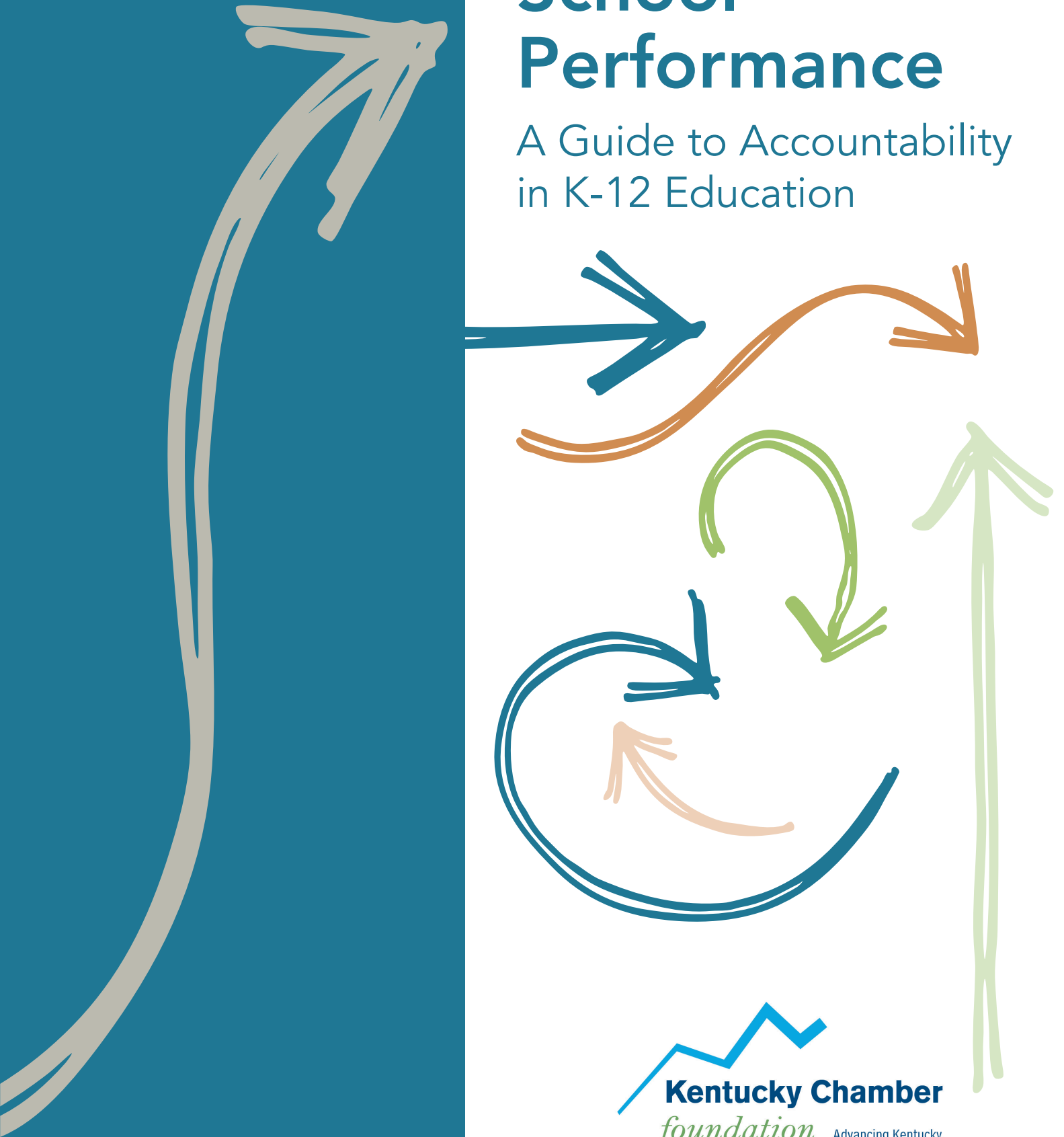


Understanding School Performance

A Guide to Accountability in K-12 Education



Kentucky Chamber
foundation Advancing Kentucky.

Accountability

Taking responsibility for our actions and making sure things get done the right way is critical to the success of any undertaking. In our society, we expect accountability across the board – from government to business to civic organizations to individuals – and we recognize how important it is that someone be answerable for action or inaction and outcomes.

