

The background of the slide is a composite image. The top left portion shows two yellow school buses parked outdoors. The bottom left portion shows a classroom interior with blue walls, decorated with colorful balloons and framed pictures. Several white student desks and black chairs are arranged in the foreground of the classroom.

Guide for Using the KDE Dropout Prevention Needs Assessment

Persistence to Graduation Team

Division of Student Success

Office of Continuous Improvement and Support



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

Resource: Dropout Prevention Needs Assessment

- The checklist was designed for schools and districts to self-assess their current strengths and areas for growth as related to student dropout prevention.
- The checklist incorporates best practices based on research and includes multiple hyperlinks to resources.
- The checklist is available on the [KDE Persistence to Graduation webpage](#).

Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

KDE Dropout Prevention Needs Assessment Checklist

Research shows to effectively prevent student dropout, districts and schools should proactively monitor student progress in attendance, behavior and curriculum; districts and schools should also intervene early with targeted support for struggling students, provide engaging curricula that link education to future success and establish personalized learning environments to foster strong relationships. This checklist will help districts and schools self-assess their current strengths and areas for growth.

Key: FI = fully implemented, NR = fully implemented but needs review, PI = partially implemented, NI = not implemented

District Level Systems	FI	NR	PI	NI
1. Does the district have a written statement of beliefs and a mission statement that clearly articulates how it supports a learning philosophy for all students?				
2. Does the district utilize the KDE school report card to know its current dropout and graduation rates by school and student group?				
3. Does the district utilize the KDE school report card to know its quality of school climate and safety by school and student group?				
4. Does the district use the following tools to help identify schools and/or students in need of support?				
4a. KDE Early Warning Tool				
4b. KDE Transient Student Report				
4c. KDE Chronic Absenteeism Report				
5. Does the district have a dropout prevention coordinator that monitors student trends and liaisons with schools, families and community to support students?				
6. Does the district offer the following options to help learners engage and persist to graduation?				
6a. Career and technical education				
6b. Alternative education programs				
6c. Credit recovery				
6d. Early childhood programs for early literacy				
7. Does the district have effective programs in place to facilitate student transitions at major intervals?				
7a. Elementary to middle school				
7b. Middle school to high school				
8. Does the district foster learning environments in their schools where all students feel safe and included ?				
9. Does the district offer professional learning to their employees that support a school culture and climate of working with students who are at risk of not graduating?				
9a. Utilizing trauma-informed practices				
9b. Promoting social and emotional competencies				
9c. Encouraging culturally responsive teaching				
9d. Utilizing positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS)				
10. Does the district regularly review its code of conduct to support the reduction of exclusionary discipline practice and promote restorative practices?				
11. Does the district have a policy to reengage students who have "stopped out" of school or dropped out and who are eligible to enroll in public schools until age 21?				



How to Utilize the Needs Assessment

1. Gather a team. Be sure to include all voices in the discussion.
 - **District Review Team:** Ensure representation from elementary through high school and a variety of roles. District review team could include superintendent, DPP, dropout prevention coordinator, mental health professionals, re-engagement coordinators, representation from CTE and alternative education, school counselors, student service directors, etc.
 - **School Review Team:** Administrators, counselors, teachers, social workers, FRYSCs, paraprofessionals, students, families and community partners, etc.
2. Read and discuss each indicator as a team.
3. Mark indicators as fully implemented, fully implemented but needs review, partially implemented, or not implemented.
4. Select 2-3 indicators that need development.
5. Create an action plan and assign responsibilities.
6. Schedule a time to review progress.

