

Management Improvement Program

Management Review Report

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Pursuant to [KRS 158.780](#) and [KRS 158.785](#), the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) shall establish a program to improve specific aspects of the management of local school districts. KRS 158.785(2) provides that the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) shall “collect and review data relative to the instructional and operational performance of local school districts.” Should the review indicate significant deficiencies, the KDE shall conduct an on-site review, pursuant to [703 KAR 3:205](#), that “include[s] the examination of local school records and interviews with school district officials, staff, and community leaders. The on-site review may include an examination of school district operations in:

- a) Governance policy and procedures;
- b) Instructional programming and organization;
- c) Fiscal management and accountability procedures;
- d) The maintenance and condition of the physical plant;
- e) Facility construction;
- f) Student transportation; and
- g) Community perception and support.”

703 KAR 3:205 Section 2 provides that if the data review and school district investigation reveal significant deficiencies, “the commissioner of education shall determine whether the significant deficiencies indicate the presence of critically ineffective or inefficient management. If it does, the commissioner shall order a management audit consistent with [KRS 158.785](#) and [[703 KAR 2:305](#)].”

This report outlines the findings and observations of the review team.

Governance Policy and Procedures

The Nelson County Board of Education is made up of 5 members. The range of membership on the Board at the time of the review spans from 5 months to 12 years. Each Board member has attended Kentucky School Board Association (KSBA) required Board member trainings. However, interviews indicated that the Board members do not have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Board members indicated that they could benefit from additional training to conduct effective and efficient board meetings.

The Board of Education has adopted policies for administration and school governance. However, there is not a system in place to review, amend, or adopt policies and procedures on a regular basis. Neither the Board of Education nor the Superintendent can clearly communicate how policies directly impact student achievement.

The district has developed an organizational chart and job descriptions. Interviews revealed Board members do not have a clear understanding of the district organizational structure or job descriptions.

There does not appear to be a comprehensive communication plan for the district. It is not clear who is responsible for keeping information up to date on the website.

Some Board members indicated that they have a positive relationship with the Central Office staff. Interviews indicated that when some Board members requested information from Central Office staff it was received in a timely fashion.

There is a strained/intense relationship between some Board Members and the Superintendent.

Instructional Programming and Organization

The Nelson County Schools recently engaged in an extensive curriculum revision and alignment process. Central Office directors collaborated with school personnel from January to May 2023 to align curriculum to the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS), as well as vertically and horizontally districtwide. The district utilized summer Leadership Pathway days for additional district and school collaboration to develop aligned unit plans and for other teacher planning opportunities. Backpack Days help ensure ongoing job embedded curriculum work. Additionally, the adoption of EL Education Language Arts curriculum in all elementary schools and Illustrative Mathematics (IM) curriculum in all elementary and middle schools has helped advance the goal of instructional consistency; multiple stakeholders noted how these common curricula aid in collaboration efforts across the district.

Interviews consistently identified the superintendent as the primary leader of curriculum and instruction, strongly supported by all Central Office directors. Interviews indicated regular meetings and frequent interactions between principals and the superintendent, as well as regular Central Office director attendance and support during school Learning Design Lab (LDL) meetings and during school walkthroughs/learning walks.

Principals and other stakeholders expressed positive outlooks, supported by data (e.g., iReady scores and reports), regarding the current trajectory of the curricular and instructional work in the district, and a review of artifacts revealed numerous supporting documents (e.g., Comprehensive School Improvement Plans, Comprehensive District Improvement Plan, Professional Development Plan, Leadership Pathway planning, Backpack Day planning, “Uniting People, Place, & Purpose” visioning work, school data dashboards, C3 process and walkthrough tool, unit plans, aligned curriculum documents, LDL documentation including weekly signals).

A review of the Career and Technical Education (OCTE) program evidence revealed that there are some deficiencies in both pathways and student data. There is limited evidence that the OCTE system and process to align pathways to the Program of Studies and the process to review student data is being followed by the District.

The district had no Special Education Corrective Action Plans (CAP) at the time of this review. KDE's Office of Special Education and Early Learning (OSEEL) conducted a desk review in the spring of 2023. The district was identified with a significant discrepancy for Indicator 4. A CAP was issued which has now been closed. In the fall of 2023, the district had a desk review for Indicator 11 and was 100% compliant. Nelson County had an Indicator 12 desk review using their 2020-2021 School Year data and district files were 100% compliant. In the 2021-22 school year, the district had an alternate assessment desk review and was 100% compliant. In the spring of 2022, a review of the district's 2020 IDEA grant award resulted in a CAP. The district has completed all required corrective actions.

The district also conducts self-reviews and reported non-compliance for Indicator 13 using School Year 2019-2020 data. A CAP was issued which has now been closed. The district self-reported noncompliance for Indicator 11 using the 2019-2020 data. A systemic citation was issued by OSEEL, and the district submitted clarifying information; no CAP was issued.

Fiscal Management and Accountability Procedures

Based on the district's independent audit, there are no obvious gaps in the financial management policies and procedures in the district. According to the latest School Report Card data on the KDE website, the district has a 12.68% General Fund balance. KDE staff in the Office of Finance and Operations, Division of District Support, have not identified any concerns to date regarding financial reporting from the district.

The Human Resource (HR) Department completes the on-boarding of new employees, and processes other employee personnel actions such as disciplinary actions, transfers, resignations, retirements, and terminations. The HR Department makes sure that the individual employee personnel files are kept current with personnel actions, employee evaluations and certification updates. It appears that there are adequate processes and procedures in place to support the functions of the HR Department. There is some concern that board members do not understand that new hires with alternative certifications are viable options for the district.

The Maintenance and Condition of the Physical Plant

The district uses a ticket system to record maintenance requests/projects, assign tasks to Facility Leads in the buildings, and monitor the completion of each request. Custodial services are outsourced to a third party. The custodial provider employs a district supervisor who liaisons with the Director of Facility Services to monitor service to the buildings. The Director of Facilities Services also updates the Kentucky Facilities Inventory and Classification System (KFICS) maintained by the Facilities Branch at KDE. There appears to be adequate processes in place to maintain the cleanliness and general maintenance of the buildings.

Facility Construction

The District Facility Plan (DFP) is a major point of conflict between some board members and the Superintendent. The current DFP was approved by the Kentucky Board of Education in 2019 and revised with an amendment in February 2022, and a finding in December 2022. A new DFP was due in 2023; the district has not initiated a request for a waiver nor established a new facility planning process.

Student Transportation

The KDE conducted a district review of the Nelson County Schools Transportation Department in December 2023. There were a few issues with new drivers (less than 1 year experience) and several buses were marked “Out of Service” for maintenance issues. It is not clear that there are processes in place to ensure driver records are maintained in a timely manner or that buses are proactively checked by the district for maintenance and safety issues. Furthermore, it is not clear who is held accountable for the shortcomings in these two areas.

The district plans to replace 4 buses per year to maximize the depreciation benefits. The district faces a common state-wide issue of being able to hire and retain drivers. The school report card data shows the district spends only \$727 per student for transportation compared to the statewide average of \$783.

Community Perception and Support

A review of recent Board meetings, interviews, and correspondence to the Kentucky Department of Education from community members indicate there is unrest in Nelson County due to the current local facilities plan and the tension between the Board of Education and the Superintendent.