

**Kentucky Board of Education Work Session  
February 7, 2017**

***SUMMARY MINUTES***

The Kentucky Board of Education held a special meeting on February 7, 2017, in the State Board Room on the Fifth Floor of the 300 Building, 300 Sower Blvd., Frankfort, Kentucky. The board conducted the following business:

**I. Call to Order, Full Board Session - February 7, 2017, 4:00 p.m. (ET)**

Chairman Bill Twyman called the special work session to order at 4:00 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Chair Twyman asked Leslie Slaughter to call the roll. All members were present, except for Robert King.

**Attendance Taken at 4:00 PM:**

Present Board Members:

Mr. Grayson Boyd  
Mr. Ben Cundiff  
Mr. Richard Gimmel  
Mr. Samuel Hinkle  
Mr. Gary Houchens  
Ms. Alesa Johnson  
Mr. Roger Marcum  
Ms. Nawanna Privett  
Mr. Milton Seymore  
Mr. William Twyman  
Ms. Mary Gwen Wheeler

Absent Board Members:

President Bob King

**III. Kentucky's Process for Developing a New Accountability System (Review Item: 2-hour presentation/discussion) - Associate Commissioner Rhonda Sims and Brian Gong, Center for Assessment**

Rhonda Sims, Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Associate Commissioner for the Office of Assessment and Accountability welcomed everyone to the work session. She then introduced Brian Gong from the Center for Assessment, who has assisted KDE with the facilitation of the various accountability work group meetings.

Rhonda asked Commissioner Pruitt to provide some opening remarks. He thanked KBE members for their commitment to this process and for agreeing to take part in the work session. He expressed his excitement about the accountability proposals and their reflection of equity, achievement, and integrity. He praised the focus on achievement gap issues, but also expressed his desire to ensure that the system focused on more than simply assessment scores. Pruitt praised the collaborative work of all committee members from across the state and expressed his appreciation for their hard work thus far.

Using a PowerPoint presentation that was on the board's online materials site, Sims began reviewing the objectives of the work session and the agenda. She then discussed the role of the KBE throughout the development process of the new system and spent time also highlighting the development process to date and the guiding principles of the new system.

Next, the five superintendents who have served as the chairs of the accountability work groups came forward to begin sharing the work of their respective committees. Those chairs were as follows:

*Sanford Holbrook - Roberson County Schools (Co-Chair, CCR)*  
*Patricia Sheffer - Union County Schools (Co-Chair, CCR)*  
*Owens Saylor - Daviess County Schools (Opportunity and Access)*  
*Steve Butcher - Pulaski County Schools (School Improvement)*  
*James Neihof - Shelby County Schools (Educational Innovations)*  
*Jennifer Stafford - KDE (Representative for Assessment)*

Superintendents Holbrook and Sheffer began by sharing the proposals related to College and Career Readiness. They expressed that the work of their committee was focused on creating personalized and rigorous paths for all students that centered around transition readiness indicators in the areas of academic, technical, and the military. They indicated that additional focus was placed on measuring employability and 21st century soft skills. The idea of a "Diploma Plus" concept was also introduced, which is designed to recognize students who attain multiple requirements beyond the minimum high school graduation requirements.

Bill Twyman asked about the flexibility for students to choose their own path. Superintendent Sheffer expressed the work group's desire to ensure that all students have the opportunity to explore within a personalized path of interest.

Jennifer Stafford then began to explain the proposals related to the Assessment Work Group. She began by clarifying the difference between assessment systems and accountability systems. Stafford stated that the role of her work group was primarily focused on assessments that should be included within the larger accountability system. She indicated that a Request for Proposal (RFP) process would be required for new assessments, which will determine the assessments for inclusion within Kentucky's new accountability system. She commented that many of the other proposals from this work group focused on the assessments being student-centered, based on Kentucky academic standards, and reflecting the "whole child".

Mary Gwen Wheeler asked if there had been any discussion about criterion-based, performance-based assessments. Rhonda Sims clarified that the Educational Innovations Work Group focused more on this part of the discussion, rather than the Assessment Work Group.

Next, Superintendent Saylor began sharing the work of the Opportunity and Access Work Group. He indicated that the proposals were focused on both leading and lagging indicators for schools and districts that are purposefully ensuring that ALL students are provided the best possible instruction and programs for success. He noted that the work group debated heavily whether the indicators were to be included in formal accountability for a school or district's rating, versus public reporting.

Superintendent Butcher then began discussing the School Improvement Committee proposals. This work group was charged with determining the entry and exit criteria that would establish the identification of the state's lowest performing schools (the bottom 5%), which would require intervention and/or support by KDE. Butcher said the proposals were focused on alignment to the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), but in some cases the work group aspired to be bolder than the law requirements.

