

Senate Bill 1 Update

Senate Bill 1, signed by Governor Beshear on March 26, 2009, is a significant piece of education legislation that revises the assessment and accountability system for P-12 education in Kentucky. It requires a revision of standards to be based on national and international benchmarks in order to increase the rigor and focus the content of P-12 education, increasing the number of students that are college ready.

The bill calls upon the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), in collaboration with the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), to plan and implement a comprehensive process for revising the academic content standards. Part of this process includes the development of a unified strategy to reduce college remediation rates and increase graduation rates of postsecondary students with developmental education needs. An outline for that process, including timelines for all activities, has been completed and is being implemented.

The next step, already underway, is the reviewing of the current system-wide public postsecondary placement policy in English and mathematics, and, working with institutional representatives and KDE, determining whether revisions are needed in those content standards. A statewide reading group, partnering with the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development, is reviewing strategies for reading in academic content areas and reading assessments with the goal of identifying those reading skills needed for success in postsecondary introductory reading intensive courses. A mathematics group, partnering with the Kentucky Center for Mathematics, is doing the same. Reading and mathematics are widely acknowledged as the gateways for success in all of a student's future educational endeavors. This is particularly the case for mathematics and science. The science standards will be reviewed in the very near future as part of the next stage of the process.

A catalog of college readiness strategies already in use within the state and nation is also being developed. This catalog of strategies can be used by educational cooperatives and P-16 Councils in their efforts to limit the number of students in postsecondary education and the workforce underprepared in the essential skill areas. KDE and many other state and national partners will be a part of the process to align course content and assessments between P-12 and postsecondary institutions.

A Steering Committee has also been established and met on August 12. This committee will provide guidance and oversight in the implementation of the process to create one set of standards from P-12 to college entry-level courses and will provide insight into the development of strategic plans to reduce the remediation rates of high school graduates and increase the graduation rates of underprepared students.

KDE Commissioner Terry Holliday and CPE President Bob King are working together to ensure that the revised standards that are recommended to the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) for approval are aligned with postsecondary education course and assessment standards for reading and mathematics. They are guiding a process whose ultimate goal is improved education at all levels for all of the Commonwealth's students.