

Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) 2026 Legislative Guidance

The 2026 General Assembly adjourned sine die April 15. Per Attorney General opinion OAG 26-03, the effective date of legislation, other than general appropriation bills and acts containing emergency or delayed effective date provisions, passed during this session is Wednesday, July 15, 2026.

The guidance provided below focuses on education-related bills that KDE staff identified as needing additional clarification and support. This non-regulatory document is designed to assist schools and districts by highlighting important legislative changes. This document does not create any new legal obligations or privileges for school districts.

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2026-2028 Budget

[House Bill 500](#), which became effective upon passage, outlines the 2026-2028 State/Executive Branch budget. Additional appropriations to KDE and school districts are provided in House Bill 900 (2026). Senate Bill 197 (2026) is cleanup legislation to House Bill 500 and House Bill 900. An overview of the education-related items in House Bill 500, House Bill 900, and Senate Bill 197 can be viewed in this [2026-2028 Biennial Budget slide deck](#).

[Career and Technical Education](#)

HB 500 appropriates General Funds in the amount of \$127,115,900 in each fiscal year for career and technical education. Of this amount, \$70,063,400 in each fiscal year shall be distributed as supplemental funding to support qualifying locally operated career and technical education centers, state operated area technology centers, and programs based on enrollment and incentive criteria, pursuant to KRS 157.069.

The General Assembly recognizes that supplemental funding for locally operated career and technical education centers and state-operated area technology centers is recurring, and it is the intent of the 2026 General Assembly to evaluate those funding needs before Jan. 1, 2028.

State-operated area technology centers (ATCs) will now be included in CTE supplemental funding. Per KRS 157.069, 60% of funding is based on weighted full-time equivalent enrollment and 40% of funding is based on incentives. Students may earn up to 4 incentives at a local district and up to 4 incentives at an ATC. Note that HB 900 provides an additional \$14 million in each fiscal year to be distributed as supplemental funding.

[Legislative Policy Requirement](#)

Local school districts and each school must continue to prominently display the district's percentage of students scoring Proficient and Distinguished on the most recent Kentucky Summative Assessments in reading and mathematics on their internet landing pages and at the top of each page of their websites.

KDE is required to ensure compliance. This is done through superintendent assurances in the Grant Management Application and Planning (GMAP) System.

[Read to Achieve \(RTA\) grant](#): HB 500 reduced the RTA grant allocation by approximately \$3.5 million dollars per fiscal year. Existing grantees are not impacted by this change and will maintain their existing award through the end of the grant cycle. Future grant cycles will be reconsidered and adjusted to meet the reduced allocation.

[Advanced Placement \(AP\)/International Baccalaureate \(IB\) exam fees](#): HB 500 eliminated \$2.6 million in annual funding to subsidize the cost of AP/IB exam fees for students who do not meet the eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price meals. Due to this loss of funding, students

who *do not meet* the eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price meals will no longer receive reduced exam fees. For 2026-2027, the cost per exam is approximately \$99. For students who *do meet* the eligibility requirements for free or reduced-price meals, HB 500 preserved funds to pay for AP/IB exam fees at no cost to students. Computer science AP exam fees are funded through an alternative source and will continue to be \$0 for *all* students.

[House Bill 900](#)

House Bill 900 provides additional appropriations to KDE and school districts. An overview of the education-related appropriations in HB 900 can be viewed in this [2026-2028 Biennial Budget slide deck](#).

HB 900 appropriates General Funds in the amount of \$14,000,000 in each fiscal year of the 2026-2028 fiscal biennium to be distributed as supplemental funding as outlined in KRS 157.069. Providing the additional \$14 million each fiscal year, in addition to the \$70,063,400 from HB 500, will provide more equitable funding for CTE across the state of Kentucky regardless of where students receive their CTE.

[Senate Bill 197](#)

SB 197 is cleanup legislation to HB 500 and HB 900. An overview of the education-related provisions can be viewed in this [2026-2028 Biennial Budget slide deck](#).

Alternative High School Diplomas

[House Bill 562](#)

House Bill 562 amends KRS 156.160 to require three high school diploma types: a regular diploma, an alternate diploma, and a modified diploma. Beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, students participating in the alternate assessment program will be able to earn an alternate diploma that complies with the criteria for a state-defined alternate high school diploma to meet requirements for inclusion in the adjusted cohort graduation rate under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-95.

- The alternate high school diploma must be obtained during the period in which students are eligible for a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and must not preclude students' access to FAPE for the duration of their eligibility period. In Kentucky, students with disabilities have the right to a FAPE until their 21st birthday or until they receive a regular high school diploma, whichever occurs first.
- Students who earn a state-defined alternate diploma will contribute positively to the school's graduation rate.

Students in the alternate assessment program who are unable to complete the requirements of the alternate diploma can earn a modified diploma (similar to the alternative diploma students

are earning now). The modified diploma does not comply with the criteria for a state-defined alternate high school diploma and does not meet requirements for inclusion in the adjusted cohort graduation rate under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-95.

- Students who earn a modified diploma will not contribute positively to the school's graduation rate.

The Kentucky Department of Education will release additional information in the coming months as districts prepare to implement the alternate and modified high school diplomas.

Assessment and Accountability

[House Bill 257](#)

Local Accountability

House Bill 257 allows districts to create “locally developed indicators of quality” that support the implementation of local accountability systems. Pursuant to HB 257, a locally developed indicator of quality means:

Measures or indicators created or adopted by a local school district that:

- 1) Are aligned with the academic standards established in Section 2 of the Act;
- 2) Allow all students to demonstrate their ability to apply grade-appropriate, standards-driven knowledge, content, and skills in real-world applications; and
- 3) May include additional locally identified indicators related to priorities established by the local community that serve to complement the requirements in subparagraphs 1 and 2 of this paragraph. These indicators may include student well-being, fiscal responsibility, or school safety.

Additionally, locally developed indicators of quality should include vibrant learning experiences, defined as:

An educational experience that is:

- 1) Characterized by student agency and the application of knowledge and skills aligned with the academic standards established in Section 2 of this Act;
- 2) Developed in partnership with students' families, local communities, and the local workforce; and
- 3) Demonstrated through personalized projects, outputs, experiences, or other produced results reflecting each individual student's academic and career interests.

Districts that choose to create locally developed indicators of quality must ensure that each indicator is disaggregated by individual subgroups and is made publicly available in an online display that clearly communicates school and district performance. Districts that wish to create locally developed indicators of quality may wish to review the [Kentucky Innovation Guide](#).

To facilitate this work, districts are eligible to receive a one-time payment of \$15,000. To facilitate this payment, KDE is developing a diagnostic that will be available for completion in the Cognia Continuous Improvement Platform. More information will be released through the Commissioner's Weekly Message when the diagnostic is available for completion.

State Assessments

Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, on-demand writing and editing and mechanics assessments are no longer required as part of the state assessment system (currently administered in grades 5, 8, and 11).

The bill is effective July 1, 2026. Therefore, state testing for Spring 2026 will remain unchanged and will continue to include on-demand writing and editing mechanics. The Quality of School Climate and Safety Survey will also be administered in connection with these assessments.

Accountability for the 2025-2026 school year will remain unchanged. It will reflect both Status and Change for each indicator and will include on-demand writing, editing mechanics, and the Quality of the School Climate and Safety indicator. All other indicators will remain unchanged.

Writing Program Guidelines

Despite the removal of on-demand writing from future state assessments, writing continues to be emphasized. Section 2, subsection (19) amends KRS 158.6453 to require each superintendent to adopt a policy that determines the writing program for the local district. The district-wide policy must be published on the district website and include disciplinary-specific writing across the curriculum and incorporate a variety of language resources, technological tools, and multiple opportunities for students to develop complex communication skills for a variety of purposes.

The KDE has developed [guidelines for establishing a district-wide writing program](#), as required under subsection (19), to assist school districts in [implementing an effective writing program across the content areas](#) aligned to the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)*.

Subsection (19)(a) further requires KDE to provide professional learning opportunities to support authentic and disciplinary-specific writing across the curriculum for superintendents, school-based decision making councils, principals, teachers, and teacher preparation programs.

Resources to support high-quality writing instruction across the disciplines are available on kystandards.org. Interactive professional learning to support authentic and disciplinary-specific writing across the curriculum will also be available on kylearninghub.org in Fall 2026.