Reviewing District Level System Indicators

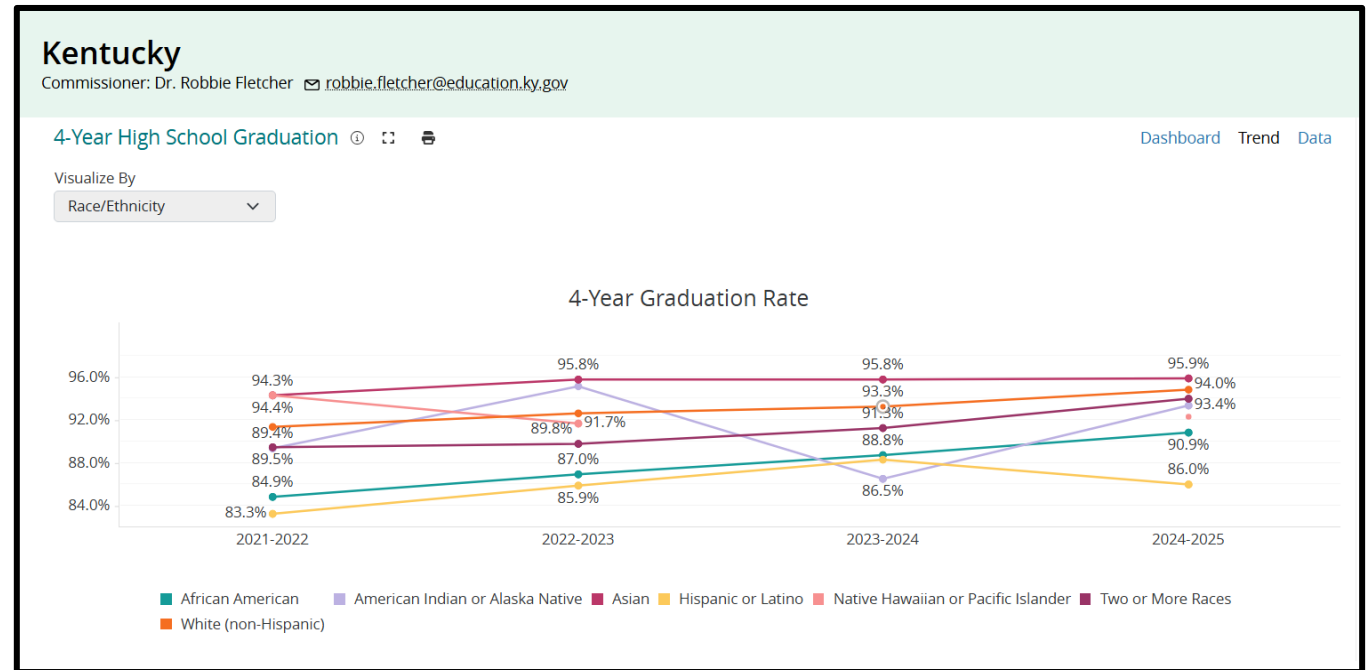
1. Does the district have a written statement of beliefs and a mission statement that clearly articulates how it supports a learning philosophy for all students?

- **Statement of Beliefs** – Outlines the core values and guiding principles the school stands for (e.g., respect, lifelong learning).
- **Mission Statement** – Describes the school's purpose, who it serves, and how it fulfills its vision in the present.
- If you need to create a statement of beliefs and/or mission statement
 - Engage stakeholders to ensure statement reflects shared values.
