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# Teaching and Learning Reform: Curriculum, the Kentucky Department of Education, & The Educational Professional Standards Board

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**DRAFT  
FOR THE  
2000 REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON THE  
KENTUCKY EDUCATION REFORM ACT  
(KENTUCKY INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION RESEARCH)**

**Teaching and Learning Reform:  
Curriculum, the Kentucky Department of Education, &  
The Educational Professional Standards Board**

What does the law require?

For explanatory purposes, the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) is generally divided into three major clusters of initiatives: finance, curriculum, and governance. As explained elsewhere in this volume, the systemic complexity of KERA makes any divisions of its initiatives, artificial, and ultimately, insufficient, in describing the decade-old scope of Kentucky's radical education reforms (Rinehart & Lindle, 1997; Steffy, 1993). For the purposes of this retrospective review of research, this chapter was designed to focus on the very heart of KERA's purpose, the improvement of teaching and learning. For that reason, this chapter addresses a teaching-learning-oriented KERA initiative, curriculum, and the development and reorganization of two state agencies primarily involved in teaching and learning, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB).

Arguably the 12 Principles of the Task Force on Education Reform<sup>1</sup> focus generally on improved teaching and learning in varying degrees (Foster, 1999; Legislative Research Commission, 1989). Yet, half of them are perhaps more germane to the efforts to increase teacher and student performance, and these are quoted herein:

- II. **We know how to successfully teach all students.** This is obviously not true for every teacher in every school. This principle simply acknowledges that there are teachers and schools that are successful in serving children from every conceivable background – rich and poor, children of all and every color, the disabled and those who are not, those for whom English is not their first language and those for whom it is. What works is a matter of knowledge, not opinion. It is

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<sup>1</sup> David Hornbeck, currently the Superintendent of the Philadelphia Public Schools, served as a consultant to the Legislative members of the Task Force appointed by then-Governor Wallace Wilkinson and the Kentucky General Assembly's leadership. Hornbeck drafted the 12 Principles as a guide for legislative design and the Task Force adopted them in 1989 (Foster, 1999; Steffy, 1993).

not a mystery. The challenge is not the challenge of discovery, it is the challenge of equipping all school staff with the knowledge to act successfully.

- III. **Curriculum content must reflect high expectations and instructional strategies must be successful ones.** What children learn should be commonly challenging. We should provide a rigorous curriculum to all, not dumbed-down curriculum to some. How we teach; where teaching and learning occur; when teaching and learning take place; and who teaches should be different for different students, classrooms, and schools. The variability should be governed by what works. When we fail with a child, a classroom or with a school, we must adopt the attitude that we do not year have the proper mix of how, where, when and who.
- VII. **School staff must be equipped with the capacity to make good instructional decisions.** Higher expectations will not happen magically. Just as the corporate community knows that a strong outcome oriented staff development and training effort is essential to meeting its bottom line objectives, so it is with schools.
- VIII. **Non-Essential [sic] regulations must be reduced significantly.** The rhetoric of school based management is empty if at the same time we bureaucratically impede or frustrate those decisions with layers of process.
- X. **What is tested with heavily influence what is taught.** This principle requires that our assessment efforts be as rich and varied and multi-dimensional as the high outcome expectations we have for our children.
- XII. **There is a need to provide for a measure of independent assessment and enforcement authority.** Staff at the local and state level must monitor the outcomes of school performance. They must be prepared to make adjustments to ensure successful performance. Teachers will assess and alter instructional practices as often as daily for some children. School systems must provide assistance to school based staff and even aggressive intervention in schools that are not successful. State or regional assistance from the State Department of Education, universities and, perhaps, other entities will in part result from examining school performance and being prepared to intervene. There are many forms that the independent and assessment authority can take. The point is not to suggest one or more particular instructional performance oversight vehicles at this time or to describe the breadth of character of circumstances that would lead to their use. The point is to articulate the principle that the oversight of the system should include mechanisms beyond the system itself. [Emphases in the original.] (Legislative Research Commission, 1989, pp. 1-4)

Legislation implementing these principles outlined in the following table of statutes below demonstrates the complexity of Kentucky’s reform design to improve teaching and learning.