State Accountability System

Beginning in school year 2026-2027, amendments to the state accountability system used to classify districts and schools include:

- The addition of new state indicators;
 - “State assessment results” is not a new indicator but will no longer include assessments in writing.
 - “Measures of individual student growth (ISG) in reading and mathematics”
 - Student performance for this indicator will be based on how much academic progress a student has made between the previous assessment and current assessment in reading and mathematics.
 - The department is working with various advisory groups, industry experts, educators, and other stakeholders to develop a model of ISG that is fair, accurate, and provides useful information about student performance.
 - “Student engagement as measured by chronic absenteeism”
 - Chronic absenteeism is defined in the bill as a student missing 10% or more of yearly school time for excused or unexcused reasons throughout the school year.
 - “Targeted quality measures” that will be reported but not included in the state accountability system until the 2030-2031 school year, weighted in accountability at no less than 5%. If these measures remain a statutory requirement in accountability, the department will amend [703 KAR 5:270](#) to align to the statute prior to the effective date.
- Percentile cut scores for the color coded-performance level for each indicator and overall performance will be based on a distribution that must be approved by the Local Superintendents Advisory Council and KDE. Once approved, the cut scores must remain in place for six years unless meaningful differentiation is no longer supported.
 - Percentile cut scores will be determined through an established standard setting process that involves educators, facilitated by national psychometric experts.
 - This standard setting event will occur in the summer of 2027 to inform the fall 2027 public reporting of assessment and accountability data from the 2026-2027 school year.
- The removal of “Status and Change” to evaluate each state indicator
 - **Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year**, schools will no longer receive Status and Change Scores or Levels such as *Very High* or *Decreased*. As a result, schools will only receive one Overall Accountability Score that will be used in the state accountability system that meets federal requirements.

- Indicator Scores will be based on current year performance only, with the exception of Individual Student Growth and English Learner Progress, which will use data from a prior year to the current year to produce a performance level.
- The removal of Quality of School Climate and Safety as a state indicator
- The Overall Accountability Weights for each state indicator will be approved by the Kentucky Board of Education.

Over the next several months, KDE will be seeking input from various advisory groups and stakeholders to inform a proposed amendment of [703 KAR 5:270](#) to align with the statutory changes.

The current accountability system structure is in place for the 2025-2026 school year; therefore, public reporting of accountability results will not be impacted by changes until 2027. Accountability for the 2025-2026 school year will reflect both Status and Change for each indicator and will include on-demand writing, editing mechanics, and the Quality of the School Climate and Safety indicator; all other indicators will remain unchanged.

As for including a growth indicator, chronic absenteeism and the removal of the Quality of School Climate and Safety Survey and elimination of the Change component, these changes will be implemented beginning in the 2026-2027 school year.

KDE's Division of Assessment and Accountability Support (DAAS) will communicate HB 257-related changes to districts through multiple, ongoing methods to ensure clarity and consistency throughout the transition. Information will be provided through established communications, including weekly DAC emails, monthly DAC webcasts, and regular updates to KDE's Office of Assessment and Accountability (OAA) webpages.

In addition to virtual communication, updates will also be provided during in-person events, including the New DAC Training in July 2026 and the February DAC Q&A sessions in February 2027.

To support successful implementation for the 2026-2027 school year, OAA will develop and deliver multiple trainings. These will include back-to-school trainings, an accountability overview training, indicator-specific trainings, and assessment-focused trainings for both the Kentucky Summative Assessment (KSA) and the Alternate Kentucky Summative Assessment (AKSA). Additional resources and guidance documents will be released as they become available, ensuring districts receive timely, clear, and comprehensive information throughout the transition.

Middle School Advanced Mathematics Report

[HB 257](#), Section 7 requires KDE to submit a study report by Nov. 1, 2026, to the Legislative Research Commission for referral to the Interim Joint Committee on Education on middle

school mathematics and advanced mathematics coursework opportunities within the Commonwealth. Per Section 8, KDE has been authorized to collect the information required within this survey to fulfill the legislatively required report.

KDE has developed a survey tool designed to gather the specific information required in HB 257. The link to the survey has been shared with District Curriculum and Instruction Leads and will remain open from May 4, 2026-June 12, 2026.

[Senate Bill 197](#)

College Admissions Exam

Senate Bill 197 included a section related to Kentucky's college entrance exam that would place limitations on the use of general funds and require a new procurement for a college entrance exam for the 2026-2027 school year.

On April 27, Gov. Andy Beshear, using his authority granted under Section 88 of the Kentucky Constitution, vetoed the reference to the limitation on the use of general funds but did not veto the reference to a new competitive procurement process.

Therefore, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) will be required to begin a new procurement for the state-provided college entrance exam to be implemented in the 2026-2027 school year.

As a result of the legislation's requirement for a new competitive procurement, the 2026-2027 school year will begin without a decision on which college entrance exam will be administered to juniors in the spring of 2027.

In July 2025, KDE completed a competitive procurement pursuant to the Kentucky Model Procurement Code as set forth in KRS Chapter 45A and as facilitated by the Finance and Administration Cabinet. The contract was awarded to the College Board to administer the SAT Junior State Administration beginning in spring 2026.

As required by the legislation, KDE is working with the Finance and Administration Cabinet to conduct a new competitive procurement process.

Curriculum and Instruction

[House Bill 253](#)

House Bill 253 prohibits school districts from using any curriculum, reading intervention, or program of instruction that utilizes the three-cueing system of teaching students to read.

The three-cueing method uses visual memory as the primary basis for teaching word recognition or reading based on meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues, which is also known as “MSV.” This method encourages students to rely on visual cues to guess rather than sound out unfamiliar words. Three-cueing has been found to hinder reading proficiency and lacks empirical evidence of its effectiveness (Brem, S., et al, 2010). See the KDE's guidance document on [Why the Three-Cueing Method Hinders Reading Proficiency](#) for more information.

Implementation Timeline - Removal of the three-cueing method of instruction

Per Section 1, subsection (3), **beginning with the 2029–2030 school year**, public school districts may not use any curriculum, reading intervention or instructional program that employs the three-cueing system to teach students to read.

Each public school district must ensure that:

1. All curriculum, reading interventions and programs of instruction utilized to teach students to read are high-quality, fully aligned to the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)*, and based on literacy strategies that are scientifically researched with proven results in teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension;
2. **Beginning with the 2029-2030 school year**, no school in the district is utilizing a three-cueing system of teaching students to read; and
3. **By June 30, 2029**, all interdisciplinary early childhood through grade five (5) educators have completed a science of reading professional learning program approved by the department.

The KDE Office of Teaching and Learning is currently developing an approved Science of Reading (SoR) professional learning list aligned to the requirements of the law. While the final approved list has not yet been published, the expectation is that SoR professional learning must go beyond a one-time training or single day event. High quality professional learning should include sustained learning, opportunities for application, and ongoing support connected to classroom practice.

Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training is an approved option, and anyone having completed LETRS will not need to complete an additional training to meet the requirement of HB 253. KDE is also expanding approved **state-funded** SoR professional learning to include new AIMS Pathway Courses (approximately 55 hours) and a new 8-module SoR professional learning developed in partnership with SchoolKit Group, which will be on the [KY Learning Hub](#). Other evaluated offerings would need to address the SoR and all essential components of reading in order to be approved.

The approved list of SoR professional learning will be added to the [Kentucky Reading Academies webpage](#) by July 1, 2026.

Section 1 also requires KDE to establish an approved list of reading curriculum and interventions that are scientifically researched and evidence-based and do not include instructional strategies that employ the three-cueing system of reading that may be used by schools to meet the requirements provided above. Subsection (4) authorizes the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE), beginning in 2030-2031, to notify public school districts of any violation of these requirements.

Section 1, subsection (5) further prohibits KDE, the Education Profession Standards Board (EPSB), educational cooperatives, special education cooperatives, early childhood regional training centers, and local school districts from providing or utilizing any professional development that uses the three-cueing system of teaching students to read.

District Dyslexia Policy Requirements - Effective Immediately

Section 2, subsection (5) amends KRS 158.307 to require each local school district to establish a “policy addressing the implementation of a program for the identification of and strategies for assisting students in K-3 with dyslexia.”

