



# **THE FUTURE OF ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN KENTUCKY**

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

**Technical Details  
Framework 2.0**

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



# **The Future of Assessment and Accountability in Kentucky**

## *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.

In October 2024, the Kentucky United We Learn Council convened to review extensive feedback from focus groups with 36 districts, a statewide capacity survey of 171 districts, and a statewide public study with 647 responses and to consider this feedback relative to the most recent prototype. The following key themes arose:

#### ***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 need to 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 should be empowered to learn from one another in meaningful ways and, in their efforts, 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 should 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. This limit can be balanced with and informed by more directly comparable information available through the statewide system on essential indicators, required 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.

In sum, these themes necessitate reimagined systems of assessment and accountability in Kentucky framed around continuous improvement.

## **The New Framework for Accountability**

### **Local 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* that include:

- 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 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.

### **Statewide System Components**

In addition to the indicators of school quality that are determined by districts through collaborative, local engagement processes, the state requires a set of common indicators that fall into two categories: 1) indicators with options for local choice and 2) indicators that are the same for all schools.

***Indicators with Options for Local Choice***

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description</b>
Vibrant Learning	All districts will be required to report on vibrant learning experiences within their local accountability systems. Districts may use their own measure of vibrant learning. Examples of vibrant learning experiences include Capstone Projects, Student-led Conferences, Service-based learning, Student Defenses, and Personalized Pathways.
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 local measures for writing, or they may use the state-provided measures for grades 3-10.
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 local measures for social studies, or they may use the state-provided measures for grades 3-10.
Interim Tests	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 and the Kentucky Academic Standards.

***Indicators that Are the Same for All Schools***

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.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Description</b>
Reading and Math Performance	The through-year adaptive assessment system will include state-provided interim assessments that provide timely and actionable information on student learning in the fall and winter. With the exception of grade 9, which will be used for instructional purposes, the spring summative administration will be used for federal reporting purposes.
Individual Student Growth	Each year, students will receive a growth score in reading and math based on a comparison of spring 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 tested 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 tested 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	No change in how this is tested or reported. A statewide student perception survey is administered at grades 3-8 and 10-11.
Transition Readiness	No change in how this is tested or reported. Students demonstrate transition readiness through a variety of college and/or career opportunities.

<i>Science</i>	<i>Statewide science tests will be administered in grades 5, 8, and 10 to meet federal testing and reporting requirements. Additionally, the Kentucky Department of Education will offer optional science tests for grades 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9, allowing districts to include them or competency-based local measures in their local accountability if desired. Science is not part of the federal accountability system.</i>
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