that there be an additional level, either 110 or 115 points, to award growth that was more than what was anticipated. The Commissioner responded positively

to this and asked the rest of the council for feedback on this concept. Robert Tuck stated that he believed adding an additional level is more equitable. Tuck then questioned the penalty of only a 50-point score for dropping from Proficient High to Proficient Low, which is only a small degree of setback. Commissioner Fletcher countered that rewarding proficiency is not part of a true growth table, reminding the council that there are also content test scores that would reward those higher scores.

Alan Young recognized that the creation of this table is a challenge that cannot be solved perfectly, but he pointed out that the penalty for dropping from Distinguished High to Distinguished Low seemed quite harsh, with only a 50-point score awarded. He also challenged that even staying in the same category may indeed be growth, as this indicator measures changes from year to year. He ended by commenting that a table of performance feels like a crude instrument to measure where students actually land.

Commissioner Fletcher stated that this reveals the importance of local accountability to truly measure the whole student. He conceded that we as a governmental agency (KDE) are tied into how the Federal government measures school performance, which is an unfortunate reality when taking the whole child into account. A test score will not measure if a student will be successful, he claimed, but hopefully the local accountability model would more accurately measure that. Carrie Ballinger commented that it was true for Rockcastle County; her community stakeholders cared more and paid more attention to the local accountability measures because they had a hand in creating them and they valued that work.

Dr. Jennifer Pusateri then raised the question of who would have access to this information on individual student growth. In the context of student well-being, providing the student with the information that they dropped from Distinguished High to Distinguished Low, for example, may create unnecessary anxiety and disappointment. Jana Beth Francis thanked Dr. Pusateri for this comment and asked Dr. Stafford if a decision has been made on sharing the growth measures with families.

Dr. Stafford responded that the Individual Student Reports (ISRs) would not have the Low and High distinctions recorded on them, just the NAPD performance levels. Francis agreed with this idea and reminded the council that there is much room for growth between Novice Low to Novice High, but the margin of growth between Distinguished Low to Distinguished High is quite small. This highlights the importance of assessment literacy as the SCAAC evaluates this table.

The council was then given time to discuss the proposed overall accountability weights that would be presented to KBE. Dr. Stafford reminded the council that there are federal restrictions that constrained the model, namely that Reading and Math Results, Individual Student Growth and English Learner Progress must have substantial weight over Chronic Absenteeism and Social Studies and Science Results at the Elementary and Middle school levels. At the High school level, Reading and Math Results, Individual Student Growth, English Learner Progress and Graduation Rate must have substantial weight over Chronic Absenteeism, Social Studies and Science Results and Postsecondary Readiness. Dr. Stafford also remarked that various advisory groups had asked that Social Studies and Science Results be weighed as much as possible within

these parameters and that Chronic Absenteeism have low weight due to the nature of the indicator.

Jana Beth Francis expressed approval for the proposed Elementary and High school weights but wondered if the Middle school weights could put more emphasis on Science and Social Studies Results. Alan Young and Robert Tuck both voiced their support of higher weight for Postsecondary Readiness, which would support the work of the High School Transformation work group. Rosemarie Young agreed and voiced her appreciation for the focus on Reading and Math Results. Dr. Stafford then outlined next steps, including her return to SCAAC in September with a finalized version of both tables.

Agenda Item: Assessment and Contract Updates

Presenter: Shara Savage, Director, Division of Assessment and Accountability Support, Office of Assessment and Accountability, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Shara Savage provided updates on Kentucky Spring 2026 testing numbers, including the successful completion of over 1.5 million online tests for the Kentucky Summative Assessment (KSA), nearly 46,500 college admissions exams (SAT), over 44,800 English learner ACCESS tests as well as over 5,000 paper tests for the Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment (AKSA). Savage also mentioned the accelerated timeline for the college admissions exam contract's procurement process, with hopes for a contract in October, and that the Summative Assessment's contract is coming up for bid.

Agenda Item: Revised Social Studies Standards

Presenter: Chrystal Rowland, Director, Division of Academic Program Standards, Office of Teaching and Learning, Kentucky Department of Education; Lauren Gallicchio, Assistant Director of Academic Program Standards, Office of Teaching and Learning, Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion: Chrystal Rowland described the statutory six-year review cycle that was undertaken for the revised Social Studies standards, which includes advisory panels, public comment periods and the involvement of over 30 Kentucky educators and community members who worked to ensure clarity and usability within the produced revisions. The first public comment period elicited over 400 responses, which highlights the stakeholder's value in the revision process.

Lauren Gallicchio announced the new K-8 curriculum: Our Commonwealth, Our Nation, Our World. In partnership with the Core Knowledge Foundation, this curriculum is being developed specifically for Kentucky schools and aligns to new updated standards, integrating civics, economics, geography and history with inquiry skills like analyzing information, critical thinking, etc. It includes texts, instructional activities and assessments to be found on the KY Learning Hub, beginning in the 2027-2028 school year.

Chrystal Rowland then outlined additional resources to support implementation of standards, including At-a-Glance documents, Consumer guides and guides for families. Rowland also

mentioned the resources and standards updates for many additional content areas, including Reading and Writing, with additional resources provided to address these revisions as well.

Feedback: Robert Tuck and Carrie Ballinger both commended KDE for developing this curriculum, noting that it will be well received within their districts. Tuck additionally expressed his interest in seeing this expansion occur in science, emphasizing the need for high-quality and locally relevant instructional resources for all content areas.

The Commissioner concluded discussions by thanking the council for their input, great conversations and time as we gear up for the upcoming school year.

Rosemarie Young made a motion to adjourn. Leslie Jefferies seconded the motion. Motion carried. The next SCAAC meeting is scheduled for September 15, 2026.