Subsection (6) specifies that the local board's dyslexia policy must include, at minimum, the following:

- (a) The definition and characteristics of dyslexia;
- (b) A process for identifying students who are displaying characteristics of dyslexia;
- (c) A process for the utilization of evaluation tools to accurately identify students who are displaying characteristics of dyslexia. Any qualified dyslexia evaluation tool utilized by a local district shall address but not be limited to the following components:
 - 1. Phonological awareness and phonemic awareness;
 - 2. Sound symbol recognition;
 - 3. Alphabet knowledge;
 - 4. Decoding skills;
 - 5. Encoding skills; and
 - 6. Rapid naming;
- (d) A process for how evaluation tools are administered and evaluated by trained district personnel or licensed professionals;
- (e) A process for outreach to parents of students identified with or displaying the characteristics of dyslexia with information and resource materials and how dyslexia may be addressed in the student's educational setting;
- (f) Identification of evidence-based interventions, structured multisensory and literacy approaches to teach language and reading skills, and accommodations that schools may utilize to provide services to students identified as having dyslexia; and
- (g) A process for monitoring a student's progress, including assessments to ascertain whether the intervention services improve the student's language processing and reading skills.

KDE has developed a [Dyslexia Toolkit](#) and a list of [approved universal screeners and reading diagnostic tools](#) to assist districts in developing and implementing their local dyslexia policy.

Section 2, subsection (7) establishes the following reporting requirements for each local district, **beginning June 30, 2028**, and for each year thereafter for a period of five years:

- (a) The number of students in K-3 that were identified through the approved universal screener and reading diagnostic assessment as defined in KRS 158.305 as displaying characteristics of dyslexia;
- (b) The number of students [identified in K-3 as displaying characteristics of dyslexia] as needing enrichment programs as defined in KRS 158.305;
- (c) The number of students in K-3 that were participating in literacy interventions within the school setting; and
- (d) The process or tools used to evaluate student progress.

Educator Workforce

[House Bill 4](#)

Section 1 establishes a new section of KRS Chapter 510 to make the “grooming of a minor” a criminal offense, which can be a Class A misdemeanor up to a Class C felony depending on the age of the victim as well as whether the perpetrator was in a “position of authority or ... special trust.” Excluded from this criminal offense are communications between a person and a minor for “any lawful or legitimate purpose,” including in relevant part:

- “Teaching curriculum on human sexuality or sexually transmitted diseases as provided in KRS 158.1415;”
- “The use of a traceable communication system by a school district employee or volunteer as provided in KRS 160.145;”
- “Communicating with a minor to determine if the minor is dependent, neglected, or abused;” and/or
- “Any conversation with a minor that is part of a person's job-related or volunteer-related duties.”

Section 2 revises KRS 510.010 to include, among other items, the definition of “grooming behavior,” which “means a course of conduct directed at a minor that is intended to establish an emotional connection with a minor through manipulation, trust-building, or influence to: (a) Facilitate future acts of sexual conduct; or (b) Normalize or desensitize the minor to acts of sexual conduct; even if no in-person meeting or act of sexual conduct is completed.” The definition also clarifies that conduct can occur “online or in person, through third parties, or by other indirect methods to facilitate the manipulation of a minor.”

Section 3 makes technical edits to KRS 161.120 but does not substantively impact superintendent reporting requirements to the Education Professional Standards Board, including but not limited to the mandate to report any certified school employee in their district when a “contract is terminated or not renewed, for cause except failure to meet local standards for quality of teaching performance prior to the employee gaining tenure;” “resigns from, or otherwise leaves, a position under threat of contract termination, or nonrenewal, for cause;” “convicted in a criminal prosecution;” or, “may have engaged in any actions or conduct ... that might reasonably be expected to warrant consideration for action against the certificate.”

[House Bill 185](#)

Section 2 creates a new section of KRS 335B.010 to 335B.070 related to criminal background checks considered by any hiring or licensing authority as part of its application process and mandates a process be created “by which an individual who has been convicted of a crime can obtain a determination about whether the crime will disqualify the individual from a position of public employment or an occupation for which a professional license is required.” Further, Section 2(4) states, in part, that “[a] hiring or licensing authority shall display on its website its application policy and procedures pertaining to an individual with a criminal background.” Finally, Section 2(6) provides that a hiring or licensing authority shall, on or before Jan. 1, 2027, “[f]ormulate policies and procedures as necessary” and, on or before Nov. 1, 2027, report to the Legislative Research Commission confirming “that an application process as described in this section has been established and is being utilized.”

Section 3 amends KRS 335B.020 regarding the items that shall be considered by the hiring or licensing authority “[i]n determining if a conviction directly relates to the position of public employment sought or the occupation for which the license is sought.”

Section 4 amends KRS 335B.030 regarding a hiring or licensing authority “den[ying] an individual a position of public employment or a license solely because of the individual's prior conviction of a crime” and requires an impacted individual be provided with “written findings of fact” and other specified details at the time of denial. Amendments also clarify that an appeal of a hiring or licensing authority’s decision can be initiated in Franklin Circuit Court or in the “Circuit Court of the county in which the appealing party resides.” Revisions were also made to strike KRS 335B.030(2)(b), which previously created a “rebuttable presumption that a connection exists” when the individual’s prior conviction was a Class A or B felony or any felony offense that required registration pursuant to KRS 17.500.

Local boards of education should consult with their board attorneys on implementation of HB 185 and compliance with these new legal requirements, including but not limited to possible updates to Policy 03.11 and Policy 03.21.

[House Bill 253](#)

Section 1, in subsection (6), includes a mandate for the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) to promulgate administrative regulations “to establish criteria for reading curriculum for each state-approved educator preparation program.” Additional requirements for educator preparation programs are set forth in Sections 3 through 5, which also contains a mandate for the EPSB to require “interdisciplinary early childhood through grade five (5) educators who receive certification pursuant to KRS 161.048(2) to (6) and (9) to complete within two (2) years of initial employment a science of reading professional learning program approved by” the Kentucky Department of Education. This mandate specifically applies to the following alternative pathways to certification: Option 1: Exceptional Work Experience; Option 2: Local District Training Program; Option 3: College Faculty; Option 4: Adjunct Instructor (P-12); Option 5: Armed Forces Veteran; and Option 8: Teach for America.

Section 6 creates a new section of KRS Chapter 160 to prohibit “a public school district” from entering into “a nondisclosure agreement relating to misconduct involving a minor or student, including abusive conduct.”

Section 7 amends KRS 160.380 to:

- Define “abusive conduct” to mean “sexual misconduct and conduct subject to mandatory reporting under KRS 620.030 that involves a minor or student”;
- Require, if requested by a school district regarding a job applicant, the applicant’s current or previous “school district, public school, or nonpublic school” to “disclose any disciplinary action, and any resulting resignation or termination, related to abusive conduct while the applicant was employed.” This disclosure requirement also applies to any “school district, public school, or nonpublic school located in a member state of the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact”;
- Protect schools, school districts, and “any school employees making a disclosure” from “civil and criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed” when “making the disclosure” or “[p]articipating in any judicial proceeding that may result from making the disclosure”;
- Require a school district that receives from a previous employing school or school district a disclosure of “abusive conduct” regarding a job applicant “for a certified position” to “request information from the Education Professional Standards Board related to pending and resolved disciplinary action against the applicant involving abusive conduct”;
- Require any “school district, public school, nonpublic school ... or the Education Professional Standards Board” to, upon request from a school district regarding a job applicant, provide information concerning “abusive conduct” within ten (10) working days;

- Prohibit a school district from hiring an applicant when “there is a finding of abusive conduct” or, in the event the applicant is already hired by or is an existing employee of the school district, require the individual be subject to “dismissal or termination”;
- Require the EPSB to “create and implement procedures for responding to a school district upon receiving an inquiry” about disciplinary actions for “abusive conduct.” KDE’s Office of Legal Services has launched the following SharePoint site where district staff may, pursuant to KRS 160.380(6)(c), “request information from the Education Professional Standards Board related to pending and resolved disciplinary action against the applicant involving abusive conduct”: [HB 253 Request - Home](#). Additional procedures and guidance related to this process are still in development and will be forthcoming;
- Clarify that any school district employee who receives an allegation, whether in writing or through electronic or oral means, of “abusive conduct ... made against a school district employee” shall report such allegation “to the school principal and in accordance with KRS 620.030.” Principals shall “document the allegation in writing and notify the superintendent or designee”;
- Require “[a]n investigation of the allegation ... by the school district until it is completed and” prohibit the investigation from terminating “prior to completion due to the employee transferring positions ... or leaving the school district, unless directed by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services or law enforcement ... to cease” investigating;
- Require “all records and references relating to an allegation of abusive conduct by a school district employee ... remain in an employee’s personnel file until completion of an investigation.” If the allegation is later “determined to be false or unsubstantiated, all records and references relating to the allegation shall be removed from the employee’s personnel file”;
- Clarify that “any certified or classified employee of the school district” shall provide notice to the superintendent “within seven (7) days of being charged with any offense which is classified as a felony”; and,
- Require superintendents to provide notice “annually” to employees of the requirements to self-report criminal charges as set forth in (12), as renumbered, and findings “by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services” as set forth in (13), as renumbered.