Next, Superintendent Neihof shared the proposals that were developed through the Educational Innovations Work Group, which focused more on the assessment aspects of innovation, rather than accountability as a whole. He indicated that the primary focus of the group's recommendations was a competency-based assessment pilot project. He discussed the importance for student performance or demonstration of knowledge to be at the core of this pilot, as research has indicated that traditional multiple-choice assessments can only typically measure about 25% of a state's learning standards. Neihof encouraged the board to focus on a 3-pronged approach to this proposal:

1. *A through-course assessment system or "digital bookshelf" that would allow for formative assessment along the way.*
2. *A standardized summative assessment, which would meet ESSA requirements for college and career readiness, etc.*
3. *Student performance measures that demonstrate or prove what students have learned as they progress through their education.*

Bill Twyman asked Superintendent Neihof if the work group had discussed the issues of data validity and reliability as it relates to competency-based education and assessment measures. Superintendent Neihof indicated that the group focused on this topic extensively. He expressed that the work group's belief is that there will be a requirement for extensive training in the field, as well as earned trust between all shareholders.

Next, Superintendents Randy Poe (Boone County) and Jim Flynn (Simpson County) discussed the charges of their respective committees. Superintendent Poe served as the chair of the Systems Integration Work Group, which is designed to blend all of the proposals from the various work groups into a cohesively-designed system. Superintendent Flynn served as the chair of the Consequential Review Committee, which was tasked with reviewing the accountability proposals and determining any possible unintended consequences for the system. Both had positive comments to share about the proposals that have come forth to date.

Upon the conclusion of the work group presentations, Chairman Twyman thanked the district superintendents and KDE staff for giving their time and expertise to this process. He then opened the floor for comments and feedback from other board members regarding the initial information that had been presented.

Many board members praised the work that had been completed thus far. Specifically, board member Roger Marcum commented that the role of superintendents in this process was unprecedented and has resulted in very thoughtful recommendations. He asked specifically about the timeline for the competency-based pilot project. Marcum expressed concern over moving too quickly. Superintendent Neihof explained that a formal timeline was still being developed, but that other states have made a slow transition to such a system over a period of three or more years.

Rich Gimmel asked for clarification regarding the use of the bottom 5% of schools to identify for targeted improvement. Superintendent Butcher and Associate Commissioner Kelly Foster explained this piece of the criteria is defined and required by the ESSA. Sam Hinkle asked about the possibility of identifying more than the required 5%. Associate Commissioner Kelly Foster discussed efforts that currently exist to support schools who are below average in terms of performance, but not identified as belonging to the bottom 5%. Concerns were noted as related to the capacity of KDE to assist more schools than what is currently required.

Next, Roger Marcum inquired about the status of the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS), should Senate Bill 1 of the current legislative session pass. His concern focused on the vertical alignment of the new assessments to these standards and how an implementation timeline may be affected, should a new standards revision process become mandated through Senate Bill 1. Commissioner Pruitt agreed, but expressed that KDE would proceed accordingly, upon the passage of the bill, to meet the requirements of the standards adoption process and ensure that this work aligns with the development of the accountability system.

Gary Houchens asked Superintendent Flynn for clarification on the recommendation from the Consequential Review Committee regarding the inclusion of AP/IB exams into the transition readiness indicators. He inquired about the discussions surrounding dual credit coursework and issues related to quality control. Superintendent Flynn referenced the research reviewed by his committee that indicated evidence of strong postsecondary transition among students who successfully complete dual credit coursework. Superintendent Poe referenced discussions among the Accountability Steering Committee and the Council for Postsecondary Education related to this topic.

Milton Seymore inquired about the option of JROTC programs and their inclusion within the military readiness component of postsecondary transition measures. Rhonda Sims expressed while many schools do offer JROTC programs, the Army is not currently growing or scaling JROTC programs due to lack of capacity.

Mary Gwen Wheeler then inquired about the dual credit and AP courses that may be eligible for acceptance as the "academic readiness" component. Specifically, she asked if these should align with the current ACT benchmarks in English, reading, and mathematics. Commissioner Pruitt stated that those conversations were ongoing with the Council for Postsecondary Education and

that the current proposal included "KBE-approved" language, meaning that the courses approved for accountability could actually be determined by the state board.

Roger Marcum inquired about the ACT WorkKeys assessment and why it was not included in the current proposals. Superintendent Holbrook explained that there appeared to be a lack of industry recognition of the ACT WorkKeys assessment and the National Career Readiness Certificate.

**IV. Dinner (Board will break for dinner at about 5:45 p.m., Dinner provided for KBE members, invited guests and commissioner's planning committee members only)**

The board recessed for dinner at 6:05 p.m.

