



COVID-19 Guidance for Schools and Districts

March 29, 2021

2020-2021 Kentucky Assessment and Accountability (ESSA and Perkins) **Frequently Asked Questions**

The purpose of this document is to provide answers to frequently questions about testing and accountability for the 2020-2021 school year.

GENERAL

Can local assessments be substituted for state assessments in spring 2021?

No. Based on the information available now and guidance from the U. S. Department of Education (USED), there is no indication local assessments will be accepted as a substitute for state assessments. Of course, districts may use local assessments and data for individual student and school purposes.

Is there a penalty to the student for not participating in state assessments this year?

No. There is not a penalty in grade point average or promotion to the next grade level, etc., for the student who doesn't test. However, students and families utilize state test results in multiple ways. On the English Language Proficiency (ELP) exams, English learners (ELs) can demonstrate their command of the English language in order to exit or enter the English Learner Program. Early graduates can exhibit performance on the end-of-course and ACT assessments that allow them to leave high school early and proceed to the next stage in their lives. High school students can demonstrate levels on the ACT or career and technical exams that may lead to scholarships or acceptance in college, apprenticeships or other advanced opportunities. Without participation in state assessments, these opportunities could be lost.

Is there a penalty for a school not reaching 95% participation on testing this year?

No. There is no penalty to the school for not making the 95% participation target for this year, although this requirement is likely to return going forward. Kentucky will request a waiver of the 95% rate of participation in state testing for spring 2021. With an approved waiver, there will be no penalty to schools for not meeting the required 95% participation rate.

Public reporting of state test results continues to be required from the U. S. Department of Education (USED), including the requirements to disaggregate data by student group (except for reporting related to accountability, such as school ratings). Although what will be reported in fall 2021 is not completely confirmed, USED expects reporting of participation rates in state testing by student demographic groups, including public data for both students who participate and those who do not participate. Performance scores (e.g., Novice, Apprentice, Proficient, Distinguished) will be reported for students who take the assessment.



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Will the results of 2020-2021 assessments be used to penalize or rank schools positively or negatively on the state accountability system?

No. Results from this year's assessment will not be used to rate or evaluate schools on Kentucky's accountability system. The U. S. Department of Education has invited states to request a waiver for the 2020-2021 school year of the accountability and school identification requirements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. A state receiving this waiver would not be required to implement and report the results of its accountability system. Kentucky will request this waiver and other flexibilities offered.

Should schools require remote/non-traditional instruction (NTI) students to come in for testing?

District and school staff should make a reasonable, dedicated effort to assess all students. All students attending school in-person full or part time should be scheduled for testing on their in-person days. Additionally, school administrators should plan, in conjunction with district administrators, to bring in small groups of students who are in a full-time virtual setting for testing. Students served in a homebound or hospital setting and provided with in-person services also should be scheduled to take the state assessment. School and district testing plans should be communicated to parents in advance of testing windows.

All test administrations in person at school buildings or in home or hospital settings must follow [Guidance on Safety Expectations and Best Practices](#) and the most current health guidance at the time of testing.

Remote proctoring with students taking assessments at home without a trained administrator is not an option on state assessments for the 2020-2021 school year; therefore, students who do not attend school in person during a testing window would not be able to be assessed.

Should schools offer parents the opportunity to “opt out” their child(ren) from this year’s assessment?

No. Currently, there is no “opt out” provision for students in Kentucky law. Testing all students allows us to identify trends for student groups that otherwise may go unseen. Based on the data from state assessments, we can identify the disparity in performance between groups and work toward closing achievement gaps.

Having performance results from state assessments provides students, parents and educators with post-pandemic starting points. Without data, it is an assumption of the degree of impact the pandemic has had on student performance. It is important to measure the extent of the learning loss that can be gleaned from a shortened assessment. With information from state assessments, individual learning strategies, plans for extended school services and other supports can be developed and implemented.

Students who meet conditions may be excused from statewide assessments due to a medical condition.

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What should a school do with students whose parents have refused the exam for their child(ren)?