Section 10 amends KRS 156.095 to:

- Require, by May 1, 2027, KDE and the EPSB to “develop a training for school district employees... related to appropriate relationships and communication with students, inappropriate relationships and communication with students, sexual grooming, and sexual misconduct”;
- Require local school districts to “require all current employees to complete the training by June 30, 2027”; and,

- Require, beginning with the 2027-2028 school year, local school districts to “require all new employees to undergo the training...within ninety (90) days of the employee's initial hiring;” however, new employees who “completed the training within the prior five (5) years with a previous employer shall be exempt.”

Section 11 amends KRS 161.151 to clarify the requirement dictating removal from a school employee’s personnel file records relating to “an allegation of a criminal offense committed by a school employee that did not lead formal charges” as well as “records relating to a criminal proceeding in which a school employee was found not guilty or the charges were dismissed.” Specifically, the law now exempts from this requirement “all records and references relating to an allegation of abusive conduct by a school district employee,” which the legislation says, in Section 7, are “to remain in an employee’s personnel file until completion of an investigation.” Only if and when the allegation is later “determined to be false or unsubstantiated” may records “be removed from the employee's personnel file.”

Section 15 declares an emergency, making the legislation effective as of the Governor’s signature on April 10, 2026.

[House Bill 727](#)

Section 1 revises KRS 161.028 to allow, in (1)(m), the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) to use certification fees for “costs associated with the development and maintenance of the Kentucky Educator Placement Service System.”

Section 2 revises KRS 160.152 to require KDE ensure that the Kentucky Educator Placement Service System (KEPSS) has the capability for job applicants to “create one (1) or more universal applications and electronically submit applications and relevant application materials to multiple local school districts.”

Section 3 revises KRS 161.030 to add language in (6)(c) requiring the EPSB to issue a five (5) year certificate to an individual:

- Whose certificate has expired;
- Who has met the requirements for a certificate or statement of eligibility in EPSB regulation; and,
- Who submits proof of successful completion of six (6) credit hours of graduate coursework.

Language is also added in KRS 161.030 (6)(d) requiring the EPSB to issue on a one-time basis a five (5) year certificate to an individual:

- Whose certificate has expired;
- Who has met the requirements for a certificate or statement of eligibility in EPSB regulation; and,

- Who submits a waiver issued by the school district superintendent exempting the applicant from the requirement to submit proof of successful completion of six (6) hours of graduate coursework.

The legislative changes in Section 3 substantially align with existing practices of KDE's Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness (OELE). Going forward, the local superintendent will determine the process for an applicant to request a "waiver" and, once issued, will confirm with OELE. To do so, the superintendent will start the District Renewal application within the Kentucky Educator Credentialing System (KECS) on behalf of the applicant, confirm therein that a waiver has been issued, and recommend the one-time renewal of a certificate or statement of eligibility.

Please be advised that, while a professional certificate can be issued by the EPSB for a teaching statement of eligibility, there are additional requirements for the professional certificate for school principal. Therefore, any waiver issued to renew a statement of eligibility for school principal will result in only a 5-year statement of eligibility being issued by the EPSB.

[Senate Bill 4](#)

Senate Bill 4 requires new principals for the 2027-2028 school year to participate in the "principal leadership development practicum," a four-year professional learning experience. In years one and two of the experience, principals will participate in a series of seminars developed by the Kentucky Department of Education. In year three, principals will participate in a training program chosen by the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce if funds are available. Year four is an optional year in which the principal may participate in professional learning opportunities chosen by the principal to fulfil their ongoing learning needs. The specific details of this program are under development, with the first cohort to begin July 1, 2027. More information will be released to districts when the program is fully designed.

The "principal leadership development practicum" replaces the Kentucky Principal Internship Program or "KPIP," which Senate Bill 4 removes, in Section 3, from KRS 161.027. That section also revises KRS 161.027(6), as renumbered, to clarify that failure "to gain employment as a principal" within the five (5) years following issuance by the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) of the "statement of eligibility for internship" shall require the applicant to "reestablish eligibility by repeating and passing the assessments in effect at that time or by completing a minimum of six (6) graduate hours." Further, KRS 161.027(7), as renumbered, requires the "principal certificate ... be extended for four (4) years" upon the "successful completion of the first year of principalship."

Federal Tax Credit

[House Bill 1](#) opts the Commonwealth into the qualified elementary and secondary education scholarship [federal tax credit](#). This federal tax credit becomes effective Jan. 1, 2027, and is provided for contributions to a scholarship granting organization (SGO). For questions regarding House Bill 1, please contact the Office of the [Secretary of State](#), who is responsible for the administration of the bill.

Local Boards of Education

[House Bill 67](#)

Section 2 creates a new section of KRS Chapter 160 to update the requirements regarding local board of education budgets, including required timelines in the local school district budgeting process. Section 8 amends KRS 160.470(6) to delete previous language regarding local board of education budgets.

Section 4 amends KRS 160.463 to require each school district to publish on the school district's main website a link to a district financial disclosure website and sets forth the information that is to be contained on the financial disclosure website. Section 3 amends KRS 160.431(4) to require the district's annual financial report and KDE's written report indicating the financial status of the district to be posted on the district's financial disclosure website.

Section 12 amends KRS 424.250 to delete the reference to "KRS 160.470" and insert "Section 2 of this Act." "At the same time that copies of the budget of a school district are filed with the clerk of the tax levying authority for the district, as provided in Section 2 of this Act[...], the board of education of the district shall cause the budget to be advertised for the district by publishing a copy of the budget in a newspaper and on the district's website." The prior version of this statute was interpreted by the Office of the Attorney General in OAG 82-603. School districts are tax levying authorities, therefore, school districts should consult with their board attorney for legal advice regarding this statute.

[House Bill 392](#)

Section 1 amends KRS 45A.385 to increase the small purchase maximum from \$40,000 to \$50,000 and provides that beginning in 2030 the small purchase maximum amount shall be increased by \$10,000 every five years effective on Jan. 1 of each year and the increase will be communicated by the Finance and Administration Cabinet. KRS 45A.385 applies to school districts that have adopted the Model Procurement Code.

Section 5 amends KRS 424.260 to increase the small purchase maximum amount from \$40,000 to \$50,000 and provides that beginning in 2030 the small purchase maximum amount shall be increased by \$10,000 every five years effective on Jan. 1 of each year and the increase will be

communicated by the Finance and Administration Cabinet. KRS 424.260 applies to school districts that have not adopted the Model Procurement Code.

Section 2 amends KRS 45A.420 to provide that “[f]or agreements that do not establish a fixed unit price, a local public agency may make purchases using an established discount, quote, formula, or other pricing method as established by the Commonwealth in the agreement. A local public agency shall retain records documenting its compliance with the procedures required in the applicable agreement.”

[House Bill 518](#)

House Bill 518 amends KRS 67.767 regarding the collection of occupational license taxes and the forms related to that collection. Section 1(2) amends KRS 67.767(2) to provide that prior to July 1, 2029, a tax district must adopt the standard forms developed pursuant to KRS 67.767(1) as its exclusive electronic return forms, accept the standard forms electronically in addition to the tax district’s own return forms, or opt out from adopting or using the standard forms if it has an online filing and payment system in use on or before Jan. 1, 2025, or entered into a binding contract for implementation of an online filing and payment system on or before July 1, 2026.

Section 1(3) amends KRS 67.767(3) to provide that a tax district that accepts the standard forms for filing under KRS 67.767(2)(a) or (b) shall have nine (9) months from the approval of an administrative regulation establishing new or amended standard forms to comply with the provisions of KRS 67.767(2)(a) or (b). Section 1(4) amends KRS 67.767(4) to provide that after July 1, 2029, a tax district must adopt the standard forms as its exclusive electronic return forms or accept the standard forms in addition to the tax district’s own return form or forms unless the tax district receives an exemption from the Secretary of State. KRS 67.767(4) also sets forth additional requirements for tax districts.

For additional information regarding HB 518, please contact the [Secretary of State](#).

