

2026 LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY — CHANGES THAT IMPACT COUNCILS

To help schools stay up to date, KASC has outlined key legislative changes from the 2026 General Assembly. This resource focuses on what school leaders need to know and do in response to these changes. It starts with needed actions and ends with other bills of interest.

SB 152, the major legislative attack on SBDM, did not pass. This bill attempted to make school councils merely “advisory” and remove the school council’s ability to create school-based policy.

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Policy Review and Changes

Teacher Safety – 2026 Senate Bill 101

Amends KRS 158.150, KRS 158.155, KRS 158.990

- Requires a local board of education to expel a student for at least 12 months if the student intentionally causes physical injury to school personnel at school or a school function
- Reinforces that the rules apply to students and all school employees on school property, at a bus stop, or at a school function (The previous law said, “educational employees” instead of “school employees.”)
- Requires that school employees report attempted assault of any school employee to law enforcement and failure to report is a misdemeanor (The new law states clearly that the report must be made to law enforcement, not just to school/district leadership.)

Council Action Needed:

- Review SBDM policies that may be impacted
 - *Discipline, Classroom Management, and School Safety*
 - *Extracurricular Programs*

KASC reviewed our sample policies for both these areas and found no conflicts with the new law or needed revisions.

Clean Up Bill for Electronic Communications Law – 2026 House Bill 67

Last year the legislature enacted a new school employee electronic communications law that resulted in unintended consequences.

Amends KRS 160.145

- Defines electronic communication, qualified school volunteer, and commercial or local government affiliation
- Provides exemptions for communications for virtual instruction, online instruction, and electronic platforms to provide academic feedback
- Updates the definition of family member, parent, school district employee, and unauthorized electronic communication
- Amends the requirement that educators be subject to disciplinary action for engaging in prohibited electronic communications to say that educators **may** be subject to disciplinary action
- Updates the procedure for parental consent
- Updates the exception to private communications to include an exception for emergencies, field trips, work-based learning, and commercial or local government affiliation
- Updates the procedures for teachers reporting unauthorized electronic communications
- Updates how alleged violations should be reported to parents

For more detailed information through a FAQ format, KDE has issued guidance: <https://www.education.ky.gov/districts/LegislativeGuidance/Pages/default.aspx>

Council Action Needed:

- Review SBDM policies that may be impacted
 - *Extracurricular Programs*
 - *Technology Utilization*
 - *Discipline, Classroom Management, and School Safety*

KASC reviewed all three of our sample policies, and the only change was made to the **Extracurricular Programs Policy**. See underlined words below:

Coaches and Sponsors — **Each district employee and volunteer who needs to communicate electronically with students enrolled in the school district will exclusively use the district-designated, traceable communication system.**

Prohibition of Three-Cueing Systems and Dyslexia – House Bill 253

Creates new section of KRS Chapter 158 and amends KRS 158.307

- Requires KDE to establish an approved list of reading curriculum and interventions that does not use a three-cueing system
- Prohibits the use of a three-cueing system in teacher professional development
- Prohibits school districts from using any curriculum or program that includes a three-cueing system by 2029-30
- Requires all interdisciplinary childhood through fifth grade educators by June 30, 2029, to complete a KDE approved science of reading professional learning program
- Requires local boards of education to develop a policy on dyslexia for K-3

Council Action Needed:

- Review policies that may be impacted – *Instructional Practices Policy* and *Curriculum Responsibilities Policy* to ensure they do not include practices or programs related to the three-cueing system

KASC reviewed our sample policies for both these areas and found no conflicts with the new law or needed revisions.

- K-3 Schools:
 - Review KDE Guidance on District Dyslexia Policies: https://www.education.ky.gov/districts/LegislativeGuidance/Documents/HB_253_2026_Supplemental_Guidance_District_Dyslexia_Policy.pdf
 - Review the district’s dyslexia policy once it is developed

Omnibus Education Bill: Universal Applications, Special Ed Class Size – House Bill 727

Universal Applications — amends KRS 160.152

- Allows teacher applicants to create a universal application through the Kentucky Educator Placement Service System and electronically submit applications and relevant materials to multiple school districts (think of it like the Common Application for applying to college); this could increase the pool of teacher applicants for many schools

Council Action Needed:

- None needed

Required Minority Teacher Search — amends KRS 160.380

- Removes the requirement for the superintendent to conduct minority teacher searches and submit data to the state on minority recruitment search efforts

Council Action Needed:

This change doesn’t mean schools/districts have to stop recruitment efforts to have school personnel reflect their student body and community; it just doesn’t require recruitment or monitoring. Your school/district can maintain your own commitment to minority recruitment. Research findings consistently show that diverse teachers aren’t just good for students of color, teachers from underrepresented groups can profoundly and positively impact learning environments.

