

Kentucky’s Accountability System at a Glance

Kentucky’s accountability system has students at its center—ensuring they are well-rounded, postsecondary ready and prepared with knowledge, skills and essential dispositions to successfully pursue the pathway of their choice after graduating from high school. The system has several key goals:

- Promote higher levels of student learning and achievement.
- Reduce achievement gaps and ensure equity.
- Build a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement.
- Communicate a clear and honest understanding of strengths and areas for improvement in schools and districts.

The system uses multiple academic and school quality measures, not a single test or indicator. Reporting of each indicator will be determined by setting standards for performance on system indicators. Measures and weights in the charts below contribute to a school’s/district’s overall accountability score and Overall Performance Rating (color). Additional information is reported to provide a more complete picture of education in Kentucky. Results are reported in an online School Report Card including disaggregation of individual student group data and include reported-only measures. Individual student reports are issued to parents/guardians.

Senate Bill 158 and Kentucky’s Accountability System

SB 158 (2020) amended KRS 158.6455, Section 1 to create an accountability system that includes an annual meaningful differentiation of all public schools in the state using multiple measures that describe the overall performance of each district, school and student demographic group.

- Performance is based on a combination of academic and school quality indicators and measures known as “state indicators.”
- Those indicators exclusively include student assessment results, progress toward achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP) by English learners, quality of school climate and safety, high school graduation rates and postsecondary readiness.
- The accountability system Overall Performance Rating for each district, school, and student demographic group is determined by the state indicators that combine current year performance, called “Status,” and improvement from prior to current year, called “Change.”
- For each state indicator, there are five Status Ratings ranging from very high to very low and five Change Ratings ranging from increased significantly to declined significantly.
- For all students as a group and separately for individual demographic groups, “Status” was determined beginning with the data from the 2021-2022 academic year, by using the current year performance. “Change” will be determined beginning with the data from the 2022-2023 academic year, by using the difference in performance of each indicator from the prior year to the current year. Note: “Status” for the EL indicator will include student progress.
- The percentile cut scores for Status and Change Ratings will be based on a distribution and will be approved by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and the Local Superintendents Advisory Council (LSAC). The cut scores will remain in place for at least six years unless existing cut scores no longer support meaningful differentiation of schools as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- Through an online “dashboard” in the School Report Card, results are reported on Status, Change and Indicator Performance Rating that combines Status and Change for each state indicator by school, district and state for all students as a group and separately for individual demographic groups. The Overall Accountability Score aggregates all available data for the state indicators.

State Indicators in the Accountability System

State Indicators	
State Assessment Results in Reading and Mathematics	<i>Reaching the desired level of knowledge and skills as measured on state required academic assessments in reading and mathematics. Student performance is aggregated to school, district and state levels.</i>
State Assessment Results in Science, Social Studies and Writing	<i>Reaching the desired level of knowledge and skills as measured on state required academic assessments in science, social studies and writing. Writing includes on demand writing and editing and mechanics. Student performance is aggregated to school, district and state levels.</i>
English Learner Progress	<i>Improvement on the English Language Proficiency Exam by English Learners. English learners’ progress is included in the calculation using an English learner growth table.</i>
Quality of School Climate and Safety	<i>Measures of the school environment. Perception data from surveys that measure insight to the school environment.</i>
Postsecondary Readiness (high school only)	<i>Attainment of the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions to successfully transition to the next level of his or her education career. To demonstrate postsecondary readiness, high school students must earn a high school diploma or be classified as a grade 12 non-graduate AND meet one type of readiness (Academic or Career).</i>
Graduation Rate (high school only)	<i>Percentage of students earning a high school diploma compared to the cohort of students starting in grade 9. Kentucky uses an average of the 4-year adjusted cohort rate and an extended 5-year adjusted cohort in accountability, which recognizes the persistence of students and educators in completing the requirements for a Kentucky high school diploma. Schools with a 4-year graduation rate of less than 80 percent are identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI).</i>

Status and Change

The accountability system performance for each level by all students and each student demographic group determined by the state indicators are based on a combination of annual performance called "Status" and difference between prior year and current year, called "Change."

For each state indicator, there will be five Status Ratings ranging from very low to very high and five Change Ratings ranging from declined significantly to increased significantly.

Beginning in Fall 2022, the KDE developed an online "dashboard" to display the accountability system results. Color-coded performance ratings for each state indicator are displayed in a straightforward manner on the dashboard based on Status (2022), and Status and Change (2023) by district and school for all students as a group and separately for individual demographic groups. Overall Performance Ratings aggregate all available data for the state indicators.

The 5 x 5 colored table for each state indicator combines Status and Change to provide an Indicator Performance Rating. Note: From lowest to highest, the five Indicator Performance Ratings are: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green and Blue.

Indicator Performance Rating (color rating based on combination of Status and Change for each indicator)

CHANGE

Status and Change Ratings	Declined Significantly from Prior Year	Declined from Prior Year	Maintained from Prior Year	Increased from Prior Year	Increased Significantly from Prior Year
Very High in Current Year	Yellow	Green	Blue	Blue	Blue
High in Current Year	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Blue
Medium in Current Year	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green
Low in Current Year	Red	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow
Very Low in Current Year	Red	Red	Red	Orange	Yellow

STATUS ↑

Minimum N-Count

For accountability, a minimum of thirty (30) students per indicator, per level (elementary, middle, and high) is required in each student demographic group to be included in school calculations. Public reporting will follow U.S. Department of Education (USED) and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines.

Accountability Weights

Overall Accountability Score

An overall accountability score is generated by combining indicator scores by their percentage of weight.

Overall Accountability Weights

	State Assessment Results (Reading and Mathematics)	State Assessment Results (Science, Social Studies and Writing)	English Learner Progress	Quality of School Climate and Safety	Postsecondary Readiness	Graduation Rate (4- and 5-year cohort)
Elementary Schools	51	40	5	4	--	---
Middle Schools	46	45	5	4	--	--
High Schools	45	20	5	4	20	6

Accountability System Considering All Indicators

Performance levels will be based on a percentile distribution. Through a standard-setting process, the cut scores required for each of the five color levels of performance will be established. The aggregation of all data will determine a school's Overall Performance Rating (color).

Overall Performance Rating

Based on the strength of performance on indicators as combined in the overall accountability score.

The Overall Performance Rating for elementary, middle and high schools will be reported using a color rating system to communicate performance of schools. Color ratings will include five performance levels (red, orange, yellow, green, blue), with red being the lowest rating and blue being the highest rating.

Red	Orange	Yellow	Green	Blue
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Cut scores for all indicator ratings and overall school performance will be approved by the KDE and the LSAC.

Note: The KDE is working with the USED on federal approval.