Kentucky United We Learn Regional Town Halls

The Future of Assessment and Accountability in Kentucky

January 2025

Welcome

Robbie Fletcher, Commissioner of Education

"To build a prosperous Kentucky, we will launch an accountability system that is meaningful and useful to all learners."

KUWL Moonshot Statement (01/24/2024)

Three "BIG" Ideas

- Vibrant Learning

- Accelerating Innovation (in Accountability)

- Collaboration with LOCAL Communities (and with other school districts)

The Flight Path

Where have we been?

- 2021
  - Listening Tour
  - Kentucky Coalition for Advancing Education (KCAE)
  - Local Laboratories of Learning (L3)

- 2022 -2023
  - Kentucky United We Learn Council
  - Accountability Focus

- 2024
  - 4 Prototypes
  - 2 Model Frameworks with an Ongoing Study Phase for Input

Where are we going?

- 2025
  - Town Halls
  - Finalized Model Framework

- 2026
  - Recommendation to the General Assembly

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Accountability :
Two Parts of the Whole

Federal/State

- Streamlining to fill the required "buckets"

- Identifying Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) schools

- Providing timely instructional data

Local

- Allowing flexibility to assess learning

- Customizing to meet community needs

- Collaborating with multiple groups

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Regional Town Hall Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction

- What is Vibrant Learning?

- What is Local Accountability?

  - One School District's Story

- Model Framework 2.0

- Question and Answer Session
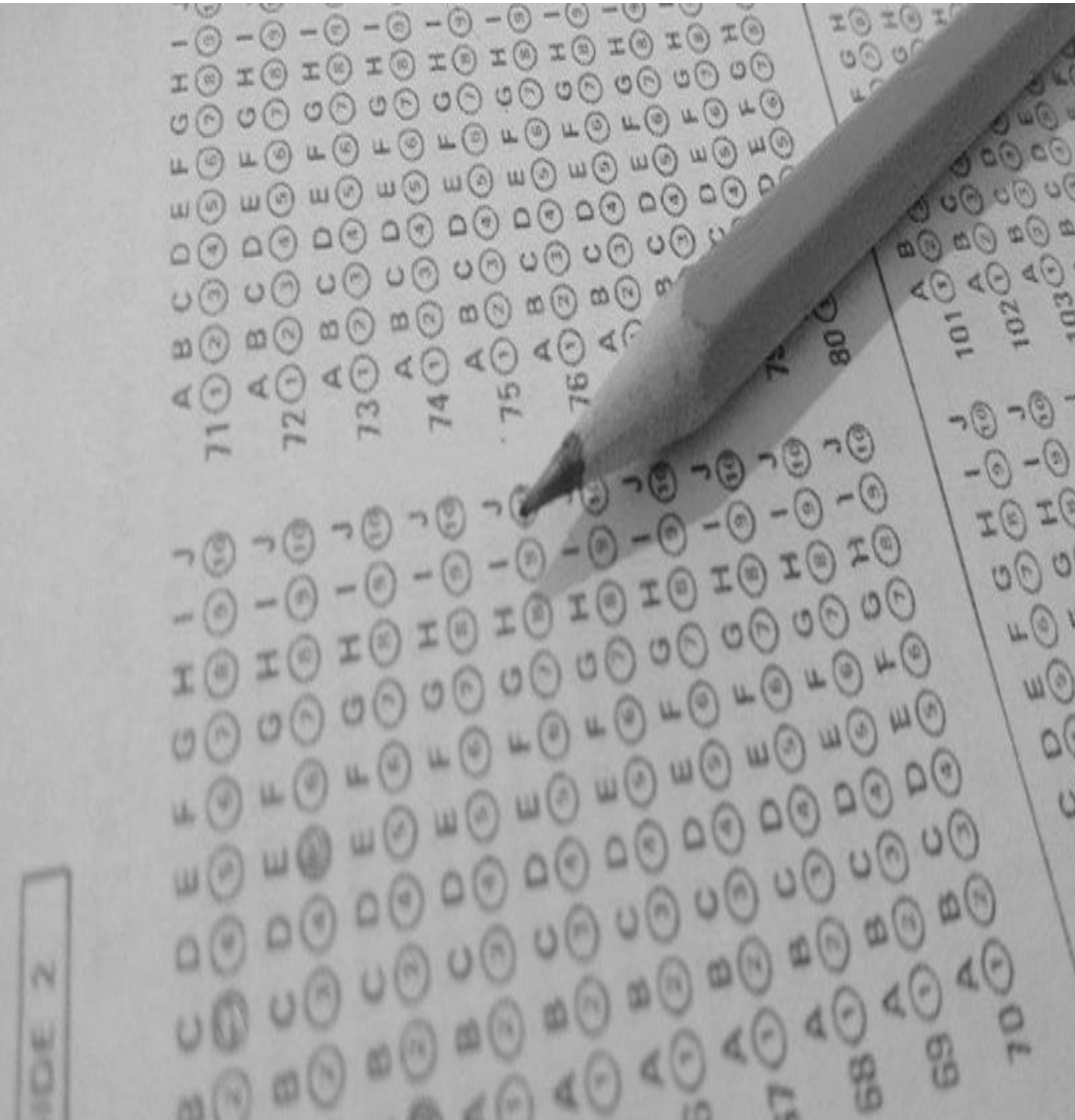
What is Vibrant Learning?

Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)
Representative

Think about a student in your life......

Pull up a photo on your phone of a child/youth you love. As you think about this child, ask yourself:

- What kind of learner are they?
- What kind of learning experiences do you want for them?

Pollinator - Traditional

In a traditional classroom students read a textbook chapter about pollinators and complete a worksheet identifying the dangers pollinators face and their importance to plants and animals.

Students draw a diagram of a pollinator and label its parts. For assessment, learners take a quiz that includes multiple-choice questions about pollinators.

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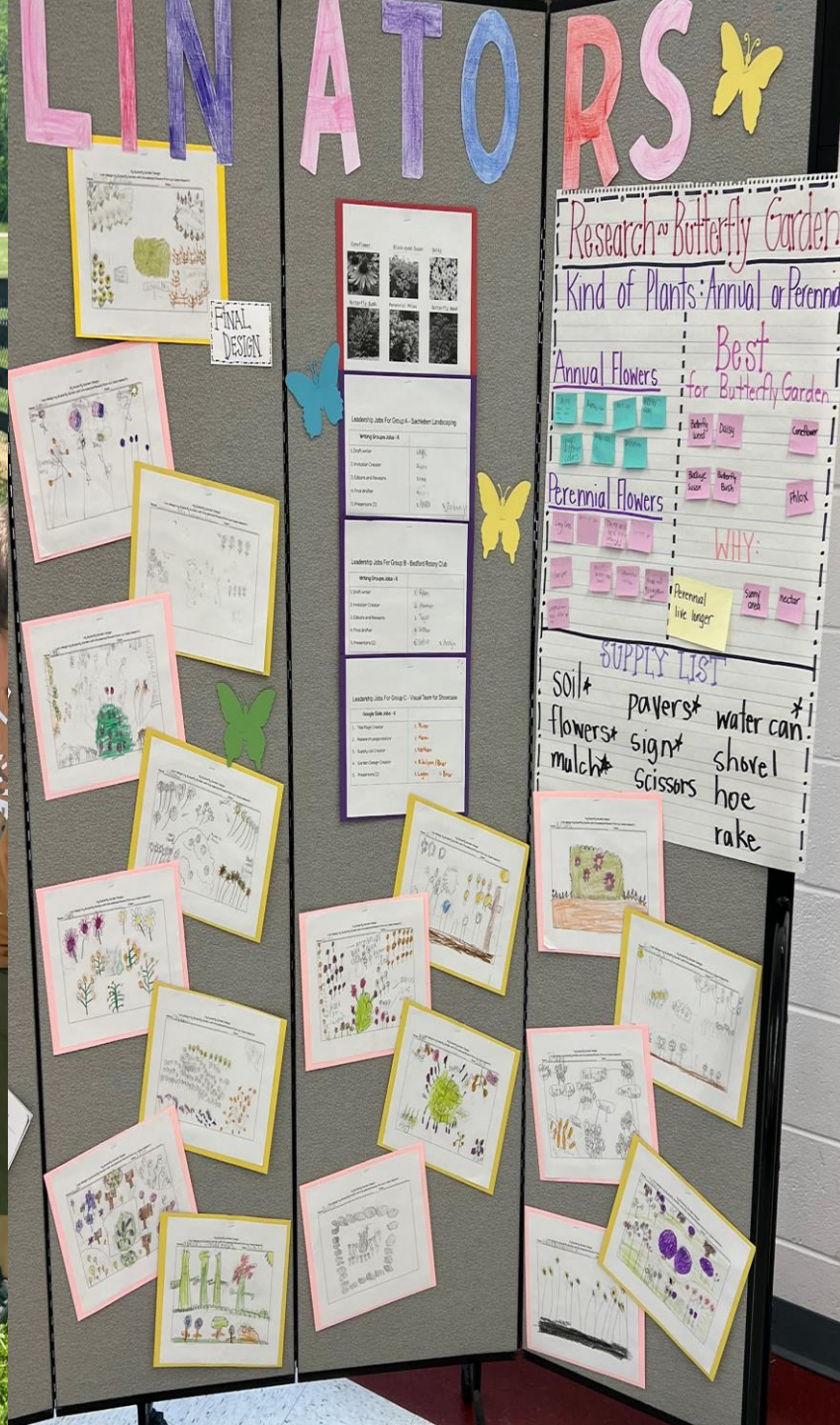
Pollinator - Vibrant

However, in this example from the commonwealth, learners are driven by the question, "How can we inspire others to protect and support pollinators?" They research pollinators and apply their knowledge to design a pollinator garden, collaborating with local businesses for materials and expertise. They share their learning with the community through visual aids, such as scientific drawings or slides, and by creating items like seed packets or bracelets to inspire action

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Human Body Systems Traditional

