REIMAGINING ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN KENTUCKY

in Service to the
Kentucky United We Learn Council's
Moonshot

**Technical Details
Framework 4.0**

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Technical Details

Introduction

The Kentucky United We Learn Council and educational stakeholders across the Commonwealth have clearly called for reimagining assessment and accountability to create systems that are more meaningful and useful for all learners, educators and communities.

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) listened to stakeholders across Kentucky and responded to their calls for action with a series of prototype descriptions of new approaches to assessment and accountability to support school improvement efforts at all levels of the educational system. The evolution of the prototypes was informed by ongoing feedback and guidance from broad-reaching stakeholders and partners via meetings, surveys and focus groups.

Throughout January and February 2025, a series of town hall meetings were held to gather feedback on Framework 2.0. These meetings provided a platform for educators, parents and community members to share their insights and suggestions on future assessment and accountability systems. Discussions focused on enhancing local flexibility, fostering collaboration among districts and building trust in the education system. The feedback collected during these sessions informed the development of Framework 3.0, which was presented to the School Curriculum Assessment and Accountability Council (SCAAC), the Kentucky United We Learn Council, the Local Superintendent Advisory Council (LSAC) and the Kentucky Board of Education. In turn they provided guidance on Framework 4.0.

Additionally, some legislators have encouraged KDE to explore the exceptions provided by the U.S. Department of Education (USED) for English learners, particularly in the areas of assessment and accountability. They believe these exceptions could offer more equitable opportunities for English learners to demonstrate their academic progress.

Framework 4.0 serves as a foundational starting point in discussions with the General Assembly for consideration of legislative changes. The following key themes are central to include in future systems:

Theme 1: Trust and Empower
KDE and local districts will work together to rebuild trust in local education systems and school improvement work. Together, leaders at all levels can look to and build upon the innovations happening in many Kentucky districts to develop and implement rich and robust local systems of assessment and accountability that value local priorities.

Theme 2: Connect to Grow
KDE has a critical role in connecting districts and supporting mutual learning processes. Districts will be empowered to learn from one another in meaningful ways and KDE will support local and shared efforts to build and implement local accountability systems that reflect and reinforce meaningful and rigorous educational experiences for all students.

Theme 3: Flexibility, Comparability and Confidence

Reimagined assessment and accountability systems will allow for maximum local flexibility while meeting the minimum federal reporting requirements. The local autonomy and flexibility to design meaningful systems for each community will limit the comparability. More directly comparable information will be available through statewide essential indicators and state assessments, and federal accountability reporting. Kentucky should reduce the federal accountability footprint and consider structures that support continuous local improvement, such as tri-annual reviews by external evaluators, to instill confidence in local systems and identify exemplary educational practices and processes that could be used across the state.

These themes align with principles earlier developed by the Kentucky United We Learn Council to guide design decisions about the assessment and accountability system. The design principles signal the importance of prioritizing student experiences and outcomes, valuing local contexts and expertise, and building and improving systems within the state policy context. In sum, these themes necessitate inclusively reimagined systems of assessment and accountability in Kentucky framed around continuous improvement.

The New Framework for Accountability

Accountability Systems with State Support

Districts will have choice, support and time in how they design their systems. All communities in the state would agree to a set of shared assurances:

Shared Assurances
- Engage in an inclusive community engagement process to capture local priorities that inform system design and continuous improvement strategies.
- Build a public reporting data display that provides a rich picture of the local system and shows strength and growth areas in lieu of a color rating system.
- Report all student-level outcome data disaggregated by student group whenever sample sizes allow.

KDE commits to building local capacity to design more meaningful systems by providing the following support:

Networked Peer Support
The focus of this work will be on creating productive, inclusive cultures of collaboration where districts lift each other and push each other forward. The state will support systematic, principled peer review processes in collaboration with regional co-ops through which neighboring districts and like districts can share insights, drive meaningful change through competency-based assessments, learn from one another and offer constructive feedback on the design of their peers' local accountability systems.

External Feedback to Inform Improvement of Local Systems
Every three years, on a rotating basis, the state will arrange a third-party review of local systems to gather examples highlighting particularly strong aspects of local systems to be

shared as resources for other districts. This review process will support a formative feedback cycle on system design and implementation for continuous improvement.

System Components

The indicators used for accountability in the Commonwealth will fall into two categories: 1) local accountability indicators with options for local choice and 2) state accountability *indicators* that meet federal requirements and are required statewide.

Local Accountability Indicators

Indicator	Description
Vibrant Learning	All districts will be required to report on vibrant learning experiences within their local accountability systems. Examples of vibrant learning experiences include capstone projects, student-led conferences, service-based learning, student defenses of learning, and personalized pathways. Districts are encouraged to develop their own, locally relevant measure(s) of vibrant learning.
Writing	All districts will be required to report on writing performance within their local accountability systems. Districts are encouraged to develop and administer their own competency-based or other authentic local measures for writing, or they may use the state-provided measures once per grade band (elementary, middle, high) at grades 5, 8 and 10.
Social Studies	All districts will be required to report on social studies performance within their local accountability systems. Districts are encouraged to develop and administer their own competency-based or other authentic local measures for social studies, or they may use the state-provided measures once per grade band (elementary, middle, high) at grades 5, 8 and 10.
Reading and Math (Interim Assessments)	Districts will have the option to include interim assessment results within their local accountability systems. The state will provide interim assessments aligned to the summative assessment. All assessments will be aligned to the Kentucky Academic Standards in grades K-10, measuring grade-level equivalency and student growth. Districts may choose to administer the state-provided interim assessments or utilize and fund their own.
Science	Districts will have the option to assess science in grades 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 while assessments in grades 5, 8 and 10 are mandatory. Districts may include science performance in their local accountability systems for all grades. Districts are encouraged to develop and administer their own competency-based or other authentic local measures for science or they may use the state-provided measures for grades 3-10.
Locally determined indicators	Districts will have autonomy and state support to develop their own local accountability systems, which may include any number of additional indicators that reflect their local contexts and priorities.

State Accountability Indicators that Meet Federal Requirements

The indicators in the table below will be used to determine the schools that qualify for comprehensive and targeted support from the state, as required by federal law. The state will no longer report color ratings.

All districts are required to administer the associated state assessments for core content areas (reading, math, science, English language progress) and the statewide quality of school climate and safety survey. They are also required to provide the relevant information for the other required indicators (graduation rate, transition readiness).

Indicator	Description
Reading and Math (Summative Achievement)	All students will be assessed in reading and math in grades 3-8 and 10. The state assessments will be adaptive and used to report on student proficiency for federal accountability and grade-level equivalents for local use.
Reading and Math (Individual Student Growth)	Each year, students in grades 4 through 8 will receive a growth score in reading and math based on a comparison of spring state assessment data from the current and previous year. These individual scores will be aggregated to determine growth scores for cohorts, schools and districts.
Graduation Rate	No change in how this is evaluated or reported. Currently, the four- and five-year graduation rates are used for accountability.
Progress Toward English Language Proficiency	No change in how this is assessed or reported. English Language progress is derived from student scores from year-to-year on the English Language Proficiency Exam, ACCESS.
Quality of School Climate and Safety	A statewide student perception survey will be administered to students in grades 3-8 and 10.
Transition Readiness	No change in how this is evaluated or reported. Students demonstrate post-secondary transition readiness through a variety of college and/or career opportunities.
Science	To meet federal testing requirements, statewide science assessments will be administered in grades 5, 8, and 10. The results will not be used in the federally approved accountability system but will be publicly reported on the state report card.