 - Be clear and concise.
 - Focus on purpose and impact
 - Make it action oriented.

2. Does the district utilize the Kentucky School Report Card to know its current dropout and graduation rates by school and student group?

For Graduation Rate:

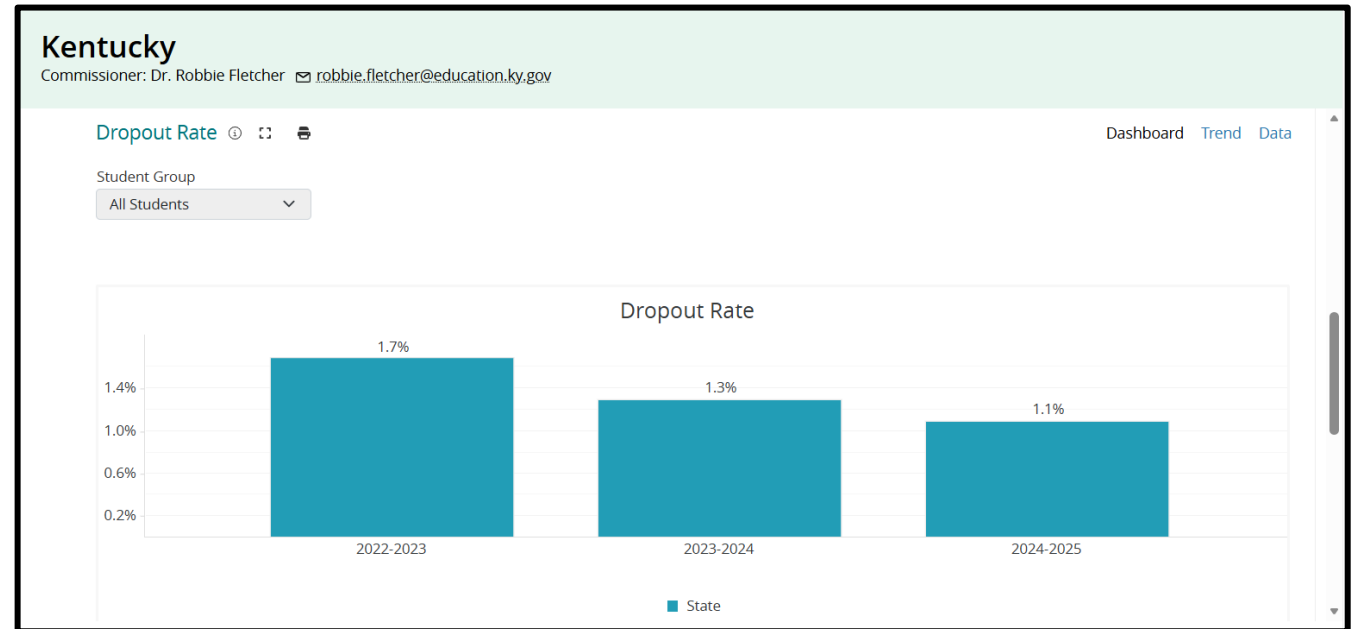
- Go to [Kentucky School Report Card](#).
- Search by district name.
- In the left toolbar, click School Accountability.
- Click on Graduation Rate.
- View Indicator Rating or click on High School Graduation to see dashboard, trend and data views by all students or selected student groups.