Traditionally, students learn about body systems by reading assigned textbook chapters on the major body systems (e.g., circulatory, digestive, respiratory) and taking notes on the key organs, structures, and functions. They will complete a worksheet with labeled diagrams, key term definitions, and questions about how each system works and interacts with others. After reviewing the material, students summarize their understanding through a short-written report or presentation.
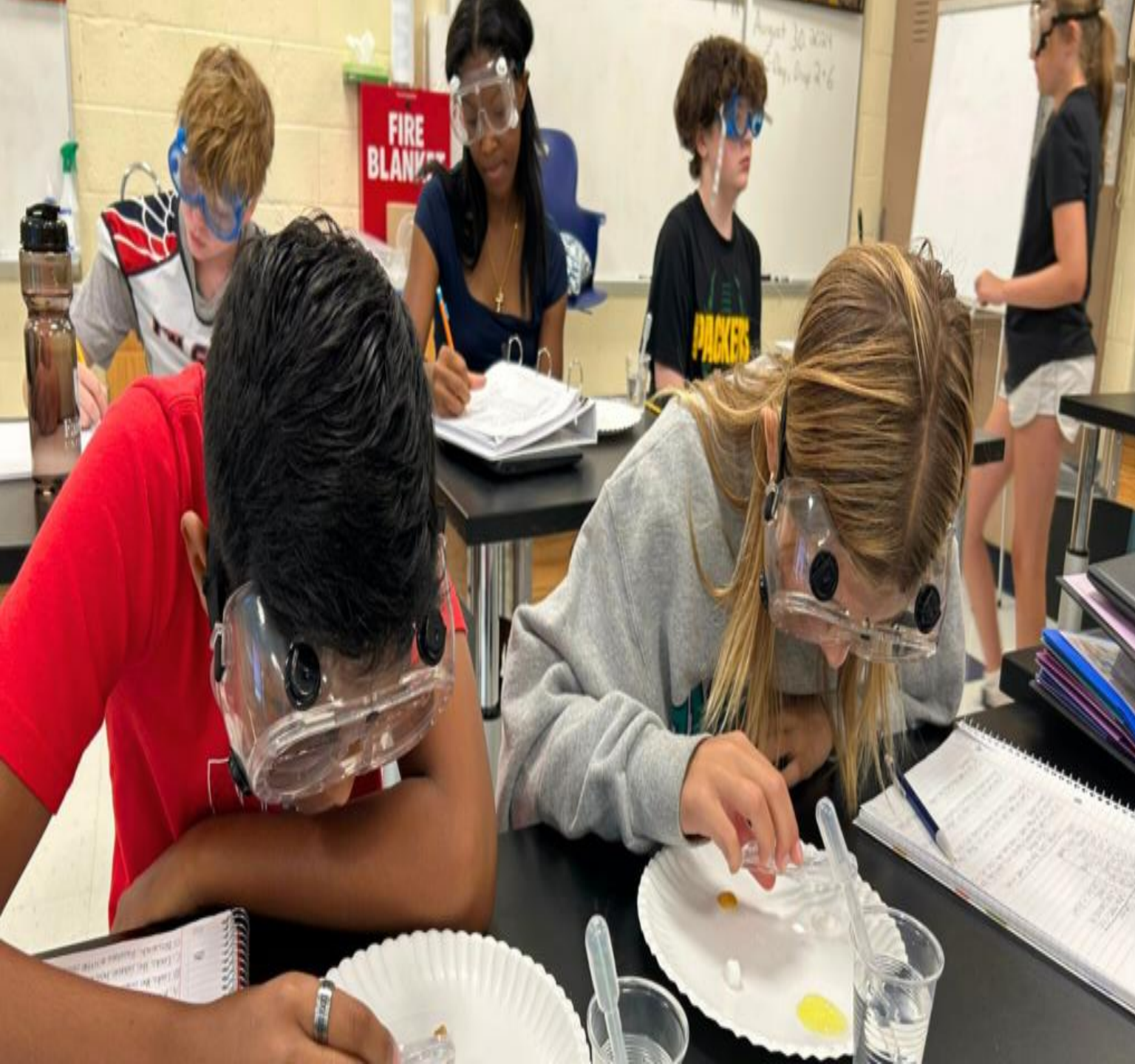
Human Body Systems Vibrant

In this example from the Commonwealth, Learners take on the role of a medical investigator to solve a real case of a sick middle school girl to answer the question, "What is going on in M'Kenna's body that is making her feel the way she does?" Through a series of investigations learners curate evidence that will inform their final presentation of learning. In their medical teams, learners choose how they will present their findings and diagnosis to a panel of community members from the medical field.

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To Kill a Mockingbird Traditional

I bet we have all read the novel To Kill a Mockingbird and write an essay defending their position on whether or not the character Atticus is a hero using evidence from the text.

To Kill a Mockingbird Vibrant

In this example from the Commonwealth, Learners consider "What makes someone a hero?" They explore this question through the lens of the Jim Crow South using a curation of teacher and learner chosen fiction and informational texts about the time period. Collaboratively, students create a video for the schools' Activism Week sharing their shared definition of a hero supported by fictional and real examples from the Jim Crow South. Their video also provides actions their fellow students can take to stand up to injustice in their own world today based on what they learned from the past.

Vibrant Learning Experiences - *As defined by the Kentucky United We Learn Council*

"Learning that matters to students"

In partnership with families and communities, students are agents of their own learning, engaged in **relevant, authentic and joyful learning** opportunities. Vibrant learning **honors students' cultural wealth, gifts and interests**. Vibrant learning culminates in the application of knowledge and skills demonstrated through **personalized products.**

Student Reflection on Vibrant Learning

"I like to build things. I like to experiment with things and see how it works in real life. When I first heard about our [dream house project], I was like "yes!" I've always loved math, but I didn't understand how [building a house] would become math. I'm an art person. I like to make it creative, not just write something down on a piece of paper and be done with it. This [project] helped me because I could learn math by converting everything and still get to do it my own way."

