

# UNITED WE LEARN



## STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029



Kentucky Department of  
**EDUCATION**

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# Message from the Commissioner

Thank you for taking the time to engage with **Kentucky's 2024-2029 Strategic Plan—United We Learn.**

This plan represents our shared vision for the future—one where every student is equipped for the future.



Rooted in the values of equity, student success, collaboration, integrity and innovation, this strategic plan outlines our bold approach to transforming education in Kentucky. It is guided by the United We Learn vision and built upon three big ideas:

- **Vibrant Learning Experiences** for every student, ensuring deeper, more meaningful learning opportunities.
- **Encouraging Innovation**, particularly in assessment and accountability, so that we measure success in ways that truly reflect student growth and achievement.
- Creating a **Bold New Future** for Kentucky's schools through strong community collaboration and stakeholder engagement.

This plan is not just a roadmap—it is a call to action for educators, families, students and community partners to work together in shaping a system that honors every learner's potential. We are committed to continuous improvement, broad partnerships and a student-centered approach to education.

We invite you to join us in this journey as we reimagine what is possible for Kentucky's students. Thank you for your dedication to the future of education in our Commonwealth.



Robbie Fletcher  
Commissioner of Education  
Kentucky Department of Education



# Overview



## Kentucky Department of **E D U C A T I O N**

### 2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN



**The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), under the guidance of Commissioner Robbie Fletcher, is committed to advancing public education in Kentucky through the United We Learn vision. This vision is built around three big ideas: creating vibrant student experiences, encouraging innovation in assessment and fostering strong community collaboration. Through these lenses, KDE is dedicated to enriching student experiences, improving learning outcomes and ensuring that every child in the Commonwealth receives vibrant educational opportunities.**

### Development of the Strategic Plan

To ensure a comprehensive and impactful strategic plan, the KDE leadership team (listed on page 24) sought input from KDE staff, customers and stakeholders to identify key areas for improvement and to provide direction for shaping the plan's priorities.

The strategic plan has undergone multiple iterations, with each version reviewed by the commissioner and KDE leadership team. To ensure alignment with statewide education priorities, early drafts of the plan were presented to the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE). The implementation of this plan spans from 2024 to 2029, with progress monitoring set to begin summer 2025. Updates will be shared with the commissioner, KDE leadership team and the KBE on a regular basis.

For the most current information please visit: [education.ky.gov/CommOfEd/StrategicPlan](https://education.ky.gov/CommOfEd/StrategicPlan)





# Overview

## Goals

The strategic plan establishes clear, measurable goals to drive student success and system improvement by 2028-2029:

- Establish an Accountability Model that includes vibrant learning, making it meaningful and useful for all our learners.
- Increase 3rd-grade Kentucky Summative Assessment Reading proficiency from 47% to 60%.
- Increase 3rd-grade Kentucky Summative Assessment Mathematic proficiency from 43% to 55%.
- Increase the completion rate of eligible students in a Teaching and Learning Pathway from 6% to 14%.
- Decrease statewide chronic absenteeism rate from 28% to 15%.
- Improve customer satisfaction, increasing favorable agreement on key engagement metrics from 56% to 66%.
- Enhance organizational process management, increasing employee satisfaction in the Operations Domain of the Employee Survey from 82% to 87%.
- Build leadership capacity, improving favorable agreement in the KDE Leadership Domain of the Customer Survey from 60% to 76%.

Each goal is further measured with key performance indicators and impacted by strategies as outlined herein.

## Monitoring and Accountability

KDE has established a structured monitoring process to track progress and make necessary adjustments at the initiative and strategy levels, as appropriate. Cross-agency strategy groups will play a crucial role in this process, ensuring coordination and alignment across the department. Regular updates will be provided to the KDE leadership team and the KBE.

A public-facing dashboard, currently in development, will serve as the primary tool for reporting progress. This dashboard will provide transparency to all customers and stakeholders. The strategic plan is designed to be a flexible model, allowing for adaptations to emerging challenges and ensuring continuous improvement in Kentucky's education system.

## Commitment to Collaboration

The success of this strategic plan depends on collective efforts across KDE, local schools and districts and the broader public. KDE remains committed to fostering engagement, transparency and responsiveness in implementing this plan, ensuring that all stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to and inquire about progress toward Kentucky's educational goals.



# Our Vision, Mission and Core Values

## Our Vision

**United We Learn** is our vision for the future of public education in Kentucky.

This vision builds around three big ideas:

- creating a more **vibrant experience** for every student
- **encouraging innovation** in our schools—especially when it comes to assessment
- creating a **bold new future** for Kentucky’s schools through collaboration with our communities.

Building on KDE’s progress, education stakeholders are developing bold, forward-thinking ideas to enrich student experiences and improve outcomes.

**United We Learn** calls on all Kentuckians to work together to create vibrant, meaningful learning for every student.

## Our Mission

Create broad partnerships to provide leadership and support so that every student is equipped for the future.

## Our Core Values

◆ **Equity**   ◆ **Integrity**   ◆ **Student Success**   ◆ **Innovation**   ◆ **Collaboration**



# The Three Big Ideas



**Vibrant Learning Experiences** spark curiosity and motivation, fostering lifelong learning. This includes creating personalized education that recognizes each family’s unique story and ensures every student feels known, supported and challenged to succeed.



**Encouraging Innovation** in schools means finding better approaches to teaching and assessment through continuous improvement and experimentation. Teachers must feel safe to try new ideas, fostering a culture of innovation. Students will be encouraged to ask, "How can I solve this?" and "Is there a better way?"