District Indicator #2 Continued

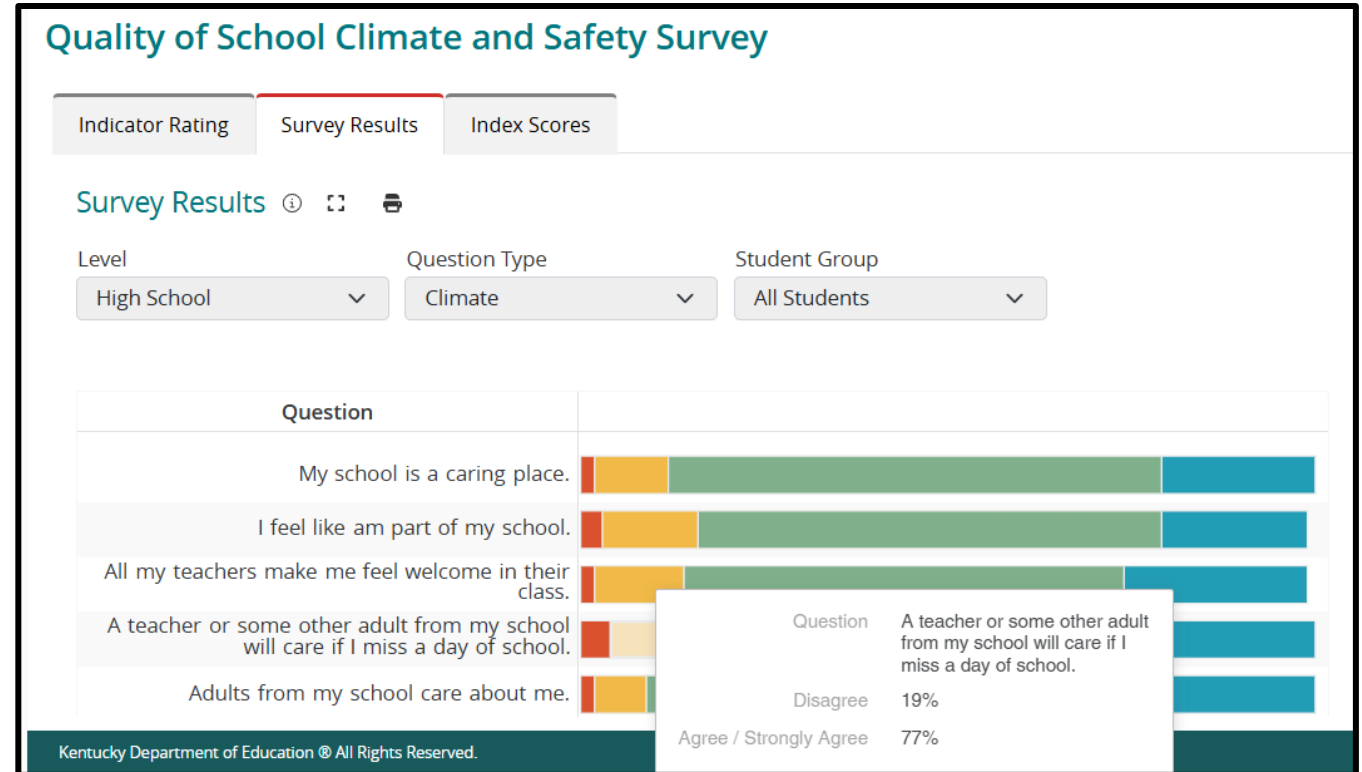
For dropout rate:

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- In the left toolbar, click Overview.
- Click on Students.
- At top of chart, select the tab for Dropout and Retention. You can view the dashboard graphs, trends and data for all students or by selected student groups.