- *Spencer County Middle School Student*

Kentucky Portrait of a Learner

- The knowledge, skills, and competencies students should know and exhibit upon graduation
- Combines academic knowledge with personal traits and skills
- Honors a wider set of student passions and experiences
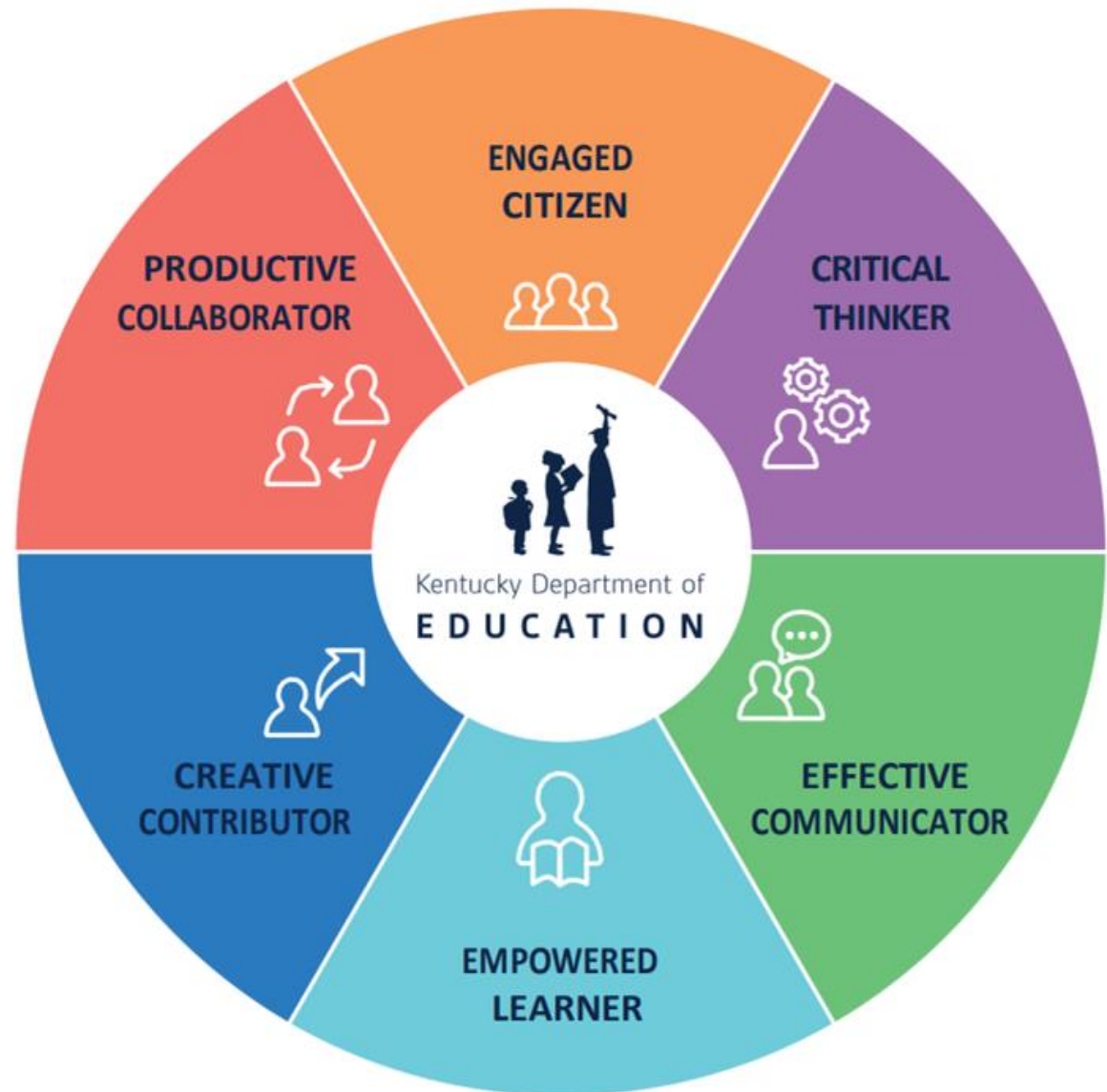
Speaker Notes on Previous Slide

Currently, over 140 out of the 171 Kentucky districts are developing or have developed a Portrait of a Learner.

Many districts are creating Performance Assessment systems to measure the agreed-upon competencies through authentic experiences and exhibitions of learning.

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"To build a prosperous Kentucky, we will launch an accountability system that is meaningful and useful to all learners."

KUWL Moonshot Statement (01/24/2024)

"Local accountability is a system designed by the people it serves, for the people it serves.

When implemented effectively, it is not only impactful but transformative, reshaping the learning process.

Furthermore, it restores and strengthens the bonds and partnerships between school districts and their communities, prioritizing student-centered, authentic, joyful and personalized learning."