Students enrolled in Kentucky’s public schools are expected to participate in state assessments. Districts are not permitted to honor a parent’s request to opt out of statewide testing as there is no authority in state or federal law allowing parents to do so. All students attending school in person full or part time should be scheduled for testing on their in-person days.

Schools will not provide alternative learning activities during the state assessment testing times. All students are expected to make a good faith effort to complete the state assessments to the best of their ability.

Remote proctoring with students taking assessments at home without a trained administrator is not an option on state assessments for the 2020-2021 school year; therefore, students who do not attend school in person during a testing window would not be able to be assessed.

Will assessment results be made available to parents and the public?

Parents will receive Individual Student Reports and schools and districts will receive summary reports.

From the guidance released by the U.S. Department of Education (USED) on Feb. 22, 2021, the Kentucky Department of Education anticipates reporting participation of students by student group. Reporting will include participation data (e.g. number and percentage) on students who took state assessments and those who did not.

Public reporting of state test results continues to be required from USED, including the requirements to disaggregate data by student group (except for reporting related to accountability, such as school ratings). Although what will be reported in fall 2021 is not completely confirmed, USED expects reporting of participation rates (e.g. number and percentage) in state testing by student demographic groups, including public data for both students who participate and those who do not participate. Performance scores (e.g., Novice, Apprentice, Proficient, Distinguished) will be reported for students who take the assessment.

Additionally, USED has stated, “As a condition of waiving accountability and school identification requirements, Kentucky will be required to publicly report disaggregated chronic absenteeism data and, to the extent the state or school district already collects such information, data on student and educator access to technology devices like laptops or tablets and to high-speed internet at home. Transparency on opportunity to learn measures, such as chronic absenteeism and access to key resources like technology, can help inform decisions about student supports for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond.”



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How much has this year's test been reduced in terms of time?

The average reduction of student's testing time varies by content area on the Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP). The average amount of time for reading, mathematics and science is 60 minutes; writing on demand is scheduled for 90 minutes. Note: Other assessment programs, such as ACT, ACCESS for English Language Learners (ELLs)/Alternate ACCESS, are standardized assessments from testing vendors, and Alternate K-PREP cannot be reduced further.

How have the testing windows been expanded for this year's tests?

Testing windows for ACCESS for English Language Learners (ELLs)/Alternate ACCESS and Alternate K-PREP were postponed until later in the school year. ACT testing will include an additional testing cycle late in the school year.

Typically, districts set their Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP) testing windows as five consecutive days during the last 14 instructional days of the school year. The limitation on five consecutive days has been suspended for 2020-2021. For maximum flexibility, districts may use any or all of their last 14 days for initial testing and make up testing as needed.

If schools need more than 14 days to administer K-PREP, the Office of Assessment and Accountability certainly will consider the request. District assessment coordinators can email DACinfo@education.ky.gov with the specific details for each school, including the district's original 14-day window, the number of additional days needed, specific dates and the number of virtual students that will be tested.

Is it still required that seniors pass the civics test?

The civics test is required this year as it is a Kentucky graduation requirement per KRS 158.141. The civics test can be administered at school or remotely prior to graduation. KRS 158.141 allows unlimited re-takes of the exam and does not specify a location or a methodology for administration of the test that cannot be accomplished either remotely or while following current U.S. Centers for Disease Control guidelines. As it is a local board of education approved test, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) recommends consulting board policy or the board as it is the decision-maker as to how the test is administered and implemented.

There may be issues if districts are forced to suspend in-person classes due to a resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, KDE recommends that school leaders determine how students may be supported in meeting the requirement if schools are open for in-person classes or if learning is occurring remotely. For access to a web-based platform for implementation, KDE has partnered with the University of Kentucky to offer a multiple-choice version of the civics test at www.iDriveDigital.com. Every Kentucky school district has access to this platform and students can login with their school email or their Google account. For more information about this resource, please visit [KDE's civics test webpage](#).



CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

Has Perkins accountability been waived for the 2020-2021 school year?

Currently, federal Perkins accountability is still in place for the 2020-2021 school year.

Is every student that receives a test ticket required to test on the CTE end-of-program (EOP) assessment?