3. Does the district utilize the Kentucky School Report Card to know its quality of school climate and safety by school and student group?

- Go to [Kentucky School Report Card](#).
- Search by district name.
- In the left toolbar, click School Accountability.
- Click on Quality of School Climate and Survey.
- View Indicator Rating, Survey Results, and Index Scores by school and selected student groups.



4. Does the district use the following Infinite Campus tools to help identify schools and/or students in need of support?

Early Warning Tool

- Provides a list of students and an Early Warning “GRAD Score” based on attendance, behavior, curriculum and stability.
- Answers the question “Who are the students most at-risk for dropping out, not graduating on time, or not being promoted to the next grade level?”

Transient Population

- Identifies transient students currently enrolled in a district and/or school.
- Students are transient if they have been enrolled in 3 or more schools in the current school year; 5 or more schools in the last 2 school years; or 10 or more schools in the last 5 school years.

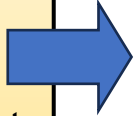
Chronic Absenteeism

- Calculates school/district chronic absenteeism data based on full-time equivalency (FTE) attendance.
- Produces aggregate and detailed chronic absenteeism data.

5. Does the district have a dropout prevention coordinator or team that monitors student trends and liaisons with schools, families and community to support students?

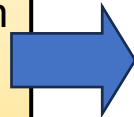
1. Identify Team

Created a dropout prevention team that includes counselor, FRYSC, assistant principal and the lead teacher at the alternative education program.



2. Explore Capacity

Meet on a regular basis to provide quick intervention (e.g., before school year starts, fall break, winter break – senior focus, spring break – junior focus).



3. Assign and Provide Supports

- Sort lowest GRAD score to highest and go student by student.
- Dig into the data to identify major problem.
- Assign supports and identify who will provide supports.

“Just this last week we did a schedule change for a student because we realized he was failing 3 of 4 classes and 2 of them were beyond salvageable. Why let him sit there and fail the final when we can do a schedule change and put him in credit recovery to recover some credit?” – Russell County Team

6. Does the district offer the following options to help learners engage and persist to graduation?

Career & Technical Education

- Connects learning to real-world careers and industry needs.
- Increases student engagement through hands-on, relevant learning experiences.

Alternative Education Program

- Offers flexible learning environments that meet diverse student needs.
- Provides individualized supports to help students persist toward graduation.

Credit Recovery

- Provides opportunities for students to earn previously missed credits.
- Helps students remain on track for on-time graduation.

Early Childhood Programs for Early Literacy

- Builds strong literacy skills that support long-term academic success.
- Helps prevent future learning gaps that can contribute to disengagement.



7. Does the district have effective programs in place to facilitate student transitions at major intervals?

Elementary to Middle School

- 5th-grade tour of middle school
- Orientation night for students and families where students can walk from classroom to classroom
- Summer bridge program

Middle School to High School

- High school counselors visit middle school to share about graduation requirements and pathways as well as help with scheduling
- Orientation night
- Summer bridge program
- Peer mentors

8. Does the district foster learning environments in their schools where all students feel safe and included?

Consider how your district monitors and addresses these areas through either student programming and/or staff professional development. Consider how all the pieces work together for a safe and inclusive environment.



- Bullying and harassment
- Classroom management
- Cyber bullying
- Drug abuse
- Gangs
- Human trafficking
- Internet safety
- School violence
- Sexting/sextortion
- Social and emotional learning
- Social networking
- Suicide prevention

9. Does the district offer professional learning to its employees that support a school culture and climate of working with students who are at risk of not graduating?

- 9a. Utilizing [trauma-informed practices](#)
- 9b. Promoting [social and emotional competencies](#)
- 9c. Encouraging [culturally responsive teaching](#)
- 9d. Utilizing [positive behavioral interventions and supports](#) (PBIS)

Free trainings available from KDE's Division of Student Success

- Adult Mental Health First Aid
- Bullying Prevention Within a Multi-Tiered Framework
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)
- Restorative Practices
- School Connectedness
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Sources of Strength
- Supporting Transient Students
- Trauma Informed Practices for Educators
- Youth Mental Health First Aid

10. Does the district regularly review its code of conduct to support the reduction of exclusionary discipline practice and promote restorative practices?