- Review SBDM policies that may be impacted
 - *Consultation Policy*
 - *Principal Selection Consultation*

KASC reviewed our sample policies and found no conflicts with the change in the law or needed revisions.

Research on Teacher Diversity

“The Essential Role of Teacher Diversity in Creating Equitable and Inclusive Learning Environments;” *Learning Environments Research*; Heinz, M., Rory, M.D. & Keane, E.; July 2025

“Why Black Teachers Matter;” *Educational Researcher*, Blazar, D.; November 2024

Omnibus Education Bill: Universal Applications, Special Ed Class Size – House Bill 727, cont...

Special Ed Class Size — amends KRS 157.220

- Directs the state board of education to revise regulations to:
 - add specifics on maximum class sizes for 11 different categories; e.g., 8 students with an emotional-behavioral disability, 10 students with a developmental delay, 15 students with a mild mental disability
 - set maximum caseloads for teachers of special education classes; e.g., 8 students with a hearing impairment, 15 students with autism, 20 students with an other health impairment (OHI)

[*See charts with previous numbers allowed and new numbers required by HB 727.](#)

Definitions added to the law, KRS 157.200

“Special classes” defined as: ... means specially equipped and staffed classes in which an exceptional child or youth, individually or in small groups, spends part of his or her day receiving specially designed instruction or related services as determined by the ARC:

“Caseload” defined as: ... means the number of exceptional children and youth assigned to a teacher of exceptional children and youth for the purpose of overseeing the management of individualized specially designed instruction and related services as required by the individualized education program:

Council Action Needed:

- Review SBDM policies that may be impacted
 - *Student Assignment Policy*

KASC reviewed our sample *Student Assignment Policy* and made the following revision:

Criteria for Student Assignment to Classes and Programs —

5. Meet the requirements for state class size caps and class sizes*

6. Comply with the state laws for class size caps and teacher caseload maximums for special classrooms*

The [revised policy is available to all KASC members](#), and we make the process simple by clearly marking what is legally required and what is suggested practice.

*In extenuating circumstances, SBDM councils can change class size caps. Contact the SBDM coordinator for directions.

Important Note: The federal requirements for students formally identified with special needs have not changed.

Related to Council Work

Kentucky’s New Assessment and Accountability System – House Bill 257

Creates new section of KRS 158; amends KRS 158.6453, KRS 158.6455, KRS 158.6459, KRS 164.7874, and KRS 157.069

ACCOUNTABILITY COMPONENTS

- Keeps math, reading, science, and social studies as state indicators
- Removes on-demand writing and editing/mechanics from state assessments
 - Districts must adopt a writing program policy that promotes disciplinary writing across the curriculum

Council Action Needed:

Writing is vital to life success and higher-level thinking. Removing it from state assessments risks it becoming a lower priority.

- Discuss what your council can do to keep writing a priority for your students — how can the council enthusiastically support staff, students, and parents in ensuring students continue to meet state writing standards?
- Stay informed on the development of the district writing program policy
- [Once that’s policy is approved by the school board] Review and revise school policies that may be impacted — *Curriculum Responsibilities Policy, Instructional Practices Policy*

ACCOUNTABILITY COMPONENTS, continued

- Uses individual growth of each student in the accountability system instead of “Change” in accountability indicators from year to year
- Replaces Quality of School Climate and Safety (QSCS) survey with chronic absenteeism in the state accountability model
 - The law specifies that districts may use the QSCS survey for part of their local indicators of quality

Council Action Needed:

Without the QSCS survey as part of state requirements, the council needs to decide the best ways to keep student voice as a priority for the school.

- Stay informed on whether the district will use the QSCS survey as a local indicator of quality
- Discuss what your council can do to keep a focus on student voices — How can your council ensure you hear from students about their school experience?

LOCAL INDICATORS OF QUALITY

- School districts will be encouraged to create their own local indicators of quality, but those indicators will not factor into the state accountability model or federal CSI calculations.
- Local indicators of quality must include:
 - Vibrant learning experiences for students
 - Local measures of performance identified by community members
 - A method of displaying data that includes breaking down data by demographic groups

Council Action Needed:

- Stay fully engaged in district efforts to create local indicators of quality

TARGETED QUALITY MEASURES

Some additional measures will be required on the Kentucky School Report Card through June 30, 2030:

- Percentage of certified teachers with Rank II or higher or National Board certification
- Percentage of 8th-grade students earning at least one high school credit
- Percentage of 12th-grade students completing FAFSA by graduation

Beginning July 1, 2030, these measures will be included as a new indicator in the state accountability system with a cumulative weight of no less than 5%.