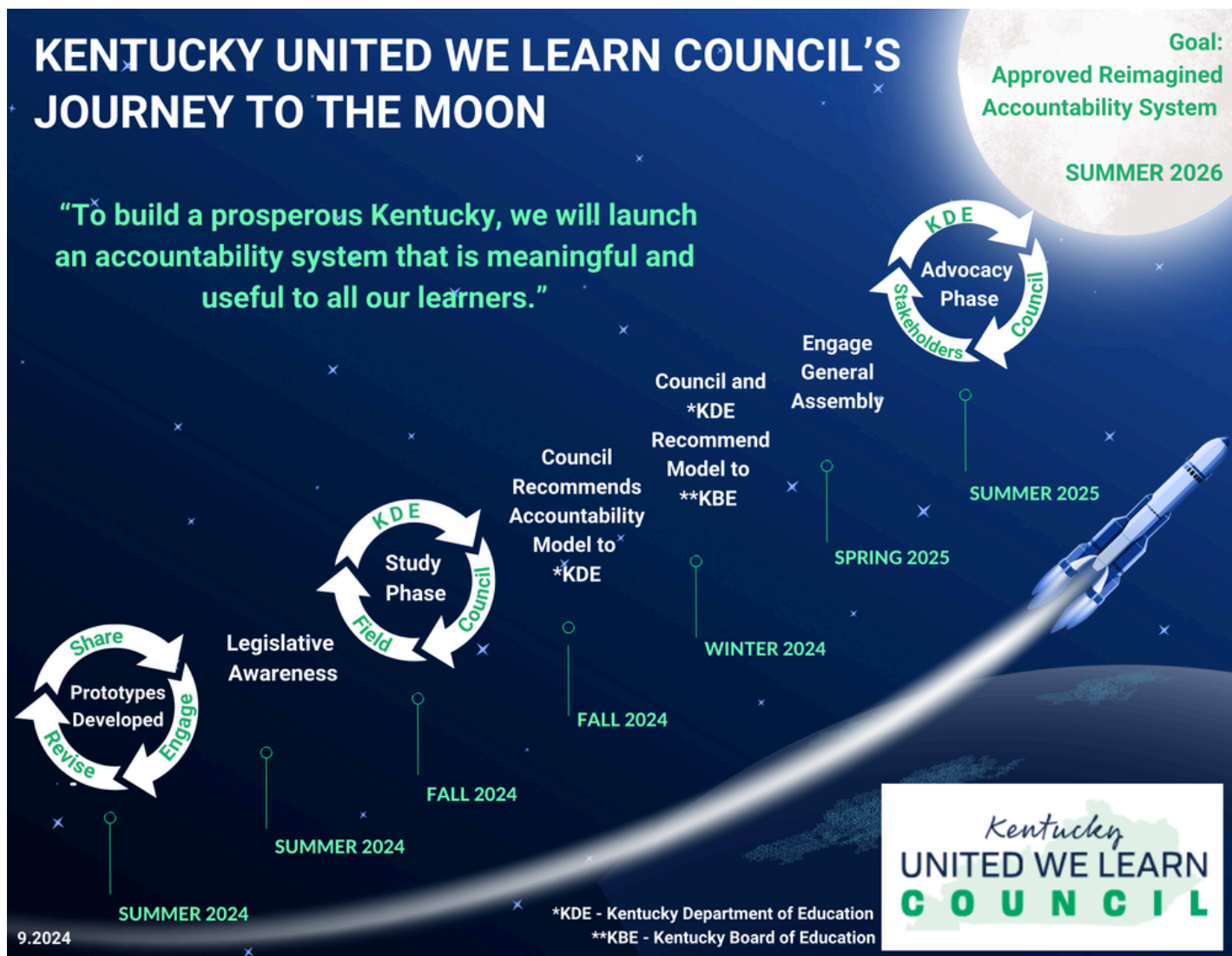


Creating a **Bold New Future** through collaboration means engaging families, educators, students, community members and business leaders to co-create opportunities that highlight students' unique gifts. Kentuckians emphasized the need for genuine collaboration, especially with groups traditionally excluded from education policy decisions. Each family’s story and each child's talents should be valued and understood.

# GOAL #1:

## Reimagining Assessment and Accountability

Establish an accountability model that includes vibrant learning, making it meaningful and useful for all our learners.



Building on the vision and foundational work of the Kentucky United We Learn (KUWL) Council and their *Journey to the Moon*, the Reimagining Assessment and Accountability initiative establishes a community-driven accountability model that supports vibrant, student-centered learning. Success is measured by the approval of a Model Framework and greater district participation in Local Accountability Systems, creation of Portraits of a Learner and providing Vibrant Learning Experiences. Key strategies include elevating vibrant learning, co-creating a feedback-driven system and supporting districts in partnership with their communities. This ensures assessment is meaningful, equitable and aligned with Kentucky’s educational vision.



# #1: Reimagining Assessment and Accountability

## Key Performance Indicators

- Increase percentage of districts at each stage of Local Accountability System implementation - Starting, Spreading or Sustaining
- Increase percentage of districts at each stage of Portrait of a Learner creation - Starting, Spreading or Sustaining
- Increase percentage of districts at each stage of Vibrant Learning Experiences development - Starting, Spreading or Sustaining

### Strategy 1.1: Co-create an accountability system through an inclusive, feedback-driven process.

- Foster a collaborative, inclusive approach to developing an accountability model that reflects stakeholder needs and values. By prioritizing co-creation, equity and policy alignment, it ensures the system is effective, responsive and supported by legislative approval for statewide implementation.

### Strategy 1.2: Elevate Vibrant Learning Experiences

- Transform education by helping districts design and scale deeper, personalized learning that actively engages students. Providing resources, guidance and showcasing successful practices fosters statewide collaboration and innovation. Aligning assessment with vibrant, student-centered learning ensures meaningful accountability and continuous improvement.

### Strategy 1.3: Support districts in developing their Local Accountability Systems through collaboration with their communities.

- Empower districts to create meaningful, student-centered accountability models aligned with local priorities. By engaging communities and implementing Portrait of a Learner frameworks, districts ensure assessments reflect shared values and deeper learning goals, fostering a more relevant and impactful approach to student success.