“Evidence suggests that the overuse of exclusionary practices is associated with a poor school climate, which can ultimately foster distrust and lead to poorer educational outcomes. In contrast, strong student-teacher relationships are associated with academic motivation, a sense of belonging, and achievement.”

Source: U.S. Department of Education “[Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, and Fair School Climates](#)”

11. Does the district have a policy to re-engage students who have “stopped out” of school or dropped out and who are eligible to enroll in public schools until age 21?

Consider the following items when working to re-engage students:

- Utilize multiple recruitment channels (phone calls, mailed letters, email, community-based referrals, home visits)
- Offer flexible learning models (e.g., virtual, credit recovery, alternative education programs)
- Maintain educational relevance by connecting coursework to real-world applications, career pathways, and future goals
- Coordinate academic and social supports by providing mentors, tutors, transportation solutions, childcare assistance, referrals to community services

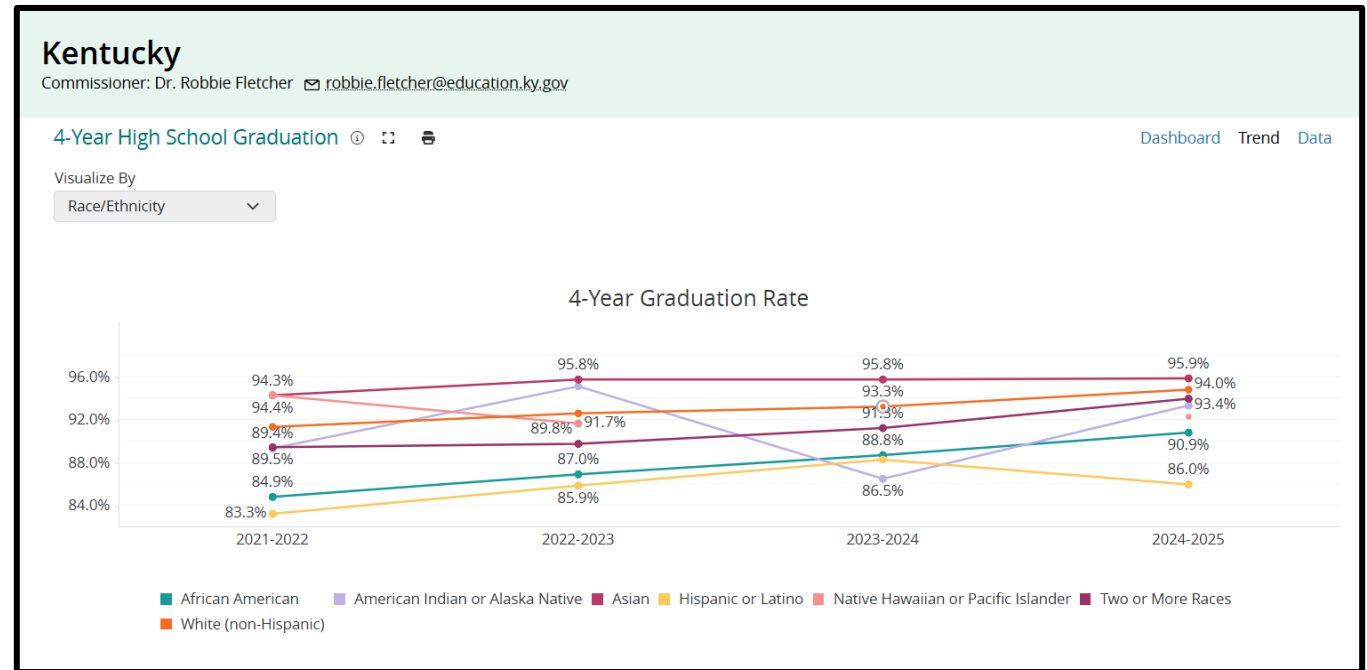
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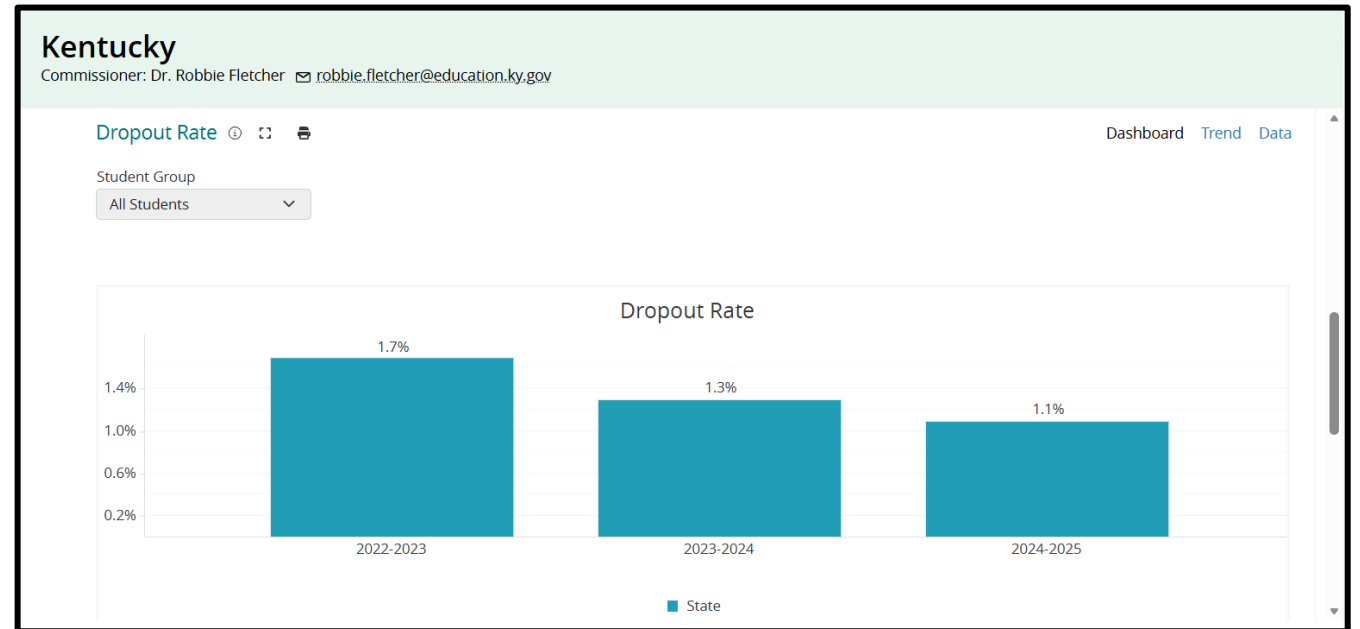
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School Indicator #2 Continued