Nowhere is that more important than in our schools, the foundation of the future we will build for individuals, communities and the state as a whole.

Accountability has been part of Kentucky's education system for decades. It's a fundamental piece of the arrangement crafted years ago when Kentucky's taxpayers supported more funding for schools with the expectation that they would receive regular, easy to understand information about how well the schools were performing.

Kentucky's accountability system has grown more complicated through the years and, today, an effort is underway to rework it with the goal of greater simplicity and better ways to help schools that are not performing as well as they should be, especially when it comes to closing the gaps that persist between the academic achievement levels of different groups of students. The process is part of what Kentucky is doing to comply with the Every Student Succeeds Act that was approved by Congress in 2015.

A new design for the system is still in the draft stage, and more information can be found online at slamdunkky.org. In addition to more information about the draft accountability system, you'll find an online survey there where you can share your opinion about the proposal with state education leaders.

Why school accountability matters

Kentucky's future relies on all of our young people receiving a high-quality education.

By 2020, 57 percent of jobs in Kentucky will require a postsecondary credential. If we want Kentucky to be strong and successful in the future, we must prepare today's young people for the workforce. To do that, we need to ensure that our K-12 public schools are giving all students the high-quality education they deserve.

One way we can connect all of our students with a great education is by evaluating how well our schools

are serving them—and taking action if schools need support to better serve all their students. In this way, we can identify which schools are struggling and help students and teachers in those schools get the resources they need to make progress and succeed. This is what we mean by accountability.

Since 2011, Kentucky has had a school accountability system called "Unbridled Learning." This system is designed to provide in-depth information through online school report cards about the performance of students, schools, districts and the state as a whole.

Right now, educators, policymakers and other stakeholders from across the state are looking at ways to continue to build on Kentucky's accountability system to ensure that it meets the needs of all of our students and schools. Our new state plan is likely to define what school accountability looks like in Kentucky for the next 10 years.

All of us have a responsibility to ensure that young people in Kentucky are ready to become tomorrow's successful workforce—business and civic leaders, teachers, engineers and innovators. That is why it is important for all of us to make sure that our accountability system will lead to a better education for all students.

A postsecondary credential can mean a two- or four-year college degree. But it also can mean being certified in a certain area of expertise or obtaining a credential in a specific skill. There are many routes today to earning a postsecondary credential.

Achievement gaps reflect the academic performance of different student populations. Research shows that students most likely to be missing academic opportunities are those:

- With low family incomes
- Who are learning English
- With learning differences
- Who are African American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian/Native Alaskan or of two or more races

What the accountability system should do

Kentucky's educators and students work hard every day to learn and achieve more. Our state accountability system must support them in making progress.

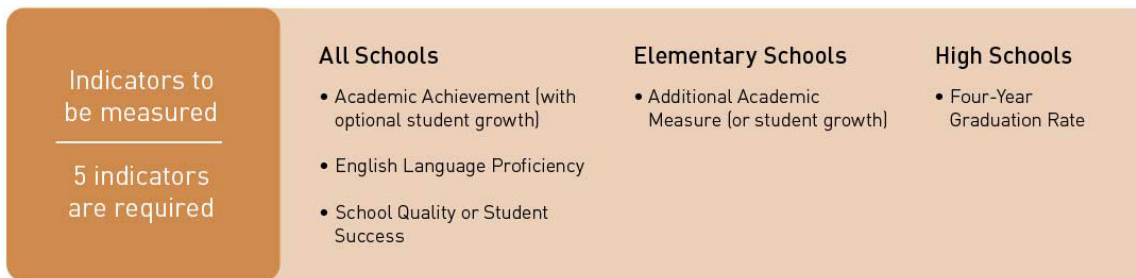
Over the past several years, students in our state have made tremendous gains. Our graduation rate is among the top in the nation, and our low-income students are graduating at especially high rates. We've made this progress by supporting the highest-need students in the highest-need schools.

But we still have a long way to go to close achievement gaps and ensure our young people are prepared for college and the workforce. Our school accountability system can help us get much closer to this goal.