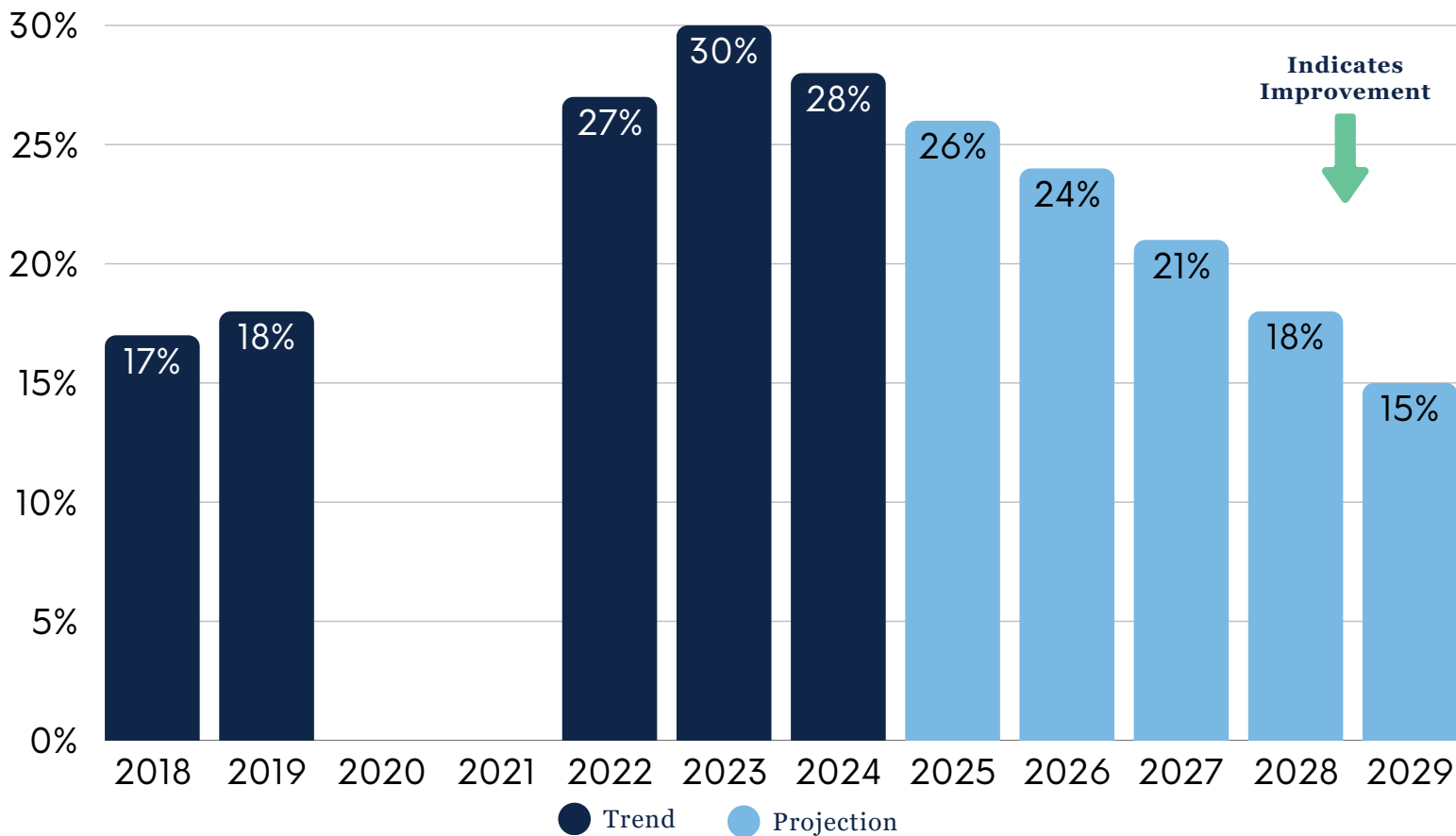


# GOAL #2:

## Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

Decrease statewide chronic absenteeism rate from 28% in 2024 to 15% by 2029.

Chronic Absenteeism Rates for Kentucky



*\*Chronic Absenteeism was not reportable for 2020 and 2021 due to traditional attendance measures not being collected.*

Kentucky aims to reduce chronic absenteeism from 28% in 2024 to 15% by 2029, reversing increases that followed the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, rates hovered around 17-18%, but absenteeism peaked at 30% in 2023. Chronic absenteeism was not reportable for 2020 and 2021 due to the suspension of traditional attendance measures. The state is targeting a steady decline through focused interventions, family engagement and school-based supports to help ensure students remain connected and on track for success.

## #2: Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

### Key Performance Indicators

- Decrease the percentage of schools in Kentucky who are experiencing high or extremely high chronic absenteeism rates

### Strategy 2.1: Expand Opportunities for Vibrant Learning Experiences

- Focus is on increasing access to meaningful, personalized learning, especially for at-risk students. By building district capacity and strengthening career and technical education (CTE) pathways, we ensure students gain real-world skills and deeper learning experiences that engage them and prepare them for future success.

### Strategy 2.2: Empower Educators to Support At-Risk Students

- Focus is on equipping educators with the training needed to identify and support at-risk students effectively. By building capacity to recognize challenges early and providing targeted interventions, we create a stronger, more responsive support system that ensures all students have the resources and opportunities to succeed.

### Strategy 2.3: Engage in Proactive Communication with Family and Community

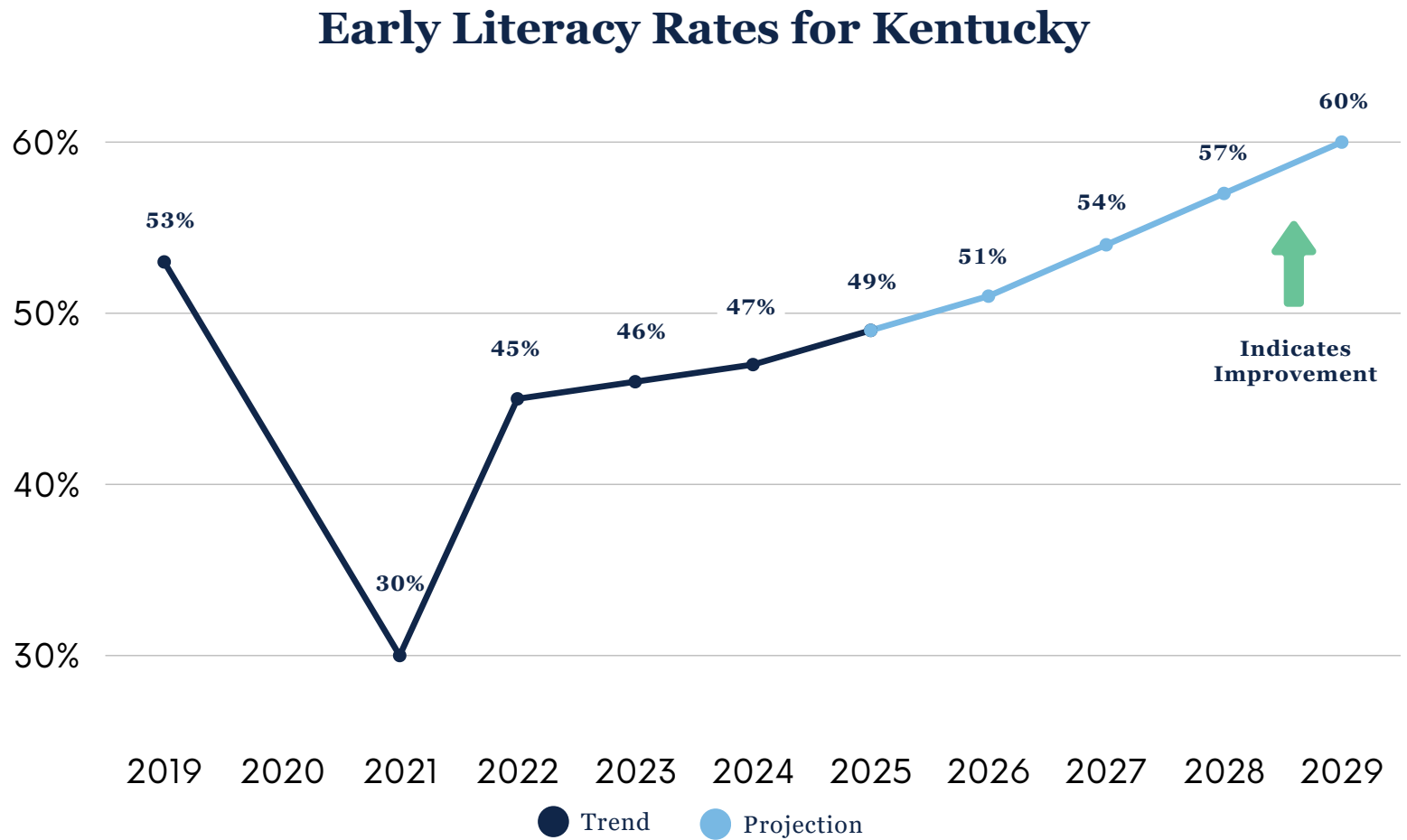
- Focus is on strengthening connections between schools, families and communities to support student success. A key effort is a targeted communication campaign to address chronic absenteeism, ensuring families understand its impact and are engaged in solutions to improve student attendance.