Council Action Needed:

Throughout the next few school years:

- Review council policies that may impact growth in these targeted quality measures — *Advanced Coursework, Student Assignment, and Professional Development*

KASC will review our sample policies through 2030 and make needed revisions. Follow KASC’s policy review schedule through the monthly Agenda News and make applicable policy changes.

College Entrance Exam – Senate Bill 197

An act providing funding and appropriations for government agencies

- Requires KDE to begin a new procurement process for the state-provided college entrance exam in the 2026-2027 school year (The upcoming school year will begin without a decision on which college entrance exam will be administered to juniors.)

Council Action Needed:

- Stay informed on which college entrance exam is chosen for the 2026-2027 school year
- Discuss how your council can support students, families, and teachers in college exam preparation

State Executive Branch Budget Bill – House Bill 500

The budget increases the SEEK base per-pupil guarantee to \$4,626 for 2027 and \$4,792 for 2028

Council Action Needed:

- None needed

Pertinent to School Work or Education Interest

School Superintendent and Administrator Raises — Senate Bill 1

- Prohibits school districts from providing the superintendent or administrators pay raises greater than the average percentage pay raise provided to the teachers
- When a school is identified for TSI or CSI for two or more consecutive years, the superintendent may remove the principal. (This portion of the bill became effective immediately upon passage.)

Establish Principal Leadership Practicum – Senate Bill 4

- Requires KDE to develop and operate the principal leadership practicum (First cohort starts July 1, 2027)
- Includes all principals with less than one year experience for 2027 (Future cohorts will include all new principals as of September 1 each year)
- Provides four years of training – first two years with KDE, third year with Truist/KY Chamber Foundation, fourth year optional

Kentucky-Grown Agricultural Products – Senate Bill 5

- Makes it easier for Kentucky schools to purchase locally-grown food for student meals.

Status Offenders – Senate Bill 170

- Creates a four-year pilot program in up to 10 school districts to help address barriers to school attendance.
- Addresses status offenders using Responsive Interventions to Support and Empower (RISE) teams and increased family involvement

Schools of Innovation Waivers — Senate Bill 263

- Amends District of Innovation law to modify the waiver process and the waiver authority of the Kentucky Board of Education
- Establishes a process for a local board to submit a request for a school or program to be identified as a school of innovation with a set of waivers
- Requires the state board to establish a list of expedited waivers for private education service providers
- Creates the school of innovation pilot project

Education Scholarship Federal Tax Credit Program — House Bill 1

- Allows the state to participate in the federal Education Tax Credit Program that incentivizes private donations to organizations that fund private school scholarships
- Provides that the Kentucky taxpayer can not claim federal tax credit and also deduct on state income tax return

Grooming a Minor — House Bill 4

- Criminalizes efforts to manipulate a minor into sexual contact with an adult, a practice known as “grooming”
- Defines “grooming behavior” as (6) **... a course of conduct directed at a minor that is intended to establish an emotional connection with a minor through manipulation, trust-building, or influence to:**
 - (a) Facilitate future acts of sexual conduct; or**
 - (b) Normalize or desensitize the minor to acts of sexual conduct; even if no in-person meeting or act of sexual conduct is completed.**

This conduct may occur online or in person, through third parties, or by other indirect methods to facilitate the manipulation of a minor

School Bus Safety – House Bill 7

- Allows school districts to install traffic cameras on school buses to enforce laws against stop-arm traffic violations

Abusive Conduct by School Employees — House Bill 253

- Forbids a school district from entering into a non-disclosure agreement related to misconduct involving a student or a minor
- Requires reference checks regarding abusive conduct investigations
- Requires a school district during the hiring process to contact EPSB regarding pending and resolved abusive conduct actions involving an applicant
- Requires districts to investigate allegations of abuse
- Requires school employees to report to the school principal any abusive conduct allegations reported to them against another school employee
- Requires all school employees to complete training in sexual grooming, sexual misconduct and appropriate relationships and communications with students by June 30, 2027
- Requires all future new employees to undergo the training by 2027-2028
- Requires school district employees to contact the superintendent within seven days if the employee has been charged with any felony offense

Alternative Diplomas — House Bill 562

- Creates a new alternative diploma option for high school students with intellectual disabilities allowing the students to be considered graduates rather than dropouts.
- Requires the Department of Workforce Development to identify all Kentucky employers in Kentucky that will recognize the new alternative diploma as a valid high school diploma