- Brian Creasman, Superintendent
Fleming County Schools

Local Accountability in Action:

Greg Sutton and Brandy New
Hardin County Schools

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District Introduction/Background

- 14,000 students, over 2,000 staff
- Strong ties to advance manufacturing and the Army
- Opportunities abound
- Tradition of a strong public school system
- 3 Es - employed, enrolled, enlisted

Speaker Notes for
District Introduction/Background

Hardin County Schools - 14,000 students, 2100 classified and certified staff, we have lots of varied job opportunities in the area to include a strong presence of advanced manufacturing which is growing constantly and a connection to the military with Fort Knox being located in our county, and access to continued education through Western Kentucky University (WKU) and Elizabethtown Community and Technical College (ECTC) for college and technical certification programs.

What brought us to local accountability? - we offer a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy, 40+ career pathways with certifications and internships, vibrant instruction opportunities through Project Based Learning (PBL) which has been a focus in 6-12 for the last 4.5 years, and strong community support shown by our community showing up to present and collaborate in schools and at special events like career fairs. We were seeing these amazing opportunities for student and staff through all of this, but we were seeing that simply a test score or a grade was not a true representation of all of our students. A single academic test score also does not show the full effect of what teachers, principals, librarians, bus drivers, cafeteria works, and instructional assistants teach our children every daily.

What are the core needs/problems? With so much to offer and so many people working together to prepare our students for the future in our community it can be hard to see the cohesion of all our work and mission for kids. We see that a Portrait of a Learner will provide coherence and clarity for staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders while ensuring that academics remain the focus of all we do for ALL our students. We need each student to have a post secondary plan that leads to being employed in a living wage job, enrolled in college or technical programs, or enlisted in the military.

Community Engagement

- Legacy of Work Ethic Standards
- UK Next Gen
- Community mapping
- Community events and feedback process

Speaker Notes for Community Engagement

Harrison County Schools (HCS) has a strong tradition of being involved in, responding to, and working with our local business and industry in our community. In 2012 HCS along with the Chamber of Commerce created the Great 8 Work Ethic Standards which was a set of standards that high school students could prove their mastery of to be eligible for Work Ethic Certification (WEC) at graduation and therefore guaranteed job interviews and a diploma seal, and possible scholarships. In 2023 HCS decided it was time to go back to that same community group and even expand it to include a more diverse and representative group in our community to reevaluate and revise what our community dispositions, in not only graduates of high school, but in the children in our community daily.

The instructional team in HCS worked with UK NextGen closely to plan community events where we gathered over a 100 community members together to discuss what skills and more importantly dispositions, we feel like our students need to be successful in the world and also to make our community stronger everyday. We did community mapping to make sure the representatives we worked with matched our community and represented not only business and industry but also groups that shape our community through aspects like religion and also had representation from groups that may often be overlooked because they are small like our special education parents and students. Being in that room was truly a special time for us. I had never before been in a public space that was so completely diverse and full of people focused on what is truly best for our community, and which recognized that our schools are the heart and future of our community.

We went through a process of working in that large group, to working as a small district team with teachers, and going back for feedback, till we had our Portrait of a Learner.

Portrait of a Learner

- Kickoff with #HCSDifferenceMaker
- Pilot teachers and individual school POCs
- Small teacher groups to lead this work

Speaker Notes for
Portrait of a Learner

At our staff kickoff last its we introduced everyone to Portrait of a Learner (PoL) by giving our district wide Difference Maker awards which are based on the competencies. That is now done monthly at our board meetings and can be given to staff, students, or community members.

Also, this year each of our 23 schools has points of contact who are slowly introducing all staff to each competency to ensure they understand each and its indicators.
Pilot teacher group is working on the ground to integrate into instruction the competencies. We are visiting with them monthly to ensure we are creating any materials they need to support the daily integration of portrait language and skills, but also to take their ideas on how this ties directly into social emotional programs in their school, PBIS, student goal setting which is done 1:1 at 3-10th grade levels around academic goals, problem and project based learning experiences, internships and career pathway experiences, and other engaging instructional routines.

A teacher group is also creating and testing all aspects of how we will collect evidence of learning around the competencies and give students an opportunity to reflect and share their growth in the competencies.
Use shift from WEC interview to defenses as the bridge to talk about student centered learning and then use next slide to highlight vibrant learning experiences like PBL and pathways.

Vibrant Learning in HCS with Stakeholders

- Elementary - rich foundations

- Middle and High - Project Based Learning, career exploration, internships through pathways