# GOAL #3:

## Improve Early Literacy

Increase 3rd-grade Kentucky Summative Assessment Reading proficiency from 47% in 2024 to 60% by 2029.



KDE aims to increase 3rd-grade reading proficiency from 47% in 2024 to 60% by 2029, surpassing pre-pandemic levels. In 2019, pre-pandemic, proficiency was 53%, but due to the pandemic, no data was collected in 2020 and rates dropped significantly to 30% in 2021. Since then, proficiency rates have improved to 45% in 2022, 46% in 2023 and 47% in 2024.

KDE is projecting steady gains with targets of 49% in 2025, 51% in 2026, 54% in 2027, 57% in 2028 and 60% in 2029. Key initiatives, including the Kentucky Reading Academies and statewide training in the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) program, are expected to drive these improvements by strengthening literacy instruction and support.

## #3: Improve Early Literacy

### Key Performance Indicators

- Decrease 3rd-grade novice in reading
- Increase the number of educators participating in the Kentucky Reading Academies
- Reduction in the need for reading improvement plans as students make accelerated progress toward reading proficiency
- Increase in the implementation of Early Literacy Screening Assessment
- Increase in the implementation of the Literacy Diagnostics

#### Strategy 3.1: Align Vibrant Learning Experiences to the Kentucky Academic Standards for Reading and Writing

- Ensure deeper, student-centered learning aligns with state standards. By building district capacity to design and scale these experiences, we create meaningful, personalized opportunities that engage students while maintaining academic rigor.

#### Strategy 3.2: Support High-Quality Literacy Instruction and Professional Learning

- Strengthen literacy education by providing educators with evidence-based training and support. Through curriculum-based professional learning, the Read to Succeed Coaching Model and initiatives like the Kentucky Reading Academies and LETRS, we ensure teachers have the tools to deliver effective, high-impact literacy instruction.

#### Strategy 3.3: Support Evidence-Based Literacy Curriculum and Instructional Resources

- Ensure districts have access to high-quality instructional materials and collaborative support. Through the Kentucky Early Literacy Leadership Network and district partnerships, educators are equipped with the resources and strategies needed to enhance literacy instruction and student outcomes.

#### Strategy 3.4: Provide Targeted Literacy Support and Intervention

- Focus on providing tailored support for students through the Kentucky Multi-Tiered System of Supports (KYMTSS). By utilizing the state-approved list of universal screeners and diagnostic assessments, districts can identify student needs early and implement targeted interventions to improve literacy outcomes.

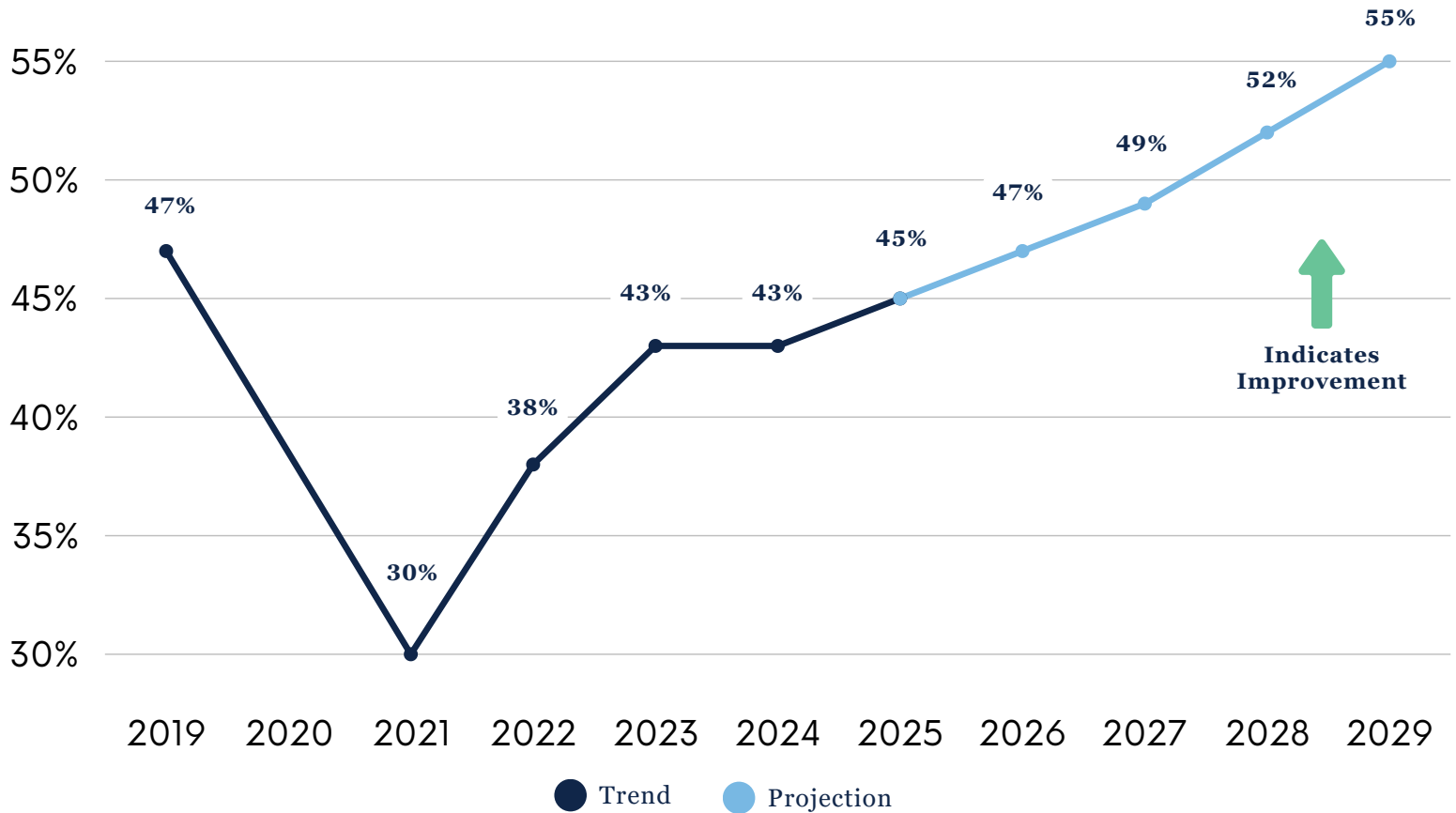


# GOAL #4:

## Improve Early Numeracy

Increase 3rd-grade Kentucky Summative Assessment Mathematics proficiency from 43% in 2024 to 55% by 2029.