[House Bill 727](#)

Section 17 amends KRS 160.180 to update the annual in-service training requirements for local board of education members. For members in office as of Dec. 31, 2014, the training is updated to include a minimum of: one hour of ethics training every year; one hour of open meetings and open records training every four years; and two hours of finance training every two years. For members in office on or after Jan. 1, 2015, with zero to eight years of experience, the training is updated to include a minimum of: three hours of finance training within the first two years of initial service, and two hours of finance training at least once every two years thereafter; and one hour of superintendent evaluation within the first two years of service. For members with more than eight years of experience, the training is updated to include a minimum of two hours of finance training at least once every two years. KDE will work the Kentucky School Boards

Association (KSBA) to ensure it provides training opportunities to its members that meet the new requirements.

Section 18 amends KRS 160.160 to require that upon the election of a chair and vice chair, a local board of education must review, with the superintendent and finance officer, the specific procedures and responsibilities of the board and district employees relating to the district budget.

Section 20 creates a new chapter in KRS Chapter 157 that will allow a local school board to request to the commissioner of education an adjustment in funding, after the Department of Revenue submits the certified property assessment to the commissioner as required by KRS 160.470(4), if it is determined that the total assessed valuation of real or personal property for the school district is amended and the impact of that amendment is equal to or greater than one percent (1%) of the school district's net general fund SEEK allotment as of March 1 of the same fiscal year of the impacted property assessment. Any adjustments in the funding formula shall be no more than an amount equal to the net loss of state SEEK funds and subject to available SEEK funds. Documentation of the amendment shall be provided by the school district.

Section 22 amends KRS 158.1413 to remove superintendents' reporting requirement on school districts' essential workplace ethics programs. While the essential workplace ethics program requirements are still in place, superintendents are no longer required to submit a report every other year to the commissioner.

[House Bill 757](#)

House Bill 757 amends various statutes related to the taxing authority of school districts and equalization and repeals KRS 160.621, 160.625, 160.627, and 160.633 regarding excise tax as a tax option for school districts. HB 757 also creates a new statute regarding removal of the penny from circulation, amends statutes regarding tax exemptions, and includes language regarding urgent needs school assistance.

The following sections in HB 757 are relevant to school districts:

- Section 25 creates a new Section of KRS Chapter 160
- Section 28 amends KRS 65.302
- Section 47 amends KRS 132.096
- Section 73 amends KRS 132.017 (emergency legislation)
- Section 74 amends KRS 160.470 (emergency legislation)
- Section 75 amends KRS 157.440 (emergency legislation)
- Section 76 amends KRS 160.473 (emergency legislation)
- Section 77 amends KRS 160.607 (emergency legislation)
- Section 78 amends KRS 160.483 (emergency legislation)
- Section 79 amends KRS 160.484 (emergency legislation)

- Section 80 amends KRS 160.505 (emergency legislation)
- Section 81 amends KRS 160.593 (emergency legislation)
- Section 82 amends KRS 160.597 (emergency legislation)
- Section 83 amends KRS 160.601 (emergency legislation)
- Section 84 amends KRS 160.603 (emergency legislation)
- Section 85 amends KRS 160.635 (emergency legislation)
- Section 86 amends KRS 160.637 (emergency legislation)
- Section 87 amends KRS 160.640 (emergency legislation)
- Section 88 amends KRS 160.642 (emergency legislation)
- Section 89 amends KRS 160.644 (emergency legislation)
- Section 90 amends KRS 160.648 (emergency legislation)
- Section 91 amends KRS 157.621 (emergency legislation)
- Section 116 amends KRS 139.495 (effective August 1, 2026)
- Section 131 – Urgent Needs School Assistance (emergency legislation)
- Section 133 repeals KRS 160.621, 160.625, 160.627, and 160.633
- Sections 135-140 provide when various sections of the Act become effective as noted above. Sections 73 to 91 and Section 131 are emergency legislation which became effective on April 14, 2026. Section 116 takes effect August 1, 2026.

For questions regarding HB 757, please contact KDE’s Division of District Support at (502) 564-3846. KDE encourages school districts to consult with their board attorney and bond counsel regarding the impact of HB 757 to their district.

[House Bill 869](#)

House Bill 869 is emergency legislation that became effective as of the governor’s signature on April 27, 2026. Section 38 amends KRS 424.110 related to various legal notices. The amended statute defines “time” as “the time of day, stated in both eastern standard time and central standard time.” Section 39 amends KRS 61.805 to also define “time” as “the time of day, stated in both eastern standard time and central standard time.” As districts publish various required legal notices, they should be aware of these changes and consult board counsel as to whether listed times comply with these new requirements.

[House Bill 904](#)

House Bill 904 amends statutes governing charitable gaming. See Sections 23-34 and Section 44. For questions regarding HB 904, please contact the [Kentucky Horse Racing & Gaming Corporation](#) at (859) 246-2040.

[Senate Bill 1](#)

Senate Bill 1 contains a preamble with language addressing Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) and repeals and re-enacts KRS 160.370 with amendments. SB 1 amends KRS 160.370(2) to update the requirements for county school districts in a county with a consolidated local government adopted under KRS Chapter 67C or having 500,000 or more inhabitants. JCPS is the only school district that currently falls under KRS 160.370(2).

[Senate Bill 4](#)

Section 5 updates KRS 160.160 to define “large school district” as “a school district that has more than three hundred thousand (300,000) inhabitants.” KRS 160.160 is also amended to provide that each local board of education shall consist of five members and deletes the exception regarding seven board members, impacting the Jefferson County Board of Education.

Section 7 amends KRS 160.180 to update the eligibility for membership on a local board of education to include that for boards of education of large school districts, the individual must not be an employee of a board of education in the Commonwealth whose position requires the individual to work on more than 100 days per year. Large school district is defined in Section 5 of the Act as stated above. Section 19 provides that “a person who was elected or appointed to a board of education prior to the effective date of Section 7 of this Act shall remain eligible for the office for the remainder of the term to which he or she was elected or appointed.”

Section 8 amends KRS 160.210(5) to provide that in large school districts there shall be five divisions from which local board members are elected and deletes language regarding the seven divisions for Jefferson County. Large school district is defined in Section 5 of the Act as stated above. Section 9 creates a new section of KRS Chapter 160 regarding the divisions for the Jefferson County Board of Education. Section 17 and 18 govern the transition for local boards of education with seven members to having five members.

Section 11 amends KRS 160.240 to delete language regarding payment of election expenses.

Section 21 provides that Sections 5 to 13 and Sections 17 to 19 are emergency legislation making the legislation effective as of April 14, 2026.

[Senate Bill 20](#)

Section 3 amends KRS 45A.380 to provide an additional basis for noncompetitive negotiation by a local public agency, including a local school board that has adopted the Model Procurement Code: “The contract is for the purchase of used vehicles or used equipment and the purchase price does not exceed seventy-five percent (75%) of the manufacturer's suggested retail price for the model year for a vehicle or date of manufacture for equipment for the same or similar vehicles or equipment.”

Section 4 amends KRS 424.260 regarding supplies and equipment being excepted from the advertisement for bid requirement. The bill excepts supplies that are “[p]erishable foods such as meat, poultry, fish, egg products, fresh vegetables, and fresh fruits; or Sold at public auction.” The bill also adds language regarding equipment to “except used vehicles and used equipment if the purchase price does not exceed seventy-five percent (75%) of the manufacturer's suggested retail price for the model year for a vehicle or date of manufacture for equipment for the same or similar vehicles or equipment”. KRS 424.260 applies to school districts that have not adopted the Model Procurement Code.

[Senate Bill 59](#)

Section 1 amends KRS 48.025 to provide that “[l]ocal, state, and federal tax dollars and resources shall not be used to advocate for or against any public question that appears on the ballot.” “Local” is defined as including school districts and a definition is also established for “resources”. A definition is also provided for “school district” that includes any “[r]egional educational cooperative organization formed by local boards of education or other public educational institutions listed in KRS 161.220(4), for the purpose of providing educational services to the participating organizations.” For individuals in violation, the bill establishes fines for the first and second offence and a fine and misdemeanor for subsequent offenses.

Section 3 amends KRS 132.017(3)(e) to provide that “[l]ocal, state, and federal tax dollars and resources shall not be used to advocate for or against any public question that appears on the ballot.” Local is defined as having the same meaning as in Section 2 of the Act which provides that “local” means “any city, county, urban-county government, consolidated local government, unified local government, charter county government, or special district.” “Resources” has the same meaning as Section 1 of the Act. It is recommended that districts consult with their board attorney regarding this language and what is permissible.