- Exhibitions of Learning

- 1:1 scheduling and 1:1 conferencing

- Defense of Learning
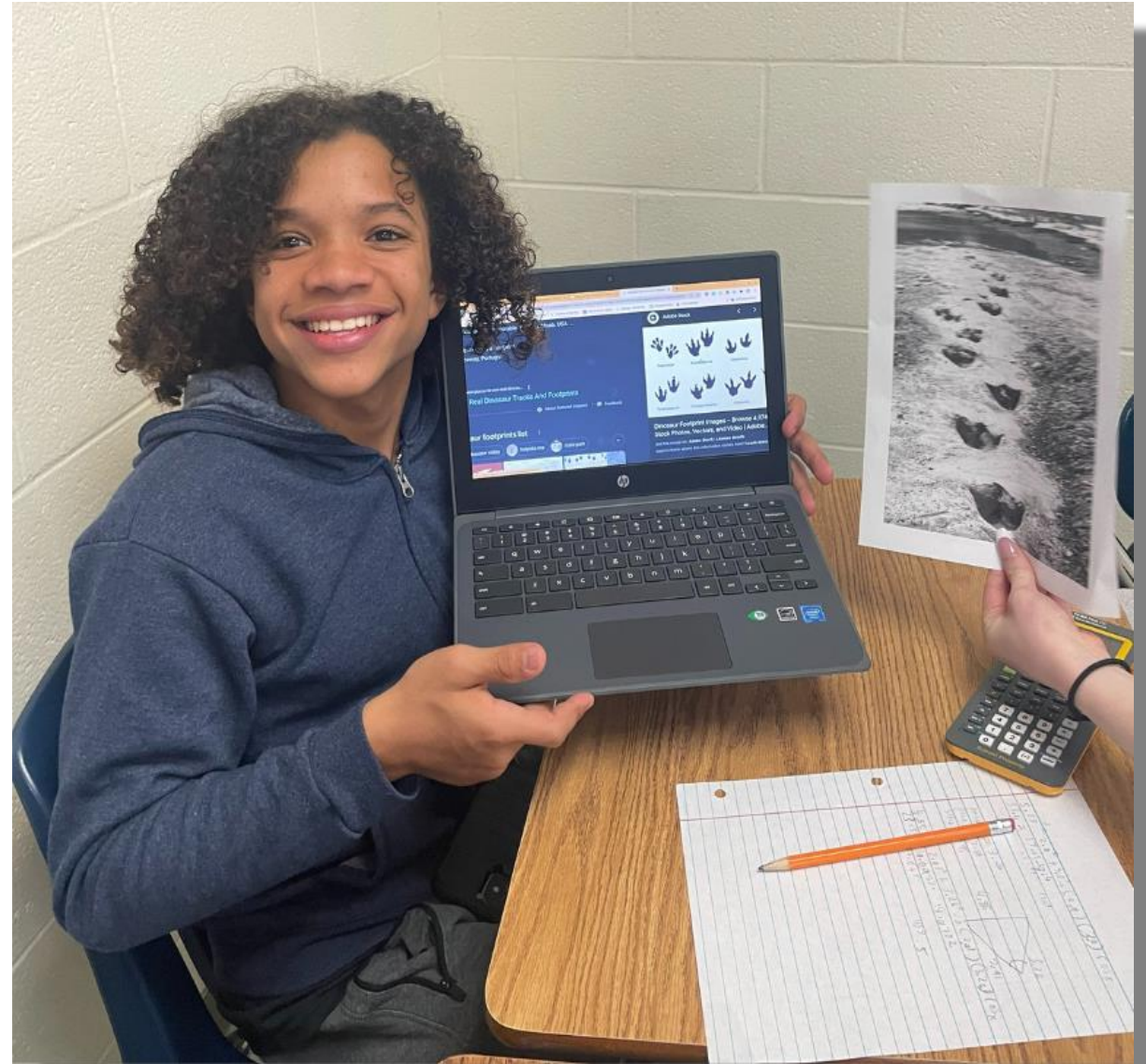
Speaker Notes for
Vibrant Learning in HCS with Stakeholders

Foundational Skills (community and parents)

Elementary - Math /Discourse - Try/Discuss/Connect Model

Research Based Programs (IM and Expeditionary) – Project Based Learning (PBL) (Collaboration Collection) SOCIAL STUDIES examples

Exhibition of Learning Nights with Goal Setting

Defense of Learning

One-on-one scheduling and the choice of their pathway

This leads to internships (30 Residential Maintenance Students during coop and internships)

Social Studies Examples: Collaboration with local Civic Leaders (Mayor Gregory), Examining Local Law Making (State Legislators / Bratcher - Deneen), Hardin County History Museum, Frazier Museum)

Vibrant Learning Examples

Speaker Notes for
Vibrant Learning Examples

Pictures left to right: J T Alton Middle school students at a Lego robotics competition, East Hardin students with a lemonade stand, John Hardin students at Target doing a financial literacy activity with shopping, Central Hardin student showcasing art at a student exhibition, a Early College and Career Center (EC3) alumni student and nurse teaching current students in a Certified Nursing Assistant (CAN) class at her workplace Baptist Health Hardin, EC3 aviation students testing a hot air balloon they made.