Early Numeracy Rates for Kentucky



KDE aims to increase 3rd-grade math proficiency from 43% in 2024 to 55% by 2029, exceeding pre-pandemic levels. In 2019, proficiency was 47%; no data was collected in 2020 due to the pandemic. Rates dropped to 30% in 2021. Since then, proficiency has been improving, reaching 38% in 2022 and 43% in both 2023 and 2024.

KDE is projecting steady gains with targets of 45% in 2025, 47% in 2026, 49% in 2027, 52% in 2028 and 55% in 2029. These improvements will be supported by key initiatives such as the Kentucky Numeracy Academies, which provide educators with training and resources to strengthen math instruction and enhance student learning outcomes.



## #4: Improve Early Numeracy

### Key Performance Indicators

- Decrease 3rd-grade novice in mathematics.
- Increase the number of educators participating in the KY Numeracy Academies
- Increase in the implementation of Early Numeracy Screening Assessment
- Increase in the implementation of the Numeracy Diagnostics

#### Strategy 4.1: Align Vibrant Learning Experiences to the Kentucky Academic Standards for Mathematics

- Ensure that deeper, student-centered learning aligns with state standards. By building district capacity to design and scale these experiences, we create meaningful, personalized opportunities that engage students while maintaining academic rigor.

#### Strategy 4.2: Support High-Quality Mathematics Instruction and Professional Learning

- Strengthen math education by providing educators with evidence-based training and support. Through curriculum-based professional learning, the KY Numeracy Counts Teacher and Leader Academies and targeted professional development, we ensure teachers have the tools to deliver effective, high-impact mathematics instruction.

#### Strategy 4.3: Support Evidence-Based Mathematics Curriculum and Instructional Resources

- Ensure districts have access to high-quality instructional materials and support systems. By leveraging the Committee for Mathematics Achievement and high-quality instructional resources (HQIR), we provide educators with the tools needed to deliver effective, research-based mathematics instruction.

#### Strategy 4.4: Provide Targeted Mathematic Support and Intervention

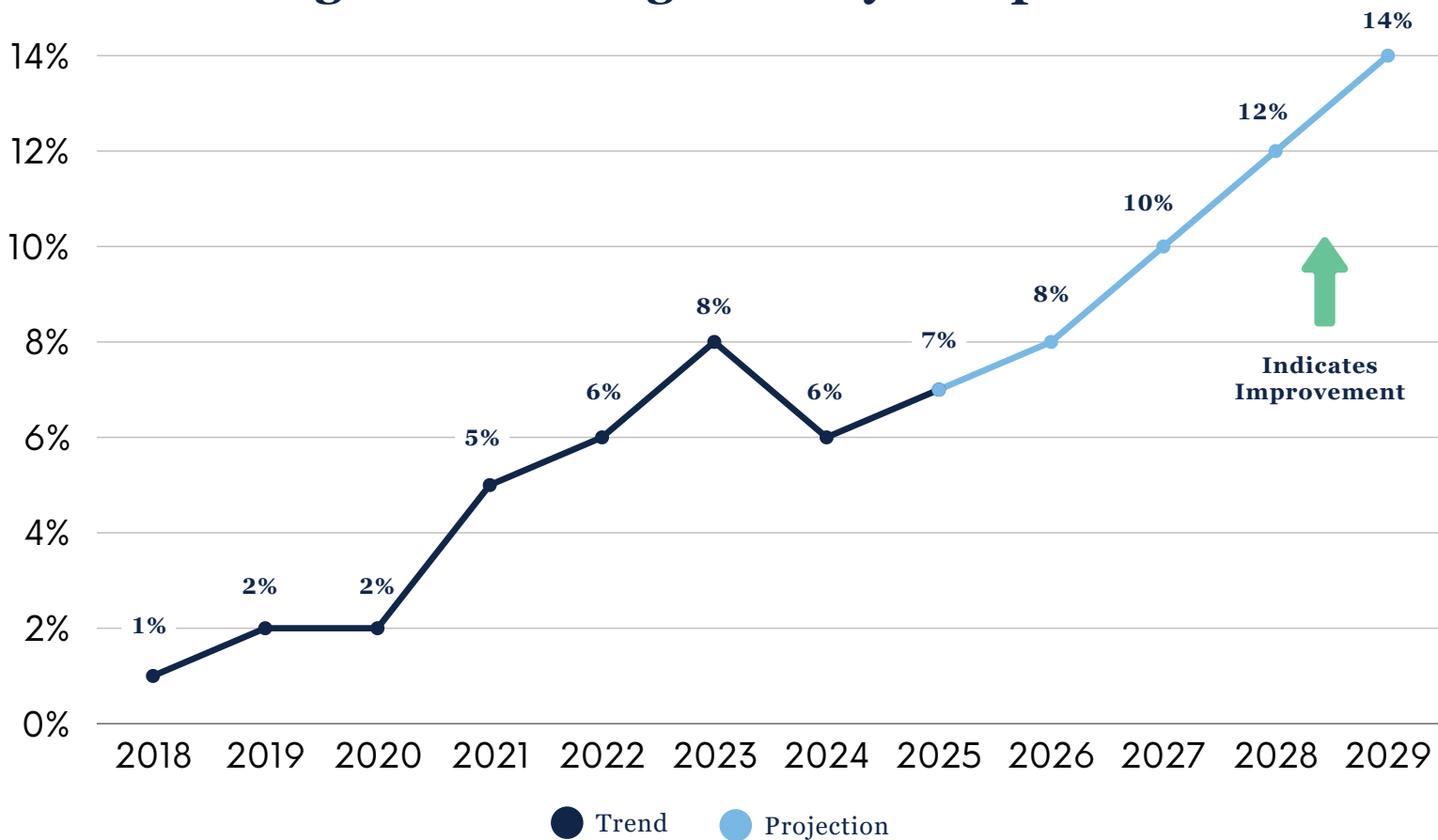
- Focus on providing tailored support for students through the Kentucky Multi-Tiered System of Supports (KYMTSS). By utilizing the state-approved list of universal screeners and diagnostic assessments, districts can identify math needs early and implement targeted interventions. Establish math improvement plans for students needing accelerated progress to ensure a focused approach to help students reach proficiency in mathematics.