School Food

[House Bill 555](#)

House Bill 555 amends KRS 158.854 to provide that a local board of education may identify a student-based enterprise to sell competitive foods throughout the school day. “Competitive foods” includes any food or beverage item sold in competition with the National School Breakfast and National School Lunch programs. A student-based enterprise is defined as “a district-approved program operated by a school district's students as part of a course designed to provide students with knowledge and experience of the operation of a business.” An approved student-based enterprise is exempted from the requirement in KRS 158.854(3) which provides that competitive foods can only be sold beginning 30 minutes after the last lunch

period. Competitive foods sold by a student-based enterprise must comply with the minimum nutritional standards set forth in [702 KAR 6:090](#) which requires compliance with [7 CFR 210.11](#).

HB 555 also amends KRS 156.160(3) to provide that the penalties set forth in this subsection shall not be applicable to a student-based enterprise operating under KRS 158.854.

For additional questions regarding the sale of competitive foods, please contact KDE's Division of School and Community Nutrition at (502) 564-5625. For questions regarding student-based enterprises, please contact KDE's Office of Career and Technical Education at (502) 564-4286.

[Senate Bill 5](#)

Senate Bill 5 is emergency legislation that creates a new section of KRS Chapter 158 to provide that a school district participating in any of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child Nutrition Programs may purchase Kentucky-grown agricultural products in accordance with federal law and shall not be subject to KRS 45A.345 to 45A.460 or 424.260. Therefore, the bill removes state procurement barriers for obtaining Kentucky-grown agricultural products, but school districts must still abide by all applicable federal laws.

For questions, please contact the KDE Division of School and Community Nutrition at (502) 564-5625.

School Health

[Senate Bill 18](#)

Section 16 creates a new section of KRS 158 to provide that KDE, in coordination with the Kentucky Department for Public Health, the Kentucky Board of Licensed Diabetes Educators, or any other entity KDE deems appropriate, must develop Type 1 diabetes informational materials for the parents and guardians of students and provide the information to local school districts on KDE's website. Each local board of education must make the Type 1 diabetes informational materials available on the school or school district website, in the main front entrance of each school, and in each family resource and youth services center.

KDE's School Health Branch is working to develop the Type 1 diabetes informational materials. The Type 1 diabetes informational materials will be posted on KDE's website and a copy will be sent to superintendents and school health coordinators once developed. For questions, please contact SchoolHealth@ky.gov.

[House Bill 280](#)

House Bill 280 is emergency legislation that updates medication requirements for students. Section 6 establishes a new section of KRS 158.830 to 158.838 to provide that undesignated glucagon may be prescribed for use in school districts. Section 7 amends KRS 158.832 to add a definition for documented medical condition and updates the definition for medication and self-administration. Section 8 amends KRS 158.834 to expand the medical conditions for which a student may self-administer medication to include: a life-threatening allergy, asthma, risk of anaphylaxis, risk of respiratory distress, diabetes, hypoglycemia, adrenal crisis, or other life-threatening medical condition as diagnosed by a health care practitioner. Section 9 amends KRS 158.836 to align with the amendments to Section 7 and 8 regarding the expansion of medical conditions for which a student may self-administer medication. Section 9 also adds language to encourage school districts to keep a bronchodilator rescue inhaler or nebulizer in a minimum of two locations in the school and to stock undesignated glucagon in a minimum of two locations in the school.

Section 10 declares an emergency, making the legislation effective as of the Governor's signature on April 10, 2026.

KDE's School Health Branch will provide additional information to school nurses regarding HB 280. For questions, please contact KDE's School Health Branch at (502) 564-5279.

School Safety

[House Bill 652](#)

House Bill 652 provides that the School Mapping Data Program will be administered by the Kentucky 911 Services Board instead of the Center for School Safety. Section 4 declares an emergency, making the legislation effective April 14, 2026. For questions, please contact the [Kentucky 911 Services Board](#) at (502) 564-3911 or by email at 911Services@ky.gov.

School Transportation

[House Bill 7](#)

House Bill 7 permits school districts to install a camera monitoring system on school buses to record stop arm violations for the enforcement of a civil penalty against the operator of a motor vehicle. A stop arm camera violation may be enforced by a law enforcement agency, a certified peace officer, or a school resource officer as defined in KRS 158.441.

Section 7 amends KRS 189.370 regarding when a motor vehicle must stop for a school bus to provide that the stop requirement shall not apply to vehicles approaching a stopped bus from the opposite direction upon a highway of four or more lanes divided by an elevated barrier or unpaved median.

For additional questions regarding HB 7, please contact KDE's Pupil Transportation Branch at (502) 564-5279.

[Senate Bill 46](#)

Section 1 amends KRS 156.153 to delete the requirement that KDE must provide a list of standards and specifications for accessory equipment and supplies and replacement equipment to the Finance and Administration Cabinet for the purpose of maintaining a price contract list under KRS 45A.489. Section 1 also updates the capacity of non-school bus passenger vehicles to 10 or fewer passengers including the driver and deletes the requirement for an alternative transportation plan. In addition, Section 1 amends KRS 156.153 to distinguish between drivers transporting students to and from school along a regular bus route and drivers transporting students to and from approved school activities. Section 1 also adds language to provide that the transportation of a student pursuant to an agreement between a school district and a parent to reimburse the parent for arranging transportation of his or her own child to and from school or approved school activities shall not be subject to any requirement imposed pursuant to KRS 156.153.

Section 2 amends KRS 160.380 to update the background check requirements for drivers of non-school bus passenger vehicles who do not have a valid commercial driver's license with an "S" endorsement issued in accordance with KRS Chapter 281A, to distinguish between drivers transporting students to and from school along a regular bus route and drivers transporting students to and from approved school activities.

School districts should note that Section 2(6)(f) states in part that "[t]he superintendent shall require any driver of any non-school bus passenger vehicle authorized to transport students to and from approved school activities who does not have a valid commercial driver's license with an "S" endorsement issued in accordance with KRS Chapter 281A to: 1. Submit to a state criminal records check from the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet or the Administrative Office of the Courts, or both, in accordance with KRS 17.160(1) prior to being authorized and annually thereafter[.]" KRS 160.380(6)(a) provides that a superintendent shall require a national and state criminal background check by the Department of Kentucky State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and a clear CA/N check for certain individuals including "[a]ny adult who is permitted access to school grounds on a regularly scheduled and continuing basis pursuant to a written agreement for the purpose of providing services directly to a student or students as part of a school-sponsored program or activity". In addition, KRS 160.380(6)(d) provides that a superintendent "may require a volunteer or a visitor to submit to a national and

state criminal history background check by the Department of Kentucky State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and have a clear CA/N check”. Therefore, KDE encourages school districts to consult with their board attorney for legal advice regarding background check requirements.

Section 3 declares an emergency, making the legislation effective as of the Governor’s signature on March 27, 2026.

Schools of Innovation

[Senate Bill 263](#)

Section 2 revises KRS 156.161:

- In (1), to allow the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) to waive regulations promulgated by the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) or statutes under the EPSB’s purview to enforce but only “after consultation with the Education Professional Standards Board”;
- In (1), to clarify the KBE cannot “overturn a certification determination of a specific individual by the Education Professional Standards Board.” The KBE also cannot waive certification statues and/or regulations “establishing certification requirements for teachers, except a waiver may authorize up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the teaching staff of a school may be employed without teacher certification if the individual possesses a “Baccalaureate or graduate degree in the subject the individual is hired to teach” or a “[r]ecognized industry credential in the technical education area the individual is hired to teach”;
- In (3), to allow a local school district to request assistance from the Kentucky Department of Education to develop a waiver request. Specifically, the district “shall provide ... a list of innovative practices the local board intends to submit in a waiver request,” and KDE shall “provide a timely analysis ... that identifies which statutes and regulations under the authority of” the KBE or the EPSB would require wavier;
- In (4), to prohibit KDE and/or the Commissioner of Education from recommending “approval or denial” of a waiver request to the KBE; however, the KBE may be provided with “the benefits and disadvantages of approving the waiver request.” Any analysis KDE provides to the KBE on the waiver request shall be consistent with any analysis provided to the district unless the waiver request has since “been modified”;
- In (5), to allow, in addition to the superintendent, the “local board’s designee” to submit a waiver request following local board approval as well as to require the KBE to review waiver requests “at a meeting occurring no later than thirty (30) calendar days after submission.” Per the revised statute, the KBE “shall grant the request if ... the waiver request reasonably demonstrates that approval is more likely than not” to (1) improve

operations “without hindering student academic achievement” or (2) “improve student academic achievement”;

- In (6), to permit the local board “to identify ... the subject of the request as a school of innovation” and, by doing so, “incorporate any waivers previously approved and in effect under” Sections 2 and/or 3 of the legislation. The KBE “shall approve the request to be identified as a school of innovation if ... all the approved waivers ... attempt to improve student outcomes in a manner that would be difficult or impossible without the approved waivers.” Any waivers incorporated within “the identification as a school of innovation ... expire on June 30 of the third full school year after the identification”;
- In (9), to clarify “a waiver related to school district facility projects ... shall not expire unless the state board specifically provides for an expiration when granting”; and,
- In (12), to prohibit a school district from being penalized “for an action that violates a statute or administrative regulation if: (a) The action was described in a request for assistance under subsection (3) of this section; and (b) The analysis of the request for assistance ... [i]ndicated that the action would not violate any statute or administrative regulation in existence at the time of the analysis” or failed to “include the statute or administrative regulation in existence at the time of the analysis and the exact request for assistance was approved as a waiver request” by the KBE.