Next Steps & Transformation

- 4 year Strategic Plan

  Assessment

  Evidence

  Instruction

  Professional Learning

  Community Communication

- HCS: Helping Children Succeed

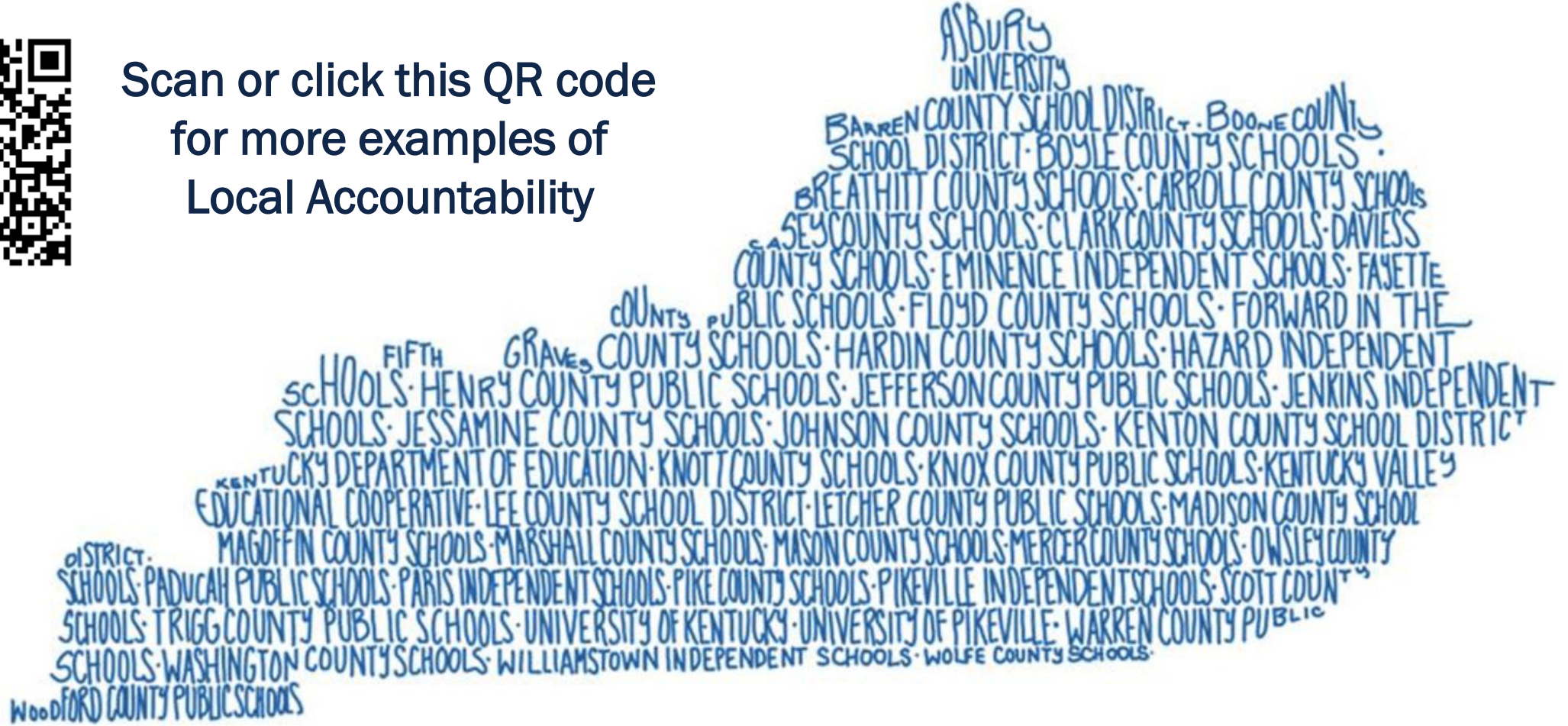**HCS**

HARDIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

HELPING CHILDREN SUCCEED

PoL Strategic Plan 24-27			
2024-2025 Explore and Celebrate	2025-2026 Educate and Enact	2026-2027 Action and Accountability	2027-2028 Refine and Elevate

Scan or click this QR code for more examples of Local Accountability

ASBURY UNIVERSITY · BARREN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT · BOONE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT · BOYLE COUNTY SCHOOLS · BREATHITT COUNTY SCHOOLS · CARROLL COUNTY SCHOOLS · CASEY COUNTY SCHOOLS · CLARK COUNTY SCHOOLS · DAVIESS COUNTY SCHOOLS · EMINENCE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS · FAYETTE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS · FLOYD COUNTY SCHOOLS · FORWARD IN THE FIFTH · GRAVES COUNTY SCHOOLS · HARDIN COUNTY SCHOOLS · HAZARD INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS · HENRY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS · JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS · JENKINS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS · JESSAMINE COUNTY SCHOOLS · JOHNSON COUNTY SCHOOLS · KENTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT · KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION · KNOTT COUNTY SCHOOLS · KNOX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS · KENTUCKY VALLEY EDUCATIONAL COOPERATIVE · LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT · LETCHER COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS · MADISON COUNTY SCHOOL MAGOFFIN COUNTY SCHOOLS · MARSHALL COUNTY SCHOOLS · MASON COUNTY SCHOOLS · MERCER COUNTY SCHOOLS · OWSLEY COUNTY DISTRICT · SCHOOLS · PADUCAH PUBLIC SCHOOLS · PARIS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS · PIKE COUNTY SCHOOLS · PIKEVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS · SCOTT COUNTY SCHOOLS · TRIGG COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS · UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY · UNIVERSITY OF PIKEVILLE · WARREN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS · WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOLS · WILLIAMSTOWN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS · WOLFE COUNTY SCHOOLS · WOODFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

We find ourselves in the midst of a movement.

In the past, systems prioritized...

Standardization
- Standardized tests for all subjects
- Instruction developed around testing offers little variance

Comparison
- Limited collaboration across districts or within communities
- Schools rated using the color system

State Control
- The state decides all measures used for accountability
- The same state accountability system for all schools

Compliance
- Accountability system designed to "meet requirements" in state and federal law
- Local improvement efforts align to requirements

Going forward, systems will support more...