## GOAL #5:

### Expand the Recruitment of Qualified Educators

Increase the completion rate of eligible high school students in a Teaching and Learning Pathway from 6% in 2024 to 14% by 2029.

Teaching and Learning Pathway Completion Rates



KDE aims to increase the completion rate of eligible high school students in a Teaching and Learning Pathway from 6% in 2024 to 14% by 2029, strengthening the pipeline of future educators. Completion rates have gradually increased over time, starting at 1% in 2018 and rising to 2% in 2019 and 2020, followed by a significant jump to 5% in 2021. Post-pandemic, rates have fluctuated, reaching 6% in 2022, 8% in 2023 and returning to 6% in 2024.

To achieve this goal, Kentucky is targeting steady growth with benchmarks of 7% in 2025, 8% in 2026, 10% in 2027, 12% in 2028 and 14% in 2029. Expanding opportunities within the Teaching and Learning Pathway will be essential in addressing educator shortages and ensuring a strong, diverse workforce for the future.

# #5: Expand the Recruitment of Qualified Educators

## Key Performance Indicators

- Increase enrollment in the Teaching and Learning Pathway Courses
- Increase in Registered Apprenticeships
- Increase enrollment in Educator Preparation Programs

### Strategy 5.1: Encourage Early Entry

- Focus on promoting careers in education by supporting pathways for future educators. By providing support for the Teaching and Learning Career Pathway, facilitating the Educators Rising career and technical student organization and assisting with the implementation of district Registered Apprenticeships, we create opportunities for students to explore teaching careers early. Additionally, advocacy through programs like the GoTeachKY Ambassador Program encourages the education profession as a first-choice career option, helping to attract and retain the next generation of educators.

### Strategy 5.2: Elevate the Teaching Profession

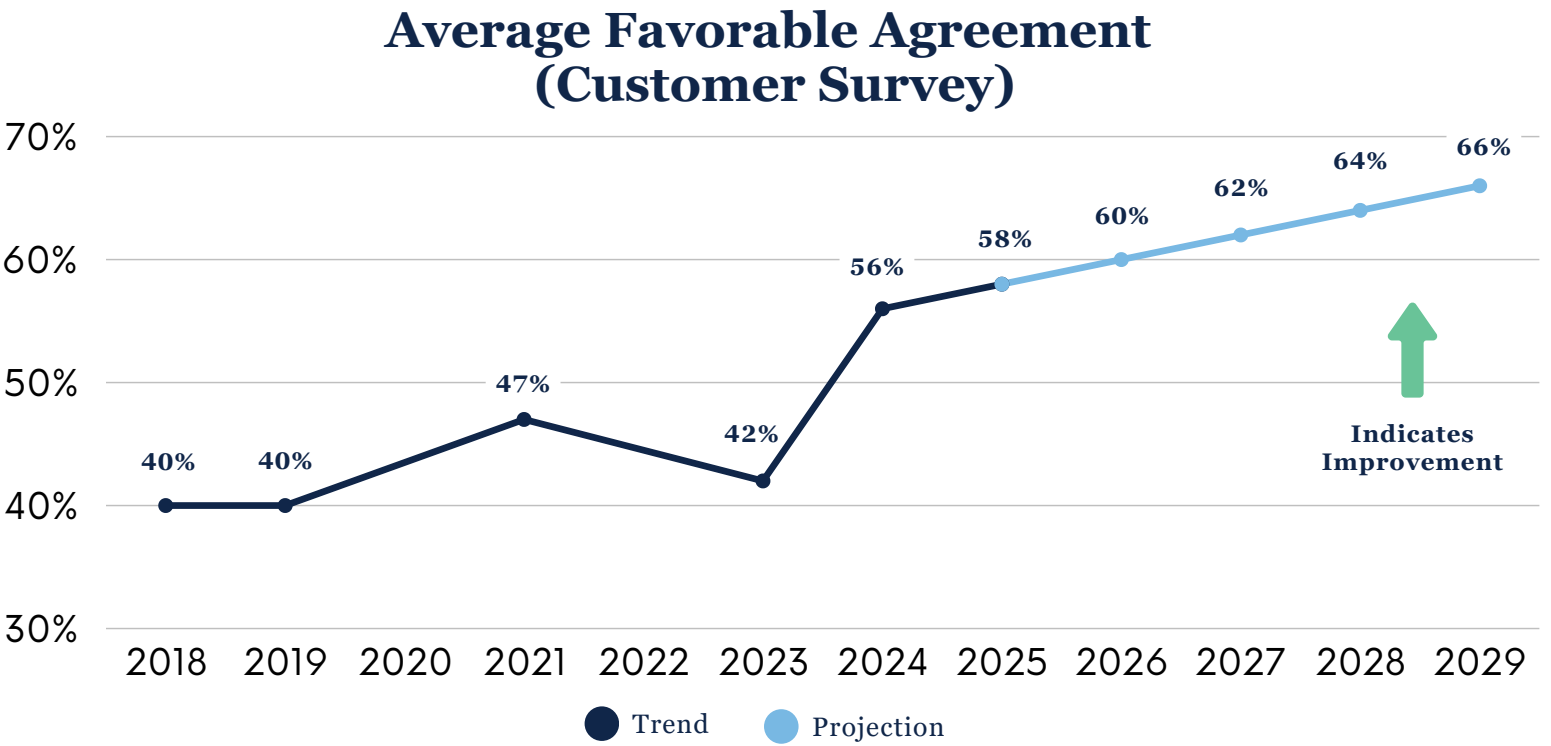
- Focus on raising the profile and value of the teaching profession. Through multi-faceted communications campaigns like GoTeachKY, we highlight the importance of teaching and attract more individuals to the profession. Teacher recognition opportunities, such as Kentucky Teacher of the Year (KTOY) and Milken Awards, celebrate outstanding educators, fostering a culture of appreciation and excellence in teaching.



# GOAL #6:

## Improve Customer Satisfaction

Increase customer satisfaction based on average favorable agreement for: “I know who to contact to get information” and “KDE values feedback” from 56% in 2024 to 66% in 2029.



Kentucky aims to increase customer satisfaction from 56% in 2024 to 66% by 2029, as measured by average favorable agreement with the statements: “I know who to contact to get information” and “KDE values feedback.” Improving these metrics reflects the agency’s commitment to being responsive, transparent and service-oriented in its communication with stakeholders.