Student Communication

[House Bill 67](#)

KDE updated the “[KRS 160.145 Traceable Communication Systems FAQ](#)” to incorporate changes that resulted from House Bill 67.

Student Discipline

[Senate Bill 101](#)

Senate Bill 101 amends KRS 158.150 and makes changes to required behavior resolutions to student disciplinary infractions. Students in grades 6 through 12 who have been “determined by the board to have recklessly, with a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument, or intentionally caused or attempted to cause physical injury to a school district employee on school property or at a school function under the board’s jurisdiction” to be expelled for a period of at least 12 months. Expulsions must be recorded in Infinite Campus within 5 days.

Students expelled under this cause may be provided services from an appropriate alternative program or setting, meaning a program that is not in the school building the student would otherwise attend and includes but is not limited to a virtual program or state-funded agency program. Students expelled for this cause shall not receive district transportation and shall not

participate in any school-sponsored extracurricular or interscholastic athletic activity while they are expelled.

Prior to returning to school, the student must present:

- 1) A written letter to any person injured by the actions that resulted in the expulsion and to the adjudicating body that requests the end of the student's expulsion;
- 2) Completed a total number of community service hours that is at least equal to 15 hours for each week since the student was expelled;
- 3) Earned a cumulative grade point average of at least three on any coursework completed since the student was expelled; and
- 4) Any other requirements established by the board.

After having completed these requirements, an adjudicating body that includes the superintendent or designee, the principal or designee, and any individual person injured by the student must review the student's request to be re-enrolled and may only authorize the end of the student's expulsion upon unanimous agreement of the group.

KRS 158.150 also outlines the requirements when students with disabilities are suspended, including when a suspension or expulsion is considered a change of placement, how the admissions and release committee (ARC) must determine whether a behavior is related to a student's disability, and providing for the student's educational needs if the current placement could result in injury to the child, other children, or the educational personnel. If the ARC determines that a student's behavior is not a result of his or her disability, the district may implement the disciplinary measures in place for all students, though educational services shall not be terminated during a suspension or expulsion that exceeds 10 days. Any action under KRS 158.150 related to students with disabilities shall comply with the applicable federal law.

Additional resources:

- [Questions and Answers: Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions](#)
- [Supporting Students with Disabilities and Avoiding the Discriminatory Use of Student Discipline under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)

Please note that Section 504 is regulated by the federal Office for Civil Rights, not the Kentucky Department of Education. Districts should consult with their local board attorneys to ensure compliance with its requirements.

Additionally, SB 101 also requires any school employee to immediately report intentional physical injury or attempt to cause physical injury of any school employee to any law enforcement agency or the state police.

Regarding students with disabilities, Section 2(3) of SB 101 requires reporting to law enforcement "... unless the school employee has reason to believe a student's disability

interfered with his or her ability to conform to the student code of conduct.” Districts may consider including protocols for required reporting by school employees in their local board policies and procedures.

In making these determinations at the local level, district and school staff may consider the needs of individual students when determining whether students with certain disabilities experience greater challenges in complying with the student code of conduct. Districts may consider implementing policies and procedures when encountering students whose disability impacts behavioral or emotional regulation; students with cognitive deficits that include mental disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and autism; and other health impairments (e.g., students with Tourette’s or attention deficit disorders that impact impulse control).

Careful implementation and staff training may be helpful to:

- Avoid inappropriate referrals to law enforcement
- Ensure IDEA timelines and procedures are followed
- Maintain focus on behavioral supports and interventions

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) states, “Nothing in [Part B] shall be construed to prohibit an agency from reporting a crime committed by a child with a disability to appropriate authorities or to prevent State law enforcement and judicial authorities from exercising their responsibilities with regard to the application of Federal and State law to crimes committed by a child with a disability.” (20 U.S.C. §1415(k)(6), 34 C.F.R. 300.535(a))

Additionally, “An agency reporting a crime committed by a child with a disability must ensure that copies of the special education and disciplinary records of the child are transmitted for consideration by the appropriate authorities to whom the agency reports the crime ... only to the extent that the transmission is permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act,” (34 C.F.R. 300.525).

Districts are advised to review and revise local policies and procedures to accommodate these changes.

Student Enrollment and Attendance

[House Bill 307](#)

With the passage of House Bill 307, districts should be prepared to notify parents and students of the Proactive Postsecondary Admissions Program in accordance with [HB 307](#) as outlined in

Section 1, subsection(4)(a). In addition, districts should be prepared to report the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) directory definitions and opt-outs, and Proactive Postsecondary Admission Program opt-ins, preferred communication method, and graduate programs in Infinite Campus beginning with the 2026-2027 school year in accordance with Section 1, subsection (4)(b) so that KDE can meet the reporting requirements of HB 307 in Section 1, subsection (5).

To prepare for implementation, districts are encouraged to review policies regarding sharing of directory information for possible amendment. Districts that currently allow opt-out of directory information sharing for individual data elements (versus opt-out of all directory information sharing) should consider the barriers this will present for HB 307 implementation. Additional information will be provided through new Infinite Campus reporting required as a result of this legislation by June 30.

[House Bill 727](#)

House Bill 727, Section 4, established that in providing special education services for exceptional children and youth, maximum class sizes for special classes and maximum caseloads for teachers of special classes must be adhered to based on disability categories. Districts may assign fewer students to a special class or caseload if student needs require it.

Effective July 15, the maximum class sizes for special classes and maximum caseloads for teachers of special classes are established in KRS 157.220.

HB 727, Sections 4-5, amends KRS 157.220 to establish requirements for providing special education services to exceptional children and youth. It specifies that maximum class sizes for special classes and maximum caseloads for teachers of special classes must be maintained based on students' disability categories.

Maximum class size for special classes:

- “Eight (8) students with autism;
- Ten (10) students with a developmental delay;
- Eight (8) students with an emotional-behavioral disability;
- Ten (10) students with a functional mental disability;
- Six (6) students with a hearing impairment;
- Fifteen (15) students with a mild mental disability;
- Ten (10) students with multiple disabilities;
- Sixteen (16) students with an orthopedic impairment;
- Sixteen (16) students with an other health impairment;
- Ten (10) students in kindergarten to grade five (5) and fifteen (15) students in grades six (6) to twelve (12) with a specific learning disability; and

- Ten (10) students with a visual disability.”

Maximum caseloads for teachers of special classes:

- “Fifteen (15) students with autism;
- Fifteen (15) students with a developmental delay;
- Fifteen (15) students with an emotional-behavioral disability;
- Ten (10) students with a functional mental disability;
- Eight (8) students with a hearing impairment;
- Fifteen (15) students in kindergarten to grade five (5) and twenty (20) students in grades six (6) to twelve (12) with a mild mental disability;
- Ten (10) students with multiple disabilities;
- Twenty (20) students with an orthopedic impairment;
- Twenty (20) students with an other health impairment;
- Fifteen (15) students in kindergarten to grade five (5) and twenty (20) students in grades six (6) to twelve (12) with a specific learning disability; and
- Ten (10) students with a visual disability.”