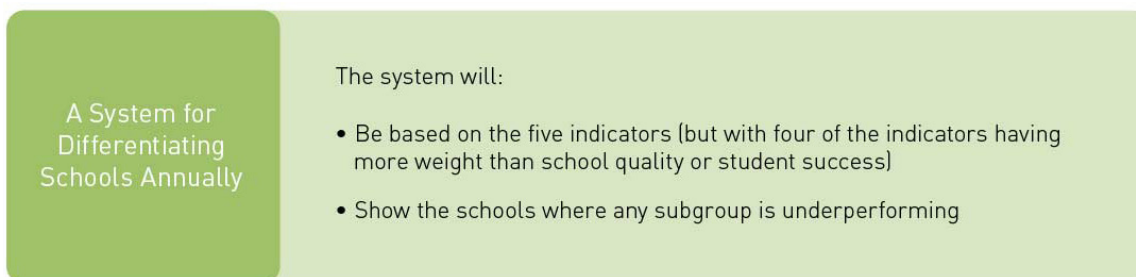
Stakeholders across Kentucky – including teachers and other educators, civic and business leaders, advocates and parents – are making a plan for how to hold schools accountable over the next several years. Our accountability system should protect taxpayers' investments in education and, to truly support all of our students, should:

- Set meaningful, ambitious goals for student performance

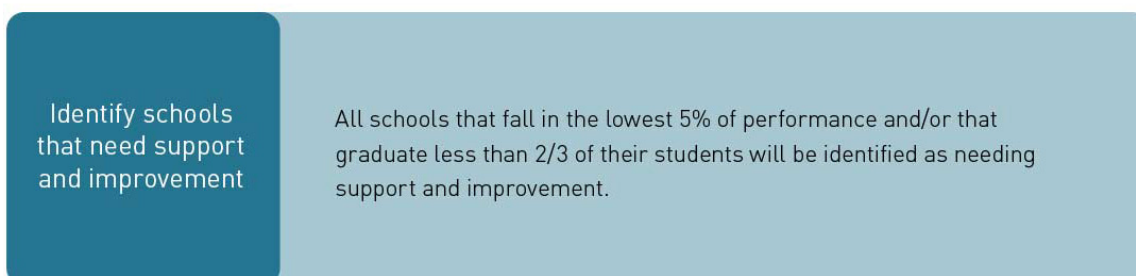
Synopsis of the Every Student Succeeds Act Accountability Requirements

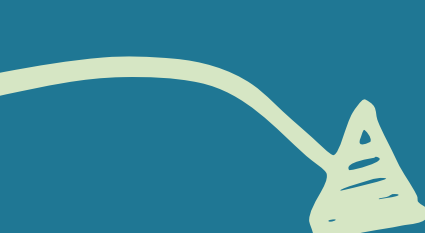


which must be used to establish



through which the state will



- 
- Give us clear information about how different groups of students in a school are performing and making progress
 - Identify schools that need targeted or comprehensive support to improve how they serve groups of students

Accountability that benefits all Kentucky students: Our role

Now is the time for parents, educators, business and civic leaders, and community members to come together and move our education system forward for all of Kentucky's young people.

With the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, which replaces No Child Left Behind, Kentucky has an opportunity to create a new accountability system that can better support all of our students and provide more meaningful information for parents, educators and communities.

We want our system to meet the unique needs and context of our state, so it is critical for all Kentuckians to have a say in what the accountability system looks like. Over the past several months, Kentuckians have shared their input and priorities through:

- A series of Education Town Hall Meetings held across the state, presented by the Kentucky Department of Education
- Submitting comments by e-mail to the Department of Education
- Participating on working groups and the Education Accountability Steering Committee, which developed recommendations on what the system should look like
- Sharing your views with state and local leaders, such as the education commissioner, members of the state Board of Education and leaders in your school district
- Emailing your input to KyEdListens@education.ky.gov
- Submitting or signing on to a public comment on the draft accountability plan
- Spreading the word about the importance of the state accountability plan on social media

The current timeline calls for Kentucky to submit its plan to the United States Department of Education in September 2017. Before then, you can make your voice heard by:

More information is available online at slamdunkky.org and educaton.ky.gov.