Historically, customer satisfaction levels were 40% in both 2018 and 2019. No data was collected in 2020 due to the pandemic. While a survey was administered in 2022, technical issues prevented its use in reporting. In more recent years, customer satisfaction has improved, increasing from 42% in 2023 to 56% in 2024.

KDE is projecting steady progress with targets of 58% in 2025, 60% in 2026, 62% in 2027, 64% in 2028 and 66% in 2029. Reaching this goal will involve strengthening two-way communication, ensuring stakeholders know where to turn for accurate information and reinforcing that their input informs agency decision-making.



## #6: Improve Customer Satisfaction

### Key Performance Indicators

- Increase the Superintendent satisfaction rate for -  
**“KDE is responsive in communications”**
- Increase the District Administrator satisfaction rate for -  
**“KDE leverages social media effectively”**
- Maintain high agreement level on semi-annual Pulse Check

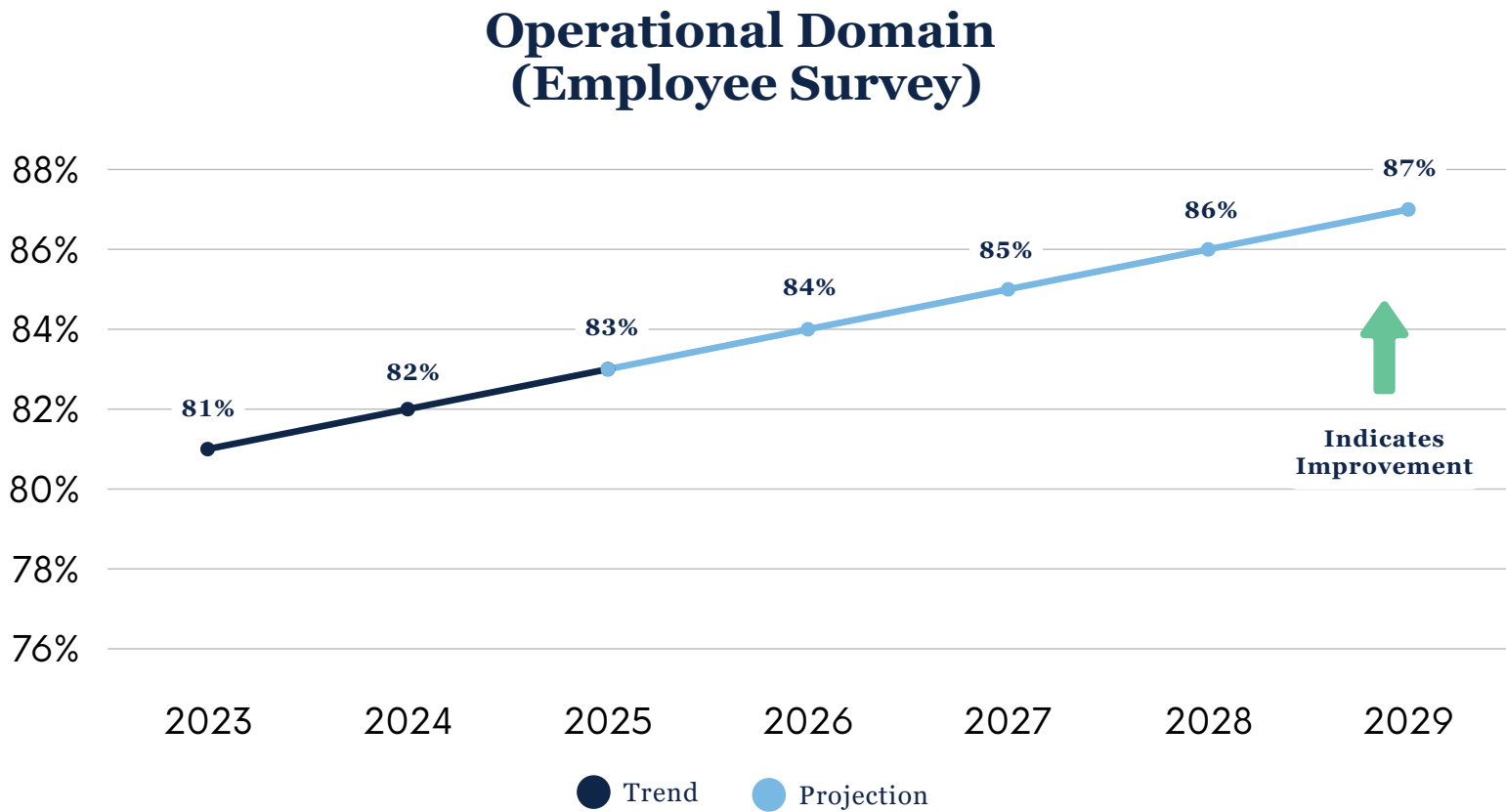
### Strategy 6.1: Develop KDE Communications Plan

- Focus on strengthening how the department communicates with key stakeholders, particularly superintendents and district administrators. By evaluating and improving responsiveness, enhancing communication channels and developing a more effective social media strategy, KDE aims to ensure timely, transparent and meaningful engagement that supports the needs of school and district leaders across the state.





**GOAL #7:**  
**Improve Organizational Process Management**  
**Improve average favorable agreement of the Operations**  
**Domain in the Employee Survey from 82% in 2024 to 87% in**  
**2029.**



KDE aims to increase average favorable agreement in the Operations Domain of the Employee Survey from 82% in 2024 to 87% by 2029. This domain, introduced in the 2022-2023 survey, reflects employees’ perceptions of the efficiency and effectiveness of internal processes and systems that support their work.

While this is a newer area of measurement, early results show relatively strong levels of satisfaction, with 81% favorable agreement in 2023 and 82% in 2024. Given these already positive responses, the goal is to build on this foundation through continuous improvement and responsive leadership. Target benchmarks include 83% in 2025, 84% in 2026, 85% in 2027, 86% in 2028 and 87% in 2029. Incremental growth in this area will signal enhanced internal alignment, stronger support systems and a more effective organizational infrastructure.