Only students graduating in 2020-2021 that have not previously tested in EOP or industry certification and do not plan to take an industry certification are required to test. Students may test as an opportunity for [statewide articulated credit](#) associated with EOP assessment.

Is there a virtual test at home option for the end-of-program (EOP) assessment this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic?

No. The Kentucky Department of Education does not have an option for students to test at home on the EOP.

What steps should a school take if a parent of a student or a student refuses to take an in-person proctored assessment due to COVID-19?

Please document, at the local level, why the student will not be taking the assessment so it can be reported, if needed.

If a parent of a student or the student refuses to test in-person due to COVID-19, will the student still be included in Perkins accountability reporting?

Yes. There are no options to remove the student from Perkins accountability. However, please note that the Kentucky Department of Education has revised Perkins performance measures to accommodate for this situation.

Will districts be asked to assist in any EOP pilot assessments in the spring of 2021?

No. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, KDE will not be piloting any EOP assessments in spring of 2021.

Can students take an online industry certification if the vendor is allowing that option?

Yes. Please follow vendor guidance for all industry certifications.

TESTING

ACT

Can students be tested if they have not completed the MyACT activity?

Yes. ACT and the Office of Assessment and Accountability are allowing up to two days after the exam to complete this activity. *Please note: The activity cannot be completed on the morning of the exam. ACT highly discourages the activity from being conducted on the exam*



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day after the assessment is administered. The student is expected to test even if the MyACT activity is not completed.

All students, regardless of test mode (online or paper), must complete the non-test activity at myact.org. Students will need their individualized non-test instructions and a copy of the “Taking the ACT” document to complete the non-test activity. It is crucial that students use the 9-digit student code that is printed on the non-test instructions document or available electronically in PearsonAccess^{next}(PAN), to connect their MyACT account with this spring’s administration. *Please note: If an examinee establishes a new MyACT account, it is vital that the examinee use the 9-digit student code and last name values exactly as they appear in PAN.*

Additional resources to support the non-test activity can be found within the [Preparation stage](#) of the ACT-hosted state testing website.

Testing staff should review the [Non-Test Instructions for Test Coordinator](#) document. At the same time, examinees would benefit from viewing the [MyACT How to Use Your Student Code for State and District Testing video](#).

If students have questions or run into error messages during the account creation or update process, please encourage them to complete the ‘[Contact Us](#)’ web form found at [MyACT](#) or by calling ACT at (319) 337-1270.

Student Code Usage Status Report -- To ensure testing staff has insight into who has and has not completed the non-test activity, ACT has made a new published report available in PAN. The new published report, called “Student Code Usage Status” will identify specific students who have not yet claimed their student code. Additionally, it establishes a connection between their MyACT account and this spring’s administration, as well as those who have not yet selected at least one score recipient.

As soon as examinees claim their student code and select at least one score recipient, they will no longer appear on the Student Code Usage Status Report. Please note that this report is updated daily. Therefore, it is important to be mindful of the date/time the latest report was published to determine if students have completed this activity.

If testing staff have questions or if there appear to be issues with the Student Code Usage Status report, please email statetesting@act.org and provide as much detail as possible so ACT can investigate further.

For students who are entirely virtual, are they required to take the ACT?

District and school staff should make a reasonable, dedicated effort to assess all students. However, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) understands there will be virtual students this spring that will not be able to be tested.



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ACT/KDE is offering three testing windows for the Spring 2021 State ACT Administration. Schools should make an effort in the three testing windows to test students. Please ensure the student is marked correctly as a virtual student in Infinite Campus for students who remain fully virtual during all three testing windows.

ACCESS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures, some students were not administered the WIDA screener and K-WAPT. Can the ACCESS test be administered before the WIDA screener and K-WAPT for the students who did not receive them this year?

Since students could exit off the screener and not be classified as an English learner (EL) or required to take the ACCESS for English Language Learners (ELLs) test, the WIDA screener must be administered prior to ACCESS for grades 1-12 online.