**V. Guided Discussion on Accountability System Proposals (60-minute discussion) - Associate Commissioner Rhonda Sims and Brian Gong, Center for Assessment**

The board reconvened at 6:23 p.m.

After dinner, discussions began on the individual components of the system and the finer details of the proposals. Associate Commissioner Rhonda Sims started with the individual indicators that had been discussed for the area of "opportunity and access". During the break, board members were able to see the polling results of the last Accountability Steering Committee on these items. Sims indicated that this is the first time in history, as a result of the ESSA law, that provides states with the opportunity to build such indicators into their accountability systems. She also expressed that the concepts of "whole child" and a well-rounded education were very prominent in last spring's town hall meetings across the Commonwealth.

Discussions on the "opportunity and access" indicators led to much conversation among board members. Much of the discussion focused on whether these indicators should be formally rated or simply publicly reported within a school's accountability system.

Roger Marcum expressed concern over funding implications for many of the indicators, particularly for smaller school districts.

Sam Hinkle expressed support of the concept of holding schools and districts accountable for these types of indicators, as they tell the truth about the entire performance of the school as a whole.

Rich Gimmel asked how Secretary Heiner's proposal on inter-district transfer policies relates to the issues of student opportunity and access. Commissioner Pruitt indicated that there are many districts across the state who are already utilizing inter-local agreements to provide greater access to programming for students.

Mary Gwen Wheeler then inquired about whether other states were currently measuring "opportunity and access" and if so, how well was this going. Brian Gong explained that the federal law had never encouraged it until recently through ESSA. He also indicated that there were a few other states who were looking at single indicators in this area; however, Gong stated Kentucky was the first state to explore an entire set of indicators.

Gary Houchens posed the question of how the state would measure student "access". Commissioner Pruitt indicated that current initiatives underway surrounding course codes and the student information database system could potentially assist with this concern.

Roger Marcum expressed the need for KDE to continue exploring this area of the accountability proposals, as these factors contribute greatly to reducing the achievement gap. Mary Gwen Wheeler agreed.

Wheeler also inquired about the timeline and next steps. Commissioner Pruitt reminded board members that the state's plan was due to the United States Education Department in September and that state administrative regulations would require a minimum of 6 months to complete (anticipating a first reading of regulations perhaps in April of 2017).

Nawanna Privett stated that these proposals reflect what the state has wanted all along and that they reflect what is most important to the board as a whole. She then asked Brian Gong to reflect on the current strengths and areas for improvement for the proposals. Brian Gong responded by stating that the following were strengths of the current proposals:

- *They reflect the values of Kentuckians.*
- *The proposals move beyond the priorities of most other states.*
- *There is sensitivity to the concept of growth for schools, districts, and communities.*
- *There is a stronger emphasis on gap reduction and criterion-referenced components.*
- *There is a framework for the future with competency-based education and other innovations.*

Gong went on to say that Kentucky's proposals are ones that "everybody says they want to accomplish, but Kentucky will be among the first to actually do it".

Ben Cundiff expressed a desire for KDE to explore the identification of more schools for targeted assistance and support (beyond the minimum requirement of the bottom 5%).

Alesa Johnson asked if there was any data to indicate how well schools were currently performing in relation to the "access and opportunity" indicators. She said while some of the indicators are currently captured through data reporting, others are not. Superintendent Neihof expressed the opinion that the beauty of these new accountability indicators is that they place responsibility on local school boards to ensure the access and opportunities are available for all students. He went on to say that this concept reinforces the notion that the decisions made by a local school board both directly and indirectly impact school and district accountability.

Next, Brian Gong explained the state's approach to measuring student growth. He stated the proposal in this area focuses on the creation of individual student trajectories annually and also incentivizes the growth of all students, through the recognition of students who are "catching up", "keeping up", or "moving up" in relation to proficiency and performance.

Alesa Johnson asked for clarification on the timelines for the annual growth trajectories. Rhonda Sims indicated that the scores would be used from spring to spring of each year and would involve multiple years of data.

Chairman Twyman asked board members if they were in agreement about the approach of the proposals being more criterion-referenced in nature. Board members unanimously agreed.

Gary Houchens expressed his gratefulness for the work that had occurred thus far and indicated that it was a great first draft. He expressed desire for continued focus on the validity of measures and to ensure attention to the details.

Chairman Twyman also thanked all of those who participated in the work session.

## **VI. Next Steps**

As previously mentioned, KDE staff will continue meeting with various work groups and shareholders to finalize the proposals. It is anticipated that a first reading of draft regulations could be presented at the April board meeting.

## **VII. Recess**

The board recessed until 9:00 a.m. the following morning.