HB 727 amends KRS 157.220 by including these additional requirements for determining maximum class size and caseload:

- Caseload limitations for speech-language pathologists are determined by KRS 334A.190.
- When a special class includes students from more than one disability category, the maximum class size is determined by the category with the highest number of students.
- A special class may have up to two students over the maximum class size if a paraprofessional is assigned to the class.
- For teachers of exceptional children and youth using a collaborative model:
 - Maximum caseload is 20 students in grades six to 12
 - Maximum caseload is 15 students in kindergarten to grade five.
- If a teacher provides services using both collaboration and special classes, the established maximum caseload limits still apply.
- Teachers of special classes who serve students with more than one disability category must use the majority disability category on the caseload to determine the maximum caseload.

Section 7 specifies that state preschool caseload and class size maximums shall be maintained pursuant to KRS 157.3175, which establishes a maximum ratio of one adult to 10 children [KRS 157.3175(6)(e)].

HB 727 added the following definitions to KRS 157.220: “Admissions and release committee” or “ARC” means “a group of individuals that is responsible for developing, reviewing, or revising an individualized education program for an exceptional child or youth”.

“Caseload” means “the number of exceptional children and youth assigned to a teacher of exceptional children and youth for the purpose of overseeing the management of individualized specially designed instruction and related services as required by the individualized education program”.

“Special classes” means “specially equipped and staffed classes in which an exceptional child or youth, individually or in small groups, spends part of his or her day receiving specially designed instruction or related services as determined by the ARC”.

For questions related to class size or caseload, please contact [Lynn Lockard](#).

[House Bill 778](#)

Section 4 amends KRS 610.030(8)(b)3 to provide that upon developing a diversion agreement, the court-designated worker shall provide summary information regarding the child to be given to the county attorney and the school district superintendent where the child is enrolled. The bill further provides that the superintendent may share the information with the director of pupil personnel and any school resource officer or any other contract employee hired to provide security services for the school that the child attends.

SB 170 (2026) Section 6 also amends this same provision in KRS 610.030 to provide that upon developing a family diversion agreement, the court-designated worker shall electronically notify the director of pupil personnel at the school district that the child attends that the child has entered into a family diversion agreement, including the date of the agreement. It is currently unclear how these amendments to KRS 610.030 will be codified in statute.

Section 5 amends KRS 610.345 to require the notices sent to the superintendent related to various criminal offenses of a student to also be sent to the director of pupil personnel. Section 5 also provides that a superintendent receiving a notice referenced in subsections (1) to (5) of KRS 610.345 must also provide such notice to the principal of the school where the child is enrolled and adds the requirement that the principal must provide such notice to the school resource officer.

Section 5 also adds language to provide that when a child is the respondent or petitioner for a domestic violence order or an interpersonal protective order, the court must notify the superintendent and director of pupil personnel where the child is enrolled and the school

resource officer or any other contract employee hired to provide security services for the school.

Section 5 also provides that records or information received by the school pursuant to KRS 610.345 must be kept in a locked file and opened only with the permission of the administrator or any school resource officer.

[Senate Bill 170](#)

Senate Bill 170 introduces significant changes to how school districts respond to truancy and student status offenses in Kentucky. The legislation shifts the focus from primarily court-based responses to earlier intervention, coordinated family support, and cross-agency collaboration.

SB 170 creates a pilot program of 10 participating districts called the Supporting Opportunities for Accountability and Restoration (SOAR) Program, which provide intervention once a student in grades 6-12 accumulates five unexcused absences during a school year

Each participating SOAR district will establish a Responsive Interventions to Support and Empower (RISE) Team. These teams include representatives from schools, mental health services, juvenile justice, social services, and community agencies. The purpose of the RISE team is to identify barriers contributing to chronic absenteeism or diversion failure and develop individualized family improvement plans. More information about the implementation of the SOAR project will be released by KDE when it becomes available.

The bill expands the responsibilities of directors of pupil personnel (DPPs) and attendance staff. Districts will need to ensure that DPPs and designated personnel:

- Provide required written notices to families regarding unexcused absences;
- Document attendance interventions and communication efforts;
- Participate in SOAR and RISE processes where applicable; and
- Collaborate with court-designated workers and community partners regarding intervention planning and follow-up support.

Finally, beginning in the 2027-2028 school year, districts will be required to collect and report detailed data related to truancy complaints, diversion outcomes, referrals to county attorneys, and court involvement. KDE is in ongoing conversations about what this data collection may look like and will release more information when it becomes available.

Superintendent and Administrator Pay

[Senate Bill 2](#)

Section 1 amends KRS 157.350 to add requirements for school districts to be eligible for SEEK funding. To be eligible for SEEK funding, for contracts, renewals, or other extensions entered into on or after July 1, 2026, a district shall not provide any superintendent a percentage pay increase greater than the percentage pay increase provided to classroom teachers in the district. Upon the expiration of the superintendent's contract, a salary increase may be negotiated and set forth in a new contract. A district also must not provide an administrator a percentage pay increase greater than the percentage pay increase provided to classroom teachers in the district unless the pay increase is in conjunction with a professional advancement that imposes a significant change in job duties and responsibilities or the result of local board action to uniformly increase the pay associated with a specific job category. The bill further provides that the commissioner of education may grant the local board a waiver of these requirements. If a waiver is denied by the commissioner of education, a waiver may be requested by the local board from the Kentucky Board of Education pursuant to KRS 156.161.

Section 1 also removes outdated language regarding nonresident pupils.

Section 2 amends KRS 160.350 to require school districts to post on their website and submit to KDE, within 30 days of execution, each superintendent's contract, amendment, renewal, extension, or addendum thereto as a scanned copy of the fully executed document and an electronic text version of the document in a format prescribed by KDE that accurately sets forth the terms of the executed document and is accessible for publication in compliance with applicable accessibility requirements. For the electronic text version, school districts should submit to KDE an unexecuted Word version of the contract, amendment, renewal, extension, or addendum that is compliant with [Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) and aligns with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1 Level AA](#). Districts should submit the scanned copy of the fully executed document and the Word document to [SEEK District Data Submission](#). KDE recommends that districts save the Word document as a PDF that complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and WCAG 2.1 Level AA prior to posting it on their website. For information regarding creating accessible documents, please see [KDE's guidance on creating accessible Word documents](#).

Section 2 also requires KDE to post these documents on its website. The documents will be posted on [KDE's School District Personnel Information webpage](#).

School districts should note that HB 67 (2026) Section 4 requires the superintendent contract and appendices to be posted on the district's financial disclosure website as well as any amendments to the contract which must be posted within five days of approval by the local board of education.

Section 5 provides that Section 3 is emergency legislation.

[House Bill 448](#)

House Bill 448 creates a new section of KRS Chapter 17 to provide that “[a] criminal justice agency shall provide criminal history records information to a requesting agency when that requesting agency is conducting a basic suitability or fitness assessment for federal or contractor employees under 5 U.S.C. sec. 9101 and requests that information from the criminal justice agency.” “Criminal justice agency” is defined to include “school resource officer departments”. “Criminal history records information” and “requesting agency” are defined in HB 448.

HB 448 also amends KRS 610.340 to provide it shall not apply to criminal justice agencies conducting a basic suitability or fitness assessment for federal or contractor employees under 5 U.S.C. sec. 9101 in accordance with Section 1 of HB 448.

Teachers’ Retirement System

[Senate Bill 85](#)

Senate Bill 85 relates to designating a special needs trust to receive state-administered retirement benefits. See Section 7-8 regarding changes to the County Employees Retirement System and Section 9-11 regarding changes to the Kentucky Teachers’ Retirement System.

For questions, contact the [Kentucky Teachers’ Retirement System](#) or [County Employees Retirement System](#).

[House Bill 642](#)

House Bill 642 amends statutes related to the Kentucky Teachers’ Retirement System (TRS). Section 1 amends KRS 161.520 regarding survivor’s benefits upon the death of a TRS member. Section 2 amends KRS 161.605 regarding TRS members returning to work after retirement to provide that “[a] retired member returning to work for an employer that participates in a state-administered retirement system shall waive his or her medical insurance with the Teachers’ Retirement System during the period of reemployment and shall receive the medical insurance coverage that is offered by the member’s active employer.”

KRS 161.605(5) is amended to increase the minimum amount per day to \$200 and KRS 161.605(6)(b) is deleted. KRS 161.605 is also amended to add language regarding waiving annuity and returning to work in a TRS covered position. Section 3 amends KRS 161.608 regarding calculating benefits of any TRS member who also has an account with the Kentucky Employees Retirement System, County Employees Retirement System, or State Police

Retirement System. Section 4 amends KRS 161.620(7) to add language regarding obtaining this payment.

For questions regarding HB 642, please contact the [Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System](#).