For a student who receives accommodation on ACCESS for English Language Learners (ELLs), their Individual Education Plan accommodations are entered into WIDA AMS, but when the test tickets are pulled, it states N/A next to accommodations. Why is that?

The only accommodations that show up on the test ticket are the three that are required prior to testing the student: (manual control of item audio, repeat item audio and extended speaking test response time). All the other accommodations the student can have if marked in the system and in the domains listed, but these will not show up on the test ticket.

Alternate K-PREP

What training/quiz is required for all teachers to administer the Alternate K-PREP?

The Overview and Attainment Task Training is required for anyone who will administer the Alternate K-PREP Attainment Tasks this spring. The quiz originally was scheduled to close Feb. 10. However, the timeframe was extended. For districts who have a teacher who did not complete the quiz during the scheduled times, email [Darrell Mattingly \(University of Kentucky\)](#) to have him provide teacher(s) with access before any Attainment Task administration is permitted to begin.

Will there be any additional trainings/guidance offered for teachers who will administer the Alternate K-PREP this spring?

The Division of Assessment and Accountability Support has created resources for schools and districts to access when preparing for the upcoming Spring 2021 Alternate K-PREP Attainment Task administration, to be conducted March 22-May 28. The resources provided include a [Special Guidance PowerPoint](#) and a [Special Guidance video](#), with specific information about decisions to postpone the test; Alternate Assessment Targets; tested students; the Quality of School Climate and Safety Survey for Kentucky Alternate Assessment students; additional guidance for the spring 2021 administration; Alternate K-PREP materials received; the TAR administration; and spring 2021 important dates and



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Alternate K-PREP office hours. [The Special Guidance handout](#) contains guidance around the 2021 Spring Alternate K-PREP administration only.

If a grade 11 Alternate Assessment student has been 100% virtual this year, will (s)he be expected from the Transition Attainment Record?

The Transition Attainment Record (TAR) is the assessment that represents the equivalent of the grade 11 ACT for students participating in the Kentucky Alternate Assessment.

The TAR differs in the fact that it opened and has been available since Oct. 5, 2020. The TAR does not require the student to be learning in person. It is completed by the TAR team members (Individual Education Program team, Admissions and Release Committee, Transition Team, etc.) and is based on standards from last year. The only scenario that might prevent the TAR from being completed is if the teacher has had no access to a student the entire year and that student is not attending virtual lessons. That would possibly be the only situation where the TAR could not be completed and would need to be communicated with the director of pupil personnel.

Why/how can the Transition Attainment Record (TAR) be given and the Attainment Tasks cannot, when a student is completely virtual (and has been all year)?

The TAR does not require the student to be present. It is a checklist completed by the TAR team members. The TAR does ask the teacher to provide a lesson to a student if the team does not feel the student has ever been given access to that content before. That/those lessons could be provided virtually, as that material is in fact instruction, and is not considered an assessment item.

Is it possible to still apply for a medical non-participation for the Alternate K-PREP this year?

Medical non-participations can be filed when test rosters in the Student Data Review and Rosters (SDRR) application are open April 20-June 15. All non-participations will be requested in SDRR and follow the same process as students participating in the general assessment (K-PREP, ACT, etc.). Until the rosters are available, document internally that the student will not be tested during the window and why. Then when SDRR opens for all students in April, the non-participation process may proceed. The medical non-participation document can be found on the [forms page](#) of the KDE website.

K-PREP

Will editing and mechanics be tested in 2020-2021?

No. Editing and mechanics will not be tested this spring as a part of the Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP) assessment. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has attempted to shorten the K-PREP assessment, both in session time and in number of items. Editing and mechanics will return in spring 2022.



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Where are K-PREP-released sample items located for previous and current standards?

Sample items based on current standards

The items for the current *Kentucky Academic Standards* (2021) are available from the [Pearson Site](#) or [PearsonAccess^{next}](#) (PAN). Additional information is available in the new Kentucky Portal from Pearson.

Sample items based on previous standards

Sample K-PREP test items for the 2020 reading, mathematics and writing previous standards are available from this [Google Drive](#). Items in the link do not contain items for the new standards or for science or social studies.

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