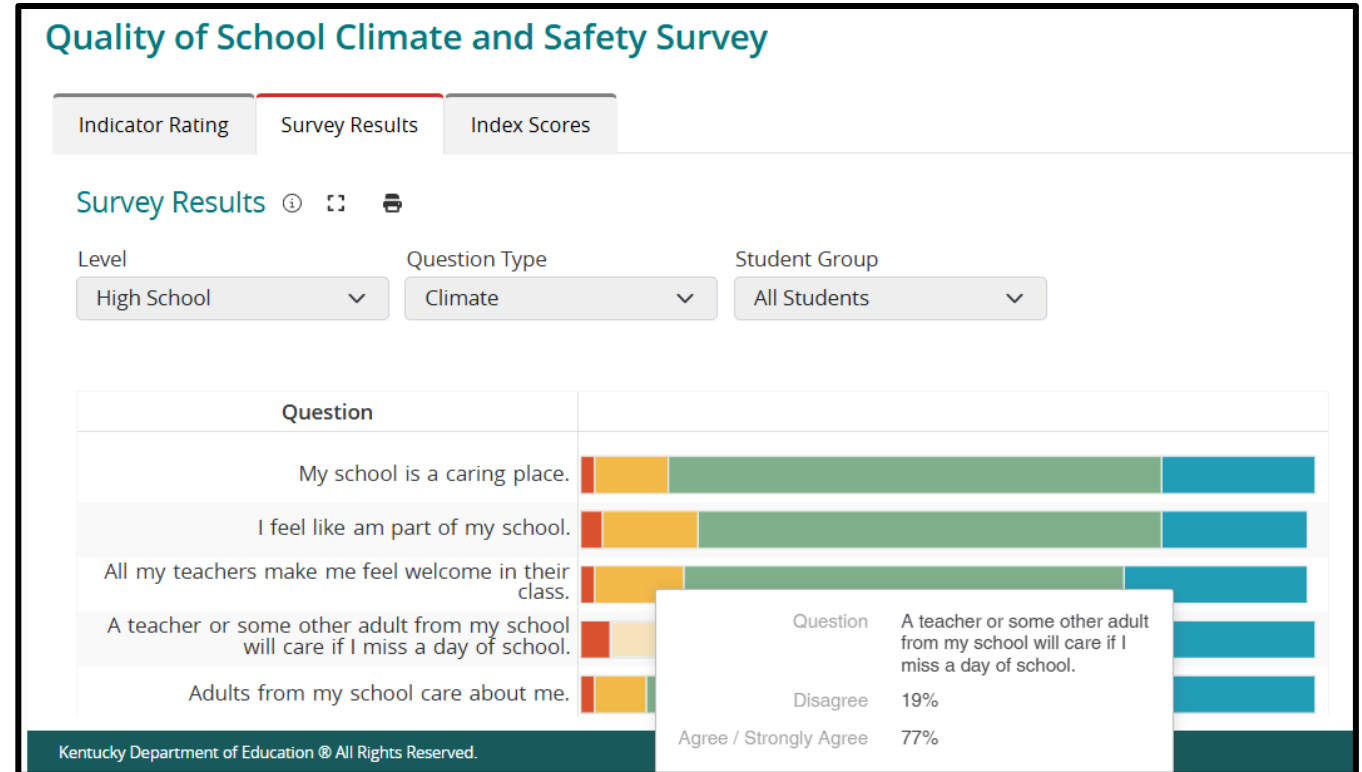
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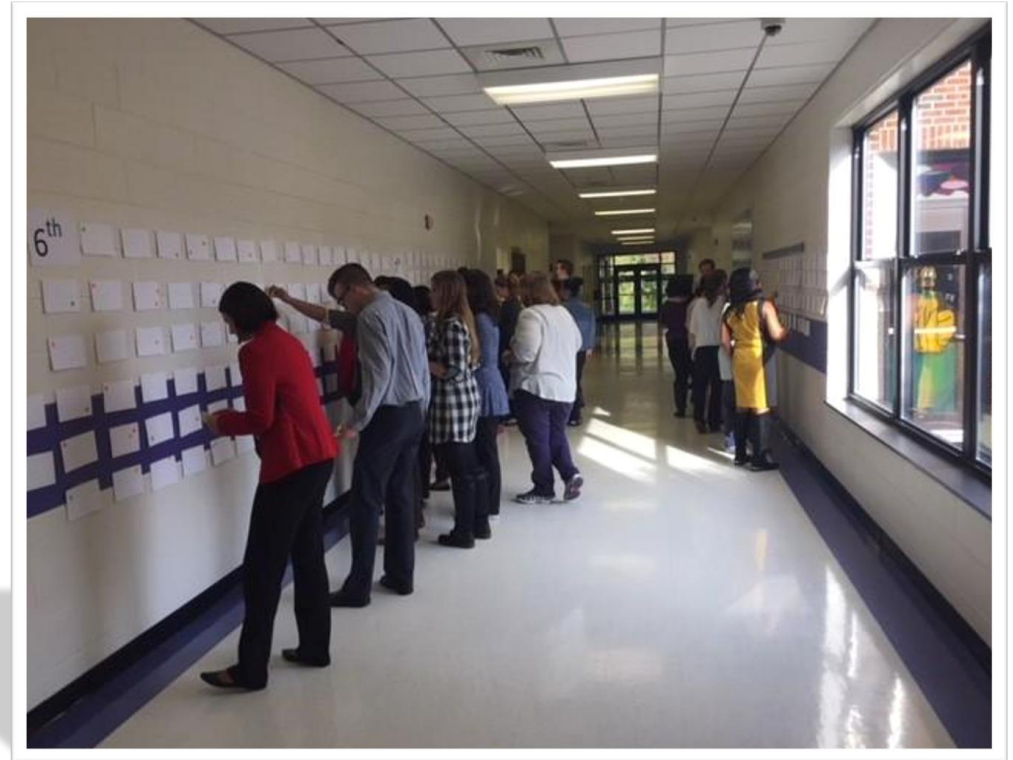
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- In the left toolbar, click School Accountability.
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4. Does the school have a plan to ensure each student is known and meaningfully connected to at least one adult in the school?

