

The Kentucky Council of English/Language Arts (KCTE LA) serves as one of the primary voices for literacy education and educators in Kentucky. Our membership exists to inform, educate and advocate on behalf of not only ELA teachers at all levels (elementary, middle, high and post-secondary), but also of students throughout the Commonwealth. KCTE/LA wishes to inform state education authorities on our position regarding the proposed requirements, as well as advocate for this position.

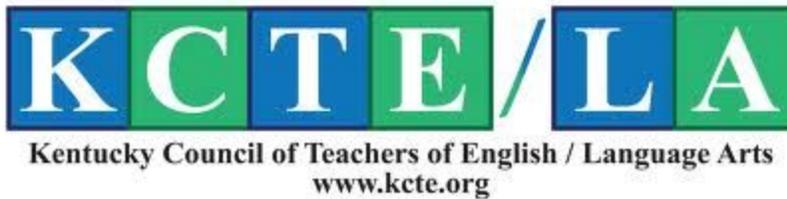
As a result, our membership has reviewed the Proposed Graduation Requirements as they relate to literacy and is, in general, supportive of the initiative to look for new and innovative approaches to engage and challenge students, and specifically supports the proposed graduation requirements:

- Inclusion of the Arts
- Overall shift to a model of “learner choice” in relation to individual learning plan
- Relative flexibility and local control for schools
- Support of Financial Literacy
- Curriculum organization is overall, developmentally appropriate

The KY Council of Teachers of English supports requiring four ELA credits in order to prepare students for college and career readiness in a world filled with written communications. We support personalized learning opportunities that include literacy for college and career readiness, and we support and encourage the increase of district budgets to develop these opportunities. We also support preparing students for a multicultural, diverse world through a foreign language requirement regardless of the path that students choose.

We pose the following questions concerning some of the proposed graduation changes:

- Reducing the number of required ELA credits to 2 from 4. We ask how students and teachers can fulfill “KAS requirements” as noted, in only 2 classes?
- How will the State ensure that literacy is a solid, pre-planned part of Standards Based Learning opportunities in all content areas?
- Who will provide additional support to help teachers transition to this new goal?
- How can we ensure that personalized learning opportunities include literacy for career or college readiness?
- How will schools be able to afford the various classes and the teachers it will require to develop a true personalized learning opportunity for students?
- Who will provide advising and support for both college bound and workforce bound students, so both paths offer opportunities to graduate early or move into trade school,



etc.?

- How does foreign language play a part in readiness for **both the work world and college**? KCTE/LA feels that regardless of students' chosen track, all students should be required to take a foreign language, reflecting our multicultural, connected world.

In addition, KCTE/LA strongly supports the KY Council of Social Studies (KCSS) in that:

● ***Speaking and Listening Standards.*** As Kentucky's population continues to diversify, it is imperative that graduation requirements reflect Speaking and Listening standards, to ensure all students are supported in developing communication skill sets. There is a wealth of research on which Kentucky can draw speaking to the importance of these skills towards achieving learning outcomes, as well as creating democratic classroom spaces conducive to rigorous and meaningful reading, writing, and learning.

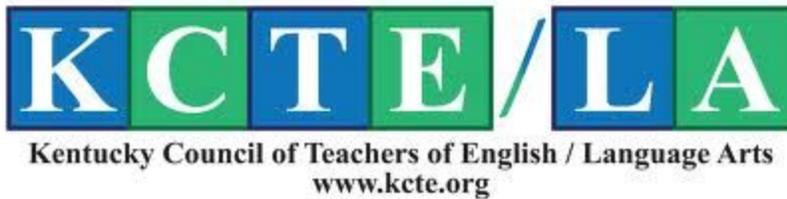
● ***Critical Media Literacies.*** We strongly believe the technology competence requirement should also include critical source analysis, media literacy, and assessment of freedom of speech issues in digital space. To be technologically competent, students must be armed with specific skills preparing them to assess information within digital spaces.

● A ***transition plan*** must be created showing how new graduation requirements would be phased in; how parents, schools, and districts would be educated on the new requirements; and, how educators at all levels would be trained to help students be successful. We would like the opportunity for ourselves and Kentucky citizens to make informed decisions.

● ***Equity must be addressed.*** Rural, urban, and other underserved schools often do not have access to the same resources as some schools in the state, especially when it comes to opportunities for students to meet the Transition Readiness requirements. Additionally, we know that, historically, unintended consequences and inequities have been associated with student tracking, as different groups are disproportionately filtered to different tracks. One example is the Technology Competency Requirement. KCTE/LA as well as KCSS is sensitive to the digital divide across the state of Kentucky, perpetuating inequities present in Kentucky's poorest regions and counties. This requirement could place undue and unintended hardship on counties lacking the financial infrastructure to provide every student access to the technology needed to meet this requirement, which could result in self-imposed graduation barriers on Kentucky's students.

Any new system must have specific plans to prevent demographics and geography from determining a student's future.

● ***Personalized Coursework.*** The depth and breadth of standards addressed through courses



requires more detail. All essential standards must be addressed regardless of student pathway. Additionally, more definition, explanation, and parameters of the “Personalized Coursework” are needed, including what course types qualify and the certifications needed to teach such courses.

● Many of these requirements are rooted in the Individualized Learning Plan, which lacks consistency in high impact implementation across the state.

● **Standards Based Learning.** KCTE/LA also requests clarification on “Standards Based Learning Experiences”. Is this connected to the shift across the state to move towards a more competency-based progression system?

KCTE/LA understands that the points made and the questions raised need further discussion and research. We, too, want the very best for all students- both those going into the workforce and those going into college, thus we have concerns about many aspects of the new proposed graduation requirements as a result.

Many of the ideas in the proposed graduation requirements appear to offer tremendous, accelerated educational outcomes, (e.g. personalized learning plans and Standards Based learning) but without defining each, providing resources and training, and without the funds for public schools to hire new teachers for new classes, the plan remains a dream that all schools in KY can not fulfill. Lack of equity is the biggest issue in the proposed graduation requirements.

KCTE/LA is also ready to continue to be involved in the longer task of shaping recommendations and solutions around research and plans that best serve our students, but currently,

*The Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts asks that the Kentucky Board of Education **not** support the proposed graduation requirements as they stand.*

Sincerely,

Amy Clancy - NBCT

KCTE/LA President

The KCTE/LA Board/Members

Kcte.org