



REIMAGINING ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In service to the
Kentucky United We Learn Council's
Moonshot

September 2024

Version 4.0

Overview



Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION



The document ["Reimagining Assessment and Accountability: Prototype Version 4.0"](#) outlines Kentucky's efforts to redesign its assessment and accountability systems in alignment with the Kentucky United We Learn Council's "moonshot" goal: **"To build a prosperous Kentucky, we will launch an accountability system that is meaningful and useful to all our learners."**

The council has been working over 18 months to create systems that prioritize equity, personalization, student voices and vibrant learning experiences (VLE). In Version 4.0, there continues to be choice points for the long-term goals of assessment and accountability. Different from previous versions, there are no prototypes. The document introduces four key sections: state accountability, federal accountability, assessment and reporting. Importantly, these changes could be implemented using a phased approach, where each phase is completed, evaluated and refined before moving on to the next stage.

1. State Accountability:

The Kentucky United We Learn Council envisions a reimagined state accountability system based on an **accreditation-style model**. This system would emphasize transparency, continuous improvement and a holistic view of school quality. Rather than focusing on a color-coded rating system, the new model would assess schools based on multiple domains such as academic outcomes, vibrant learning experiences (VLE), teaching quality, leadership, school culture and community connections. Schools may be evaluated using a combination of state-mandated evidence (e.g., reading and math growth metrics) and locally-determined criteria tailored to each community's unique needs.

In addition to the state model, the **Local Accountability Model** has emerged in response to stakeholder input, focusing on community-driven initiatives and localized decision-making. This approach advocates for the involvement of local stakeholders—such as parents, community members and school leaders—in the accountability process. A local accountability system, as defined by the council, encompasses policies, practices and resources used by district leadership to engage in school improvement beyond federal compliance. It includes both common components like VLE and disaggregated student data, as well as unique, community-specific elements. The goal is to create a transparent system that reflects local priorities, providing a more comprehensive understanding of school effectiveness and offering meaningful data to support continuous improvement.

By using a phased approach to balance state and local accountability models, Kentucky aims to gradually implement a system that is both standardized and responsive to community-specific needs. This allows for adjustments and improvements as each phase is completed, ensuring that the state's education system effectively meets the diverse needs of its students and stakeholders.

2. Federal Accountability System:

The council aims to minimize the footprint of federal accountability, reducing it to the minimal requirements under the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**. The system will focus on reporting disaggregated data for student groups and identifying schools needing support. Kentucky intends to simplify federal compliance by emphasizing individual student growth.

3. Reimagined Assessment System:

The Kentucky United We Learn Council envisions an assessment system integrated into the learning process, providing real-time feedback and focusing on authentic demonstrations of learning. The new system could combine through-year assessments with performance-based models. While federally required subjects like math and reading would rely on adaptive testing, non-required subjects like social studies and writing will incorporate locally driven, performance-based assessments.

Using a phased approach, the implementation may begin with piloting performance assessments and gradually replacing interim assessments with state-developed adaptive models. This approach allows the state to reduce testing time and costs while ensuring the system is refined and improved through feedback at each phase.

4. Reporting and Transparency:

The reimagined reporting system aims to align with the new state accountability framework. Kentucky plans to pilot a redesigned, user-friendly school report card that includes both state and local data points.

Design Principles:

The document concludes with 12 design principles developed by the council's **Accelerating Innovation Committee**, which guide the redesign of the accountability system. These principles emphasize student-centered learning, local flexibility and transparency, while prioritizing marginalized students and fostering sustainability.

In summary, Version 4.0 reflects Kentucky's forward-looking approach to developing an assessment and accountability system that promotes deeper learning experiences while aligning with both state and federal requirements. By using a phased approach, Kentucky can gradually introduce these changes, evaluate their impact and make adjustments to ensure the systems effectively support equity, innovation and continuous improvement. This method balances the need for innovation with practical considerations of policy, ensuring successful and sustainable implementation.