Student connectedness is a student's belief that adults and peers in school care about their learning, well-being and success.

- Built through trust, relationships and meaningful participation in the school community
- Supported through both individual actions and systemic structures
- A research-backed protective factor against disengagement



5. Does the school have an assigned staff member or student support team that consistently reviews data from the KDE Early Warning Tool to help identify students in need of support with attendance, behavior, curriculum or stability?

- The [Infinite Campus Early Warning Tool](#) provides a quick snapshot of who may be in danger of not graduating on time or not being promoted to the next grade level.
- Data from the Early Warning Tool can be implemented into current MTSS structure or used as part of a dropout prevention team.

Early Warning ☆ Student Information >

Category Type **Independent Category Outcome** Category Impact Displaying 685 out of 685

Watchlist	Last Name	First Name	Grade	GRAD Score ↑	Attendance	Behavior	Curriculum	Stability
☐ (3)	WOOLUM	COLTON	09	52	54	89	69	54
☐ (2)	COLLINSWOF	JESSIE	11	53	131	125	66	119
☐ (1)	HENDRICKSO	JAYLEN	10	53	83	123	62	104
☐ (1)	HOWE	ARIANA	10	53	118	125	65	94
☐ (1)	LEE	BRIAN	14	53	99	123	62	61
☐ (1)	SMITH	NICHOLAS	08	53	93	122	75	60
☐ (1)	BROWN	DYLAN	12	54	113	125	66	141
☐ (2)	CALLAHAN	ABREANNA	10	54	89	100	52	62
☐ (1)	CREIGHTON	HUNTER	10	54	104	125	84	82

6. Does the school use tools like Infinite Campus Insights to disaggregate data and determine which additional structures and interventions need to be implemented schoolwide based on student attendance, behavior, curriculum and stability?

- [Infinite Campus Insights](#) offers multiple visualization dashboards on attendance, behavior, course performance, and stability.
- Reports can be viewed as a chart or in detail view with student names and any other applied fields and filters.
- Users can incorporate the Watchlist feature from Early Warning as well as established caseloads or ad hoc filters.



7. Once all data is disaggregated, does the school have a delineated process for how staff will work with students to support them and consistently monitor progress?

- 7a. Assign mentor (i.e., advisor, check-in)
- 7b. Develop interventions
- 7c. Create/modify [individualized learning plan](#)
- 7d. Other:

- Consider utilizing your MTSS team or MTSS structures for disaggregating data and providing student supports
- Available resources for [Kentucky Multi-Tiered System of Supports](#)

8. Does the school offer an advisory course or other elective in which students can grow in the following areas?

- 8a. Organizational and study skills
- 8b. [Social and emotional competencies](#)
- 8c. [College and career exploration](#)
- 8d. [Financial literacy](#)



9. Does the school offer opportunities for students to earn previously missed credits?

- 9a. Remediation
- 9b. Summer school
- 9c. Credit recovery
- 9d. Competency-based education

Course failures and insufficient credit attainment are among the strongest predictors of not graduating on time. For students who are already dealing with stressful situations, this dynamic contributes to feelings of failure, frustration or even dropping out of school.

10. Does the school counselor obtain transcripts from previous schools to support transient student credit accumulation?

Our most transient students face significant life challenges and often relocate to another school, alternative program or district numerous times. They do not always receive partial credit for the work they completed in previous settings, often virtual/performance-based courses.

Credit Accrual Best Practices:

- Add up credits, including in progress grades
- Priority registration
- Early identification
- Credit recovery options
- Personalized assignments
- Measuring mastery

11. Does the school assign an adult and a peer-buddy to support new or transient students entering and exiting the school?



Peer buddies can support...

- Building belonging and reducing isolation
- Academic support and confidence
- Social skill development
- Cultural and community integration

Source: Grand Canyon University “[Benefits of Implementing a Buddy System in Schools](#)”

12. Does the school identify and address non-academic barriers (e.g., basic needs, health conditions and family factors) and engage with the FRYSC or partner with community organizations to provide essential services and resources for families in need?

“The primary goal of the Family Resource and Youth Services Centers is to remove non-academic barriers to learning to enhance student academic success.”

FRYSCs develop and sustain partnerships that promote:

- Early learning and successful transition to school
- Academic achievement and well-being
- Graduation and transition into adult life

13. Does the school provide mental health services either on site or through formal referral pathways?

School-Based Mental Health services bring support directly to students at school.

- **Prevention:** Helping students build skills before challenges arise.
- **Early Support:** Catching concerns early and offering help.
- **Timely Intervention:** Responding quickly when students need more intensive support.



14. Does the school offer continued opportunities for family engagement to encourage student success?



Resources for family engagement:

- [Family Involvement - Kentucky Department of Education](#)
- [Parent and Family Connection Hub - Kentucky Department of Education](#)
- [Family Friendly Schools – Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence](#)

Connect with the Persistence to Graduation Team

We offer consultation services and trainings on the following topics and more:

- Addressing Chronic Absenteeism
- Establishing School Connectedness
- Infinite Campus Early Warning Tool
- IC Insights Data Visualization Dashboards
- Implementation of Data Tools to Support Student Success
- Supporting Transient Students
- Using a School and District-Level Dropout Prevention Needs Assessment

Email a member of the Persistence to Graduation Team.

- PtGTeam@staff.ky.schools.us



Schedule time using [Microsoft Bookings](#).