Vibrant Learning
- Students have agency to demonstrate knowledge and skills in a variety of ways
- State tests meet students where they are

Collaboration
- Districts collaborate in partnership with communities
- The state supports networks of peer districts
- No more color ratings

Local Innovation
- Districts engage with communities to design custom accountability systems reflecting local values
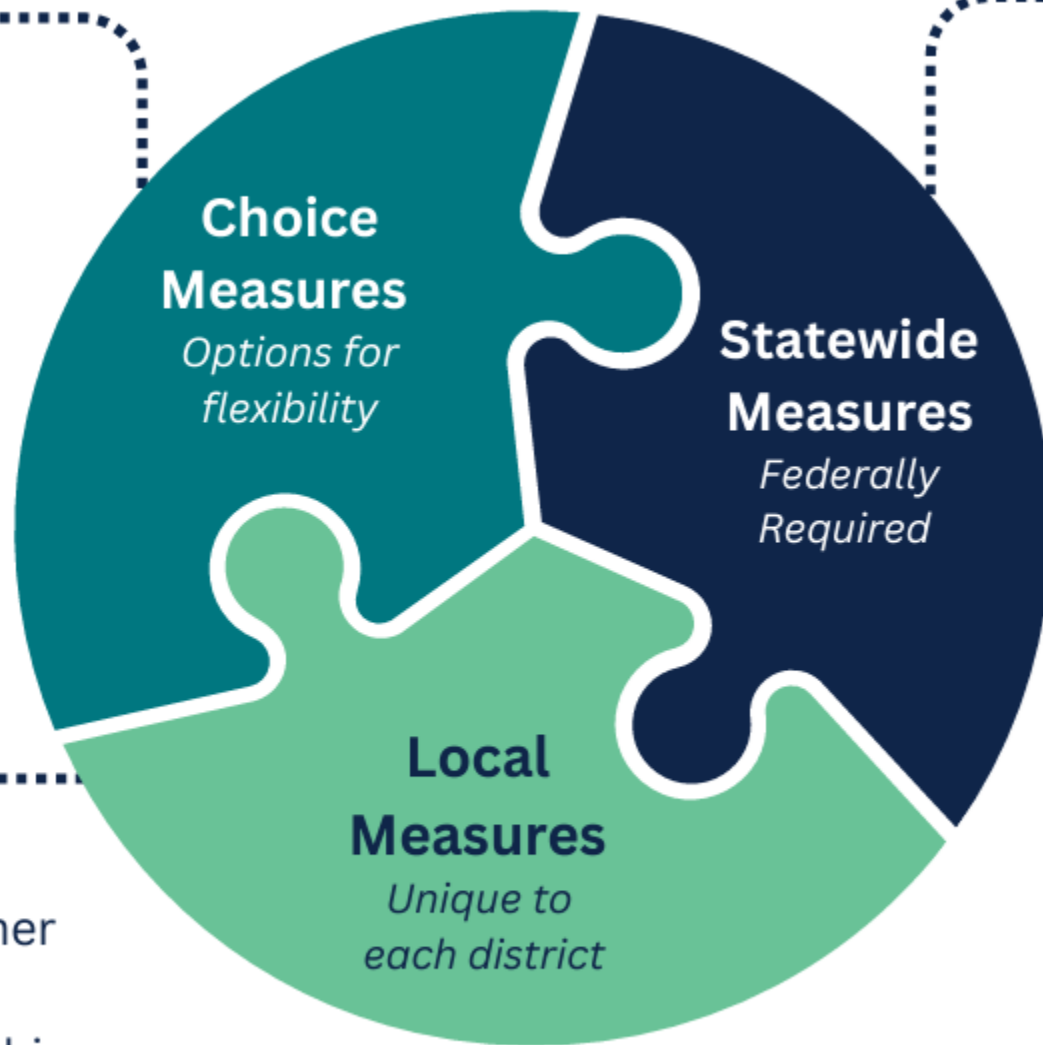- Some state requirements allow local choice

Feedback and Support
- All schools receive peer and expert external feedback to support improvement
- Local flexibility and data lead to customized support

- Social Studies & Writing
- Vibrant Learning Experiences
- Interim Assessments

Choice Measures
Options for flexibility

Statewide Measures
Federally Required

Local Measures
Unique to each district

- Portrait of a Learner
- Engagement
- Culture & Leadership

- Reading and Math
- Individual Student Growth
- Transition Readiness & Graduation Rate
- English Language Progress
- Climate and Safety Survey
- *Science Assessment -*

Students must be tested in science using a common statewide measure. However, districts may choose to include it in local accountability and add additional competency based measures.

Scan or click for more details.

Districts will design and implement local accountability systems - with state and peer support - on a timeline that sets everyone up for success.

1

Pilot Phase

Continue with a representative pilot group of districts to design and implement local accountability systems. This phase focuses on testing key components, gathering feedback, identifying challenges, and refining processes.

2

Expansion Phase

Expand local accountability systems to more districts, applying lessons from the pilot. State invests in high-quality professional learning systems and strong communities of practice for local system design and stakeholder engagement.

3

Sustainability Phase

Local accountability systems are scaled across the state with active networks for shared learning, system review, and continuous improvement.

Reminder:
Think about a student in your life......

Pull up a photo on your phone of a child/youth you love. As you think about this child, ask yourself:

- What kind of learner are they?
- What kind of learning experiences do you want for them?

How can I stay engaged?

Scan or Click the QR code to find out how you can stay engaged.

Turn and Talk to your Table Partner.....

What **WOWS** or **WONDERS**
do you have?

Thank You!

Scan or click this QR code to submit any additional questions or comments.

You can also hand your question card to any KDE representative.