## #7: Improve Organizational Process Management

### Key Performance Indicators

- Reduce the number of process-related risks on biennial Risk Assessment
- Increase agreement on "**KDE regularly reviews and improves its processes**"
- Increase agreement on "**Processes are documented to protect important assets**"
- Increase agreement on "**Processes for handling an emergency are documented**"

### Strategy 7.1: Develop Agency-Wide Process Management System

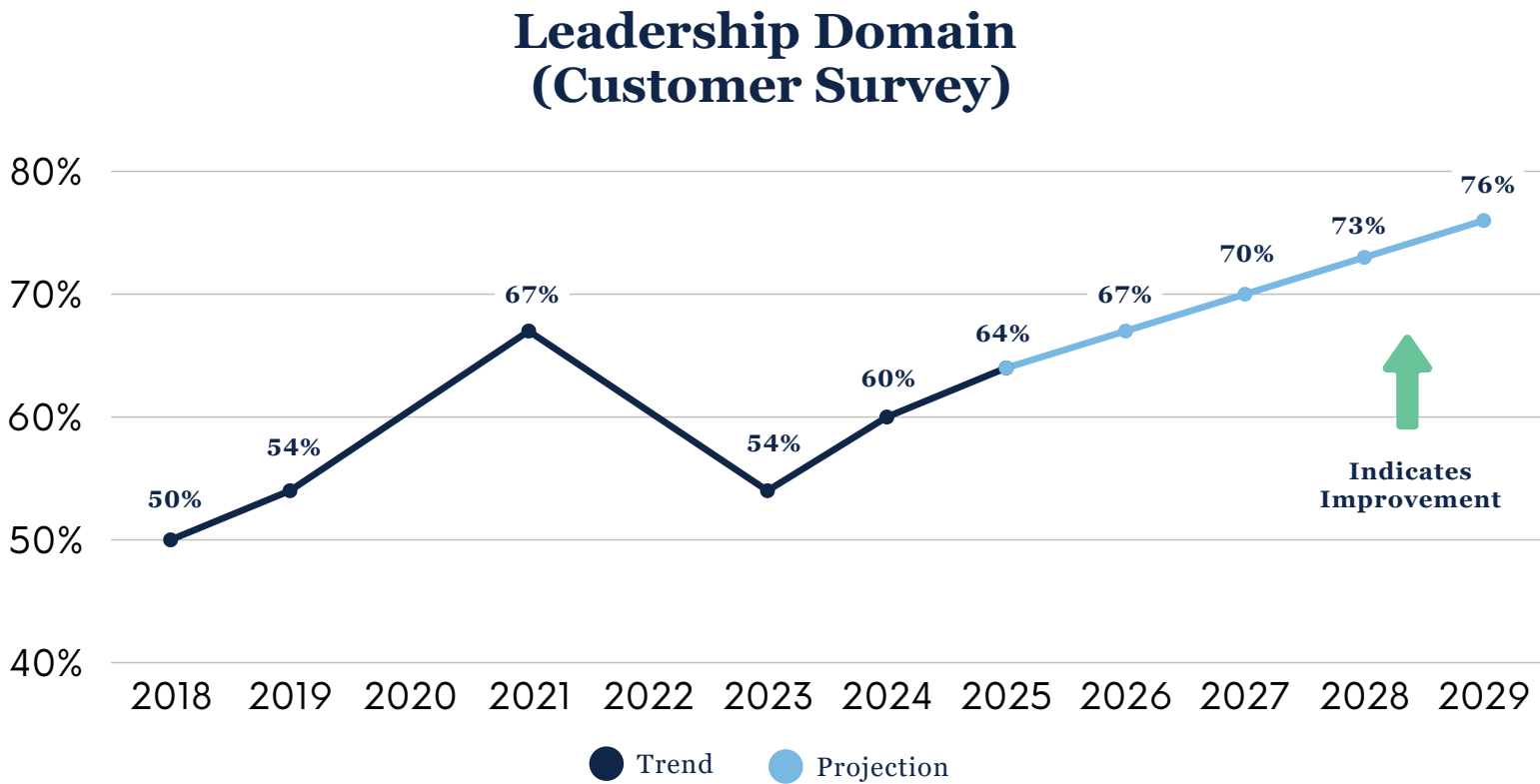
- Focus on increasing efficiency and consistency across the department. By establishing a clear process for identifying, documenting and monitoring key workflows within each office, KDE aims to improve internal operations, promote accountability and ensure high-quality service delivery across all areas of work.



# GOAL #8:

## Build Leadership Capacity

Improve average favorable agreement of the KDE Leadership Domain in the Customer Survey from 60% in 2024 to 76% in 2029.



KDE aims to improve the average favorable agreement rating in the KDE Leadership Domain of the Customer Survey from 60% in 2024 to 76% by 2029, reflecting stronger leadership practices and improved support to districts and schools. Favorable agreement steadily increased from 50% in 2018 to 67% in 2021. Due to the pandemic, no survey was administered in 2020 and while a survey was conducted in 2022, technical issues and leadership decisions at the time prevented its use in reporting. In subsequent years, the favorable rating declined to 54% in 2023 before recovering to 60% in 2024.

KDE is projecting increases with targets of 64% in 2025, 67% in 2026, 70% in 2027, 73% in 2028 and 76% in 2029. Efforts to build leadership capacity will focus on strengthening communication, collaboration and responsiveness across the agency to better serve the needs of education stakeholders.

## #8: Build Leadership Capacity

### Key Performance Indicators

- Increase the overall agreement rating of employee satisfaction in the KDE Leadership Domain
- Increase agreement on the Employee Survey for - **“I am able to develop my professional skills in my current role”**

### Strategy 8.1: Create more professional learning opportunities for KDE staff

- Focus on fostering a culture of continuous growth and improvement within the agency. Through high-quality manager training, affinity groups for sharing best practices and systems to track both internal and external training, staff are better equipped to succeed in their roles. Additionally, focus groups representing all offices and levels of employment will provide valuable input on how employees should be trained, supported and held accountable - informing KDE’s management culture and shaping future performance goals.




# Acknowledgements

We extend heartfelt appreciation to the KDE staff, whose dedication and daily commitment to serving Kentucky’s students are essential in bringing this plan to life.

## KDE Leadership Team

- Dr. Robbie Fletcher**, *Commissioner of Education*
- Todd Allen**, *Deputy Commissioner - Office of Legal Services*
- Thomas Tucker**, *Deputy Commissioner - Office of Teaching and Learning*
- Meredith Brewer**, *Assoc. Commissioner - Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness*
- David Couch**, *Assoc. Commissioner - Office of Educational Technology*
- Karen Dodd**, *Chief Performance Officer - Office of the Commissioner*
- Kelly Foster**, *Assoc. Commissioner - Office of Continuous Improvement and Support*
- Jennifer Ginn**, *Director of Communications - Office of the Commissioner*
- Beth Hargis**, *Assoc. Commissioner - Office of Career and Technical Education*
- Gretta Hylton**, *Assoc. Commissioner - Office of Special Education and Early Learning*
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- Micki Marinelli**, *Chief Academic Officer - Office of Teaching and Learning*
- Brian Perry**, *Director of Government Relations - Office of the Commissioner*
- Matt Ross**, *Assoc. Commissioner - Office of Finance and Operations*
- Rhonda Sims**, *Assoc. Commissioner - Office of Assessment and Accountability*






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2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN





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**Strategic Plan**  
**2024-2029**

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