Table 1  
Task Force’s Teaching-Learning Principles Aligned By Statutes

<b><u>Task Force Principle</u></b>	<b><u>Kentucky Revised Statute (KRS)</u></b>
II. We know how to successfully teach all students.	§158.6435 Capacities Required of Students in Public Education System
III. Curriculum content must reflect high expectations and instructional strategies must be successful ones.	§158.6451 Legislative Declaration on Goals for Commonwealth’s Schools: Model Curriculum Framework
VII. School staff must be equipped with the capacity to make good instructional decisions.	§ 156.005-026 Kentucky Department of Education § 156.095 Professional Development Program for Certified Personnel, Statewide Program 98-99 and 99-2000 § 156.097 Teacher Institutes § 156.101 Instructional Leader Program. Certified Employee Evaluation § 156.111 Superintendents Training Program and Assessment Center § 157.390 Classification of Teachers, Determination of Salaries, Professional Compensation Plan § 158.070 School Term; Professional Development and Holidays § 158.72 Guidelines to Provide Highly Skilled Education Assistance to Schools and Districts; Professional Leave for Selected Employees; Review of Paperwork Requirements § 161.010-126 Certification of School Employees and Educational Professional Standards Board
VIII. Non-Essential [sic] regulations must be reduced significantly	§ 156.160 (2) (a) Waivers from Kentucky Board of Education Regulations
X. What is tested will heavily influence what is taught.	§ 158.6453 Commonwealth Accountability and Testing System (CATS) § 158.6454 National Technical Advisory Panel on Assessment & Accountability § 158.6555 Accountability System § 158.6458 Plan to Implement Accountability System
XII. There is a need to provide for a measure of independent assessment and enforcement authority.	§ 7.410 Office of Educational Accountability § 158.6452 School Curriculum, Assessment & Accountability Council § 158.647 Educational Assessment and Accountability Review System

Table 1 shows multiple statutes and sections with relevance to the 12 principles and the improvement of teaching and learning. The first two rows of the table reveal the statutory results of the judicial and legislative processes that created the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act. Row 1 dedicated to Task Force Principle II “We know how to successfully teach all students,” shows the statutory connection (KRS § 158.645) to the

Franklin County Circuit Court's (*Council for Better Education v. Wallace Wilkinson, et al*, 1988) "Finding of Fact," affirmed by the Kentucky Supreme Court, that all students in Kentucky should possess certain abilities when they graduate from the state's public school system (*Rose*, 1989).

It is the intent of the General Assembly to create a system of public education which shall allow and assist all students to acquire the following capacities:

- (1) Communication skills necessary to function in a complex and changing civilization;
- (2) Knowledge to make economic, social, and political choices;
- (3) Understanding of governmental processes as they affect the community, the state, and the nation;
- (4) Sufficient self-knowledge and knowledge of his [sic] mental and physical wellness;
- (5) Sufficient grounding in the arts to enable each student to appreciate his or her cultural and historical heritage;
- (6) Sufficient preparation to choose and pursue his [sic] life's work intelligently; and
- (7) Skills to enable him [sic] to compete favorably with students in other states. (KRS § 158.645 (1-7))

The General Assembly transformed these capacities, as KRS § 158.6451, into the basis for curriculum under Task Force Principle III, "Curriculum content must reflect high expectations and instructional strategies must be successful ones." The wording in KRS § 158.6451 follows below:

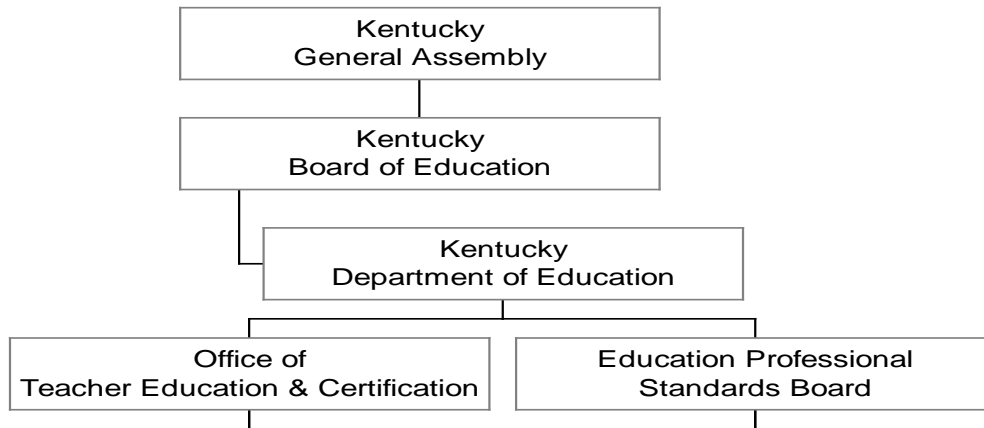
- (1) The General Assembly finds, declares, and establishes that:
  - (a) Schools shall expect a high level of achievement of all students.
  - (b) Schools shall develop their students; ability to:
    1. Use basic communication and mathematics skills for purposes and situations they will encounter throughout their lives;
    2. Apply core concepts and principles from mathematics, the sciences, the arts, the humanities, social studies, and practical living studies to situations they will encounter through their lives;
    3. Become a self-sufficient individual;
    4. Become responsible members of a family, work group or community, including demonstrating effectiveness in community service;
    5. Think and solve problems in school situations and in a variety of situations they will encounter in life; and
    6. Connect and integrate experiences and new knowledge from all subject matter fields with what they have previously learned and build on past learning experiences to acquire new information through various media sources.
  - (c) Schools shall increase their students' rate of school attendance.

- (d) Schools shall reduce their students' dropout and retention rates.
  - (e) Schools shall reduce physical and mental health barriers to learning.
  - (f) Schools shall be measured on the proportion of students who make a successful transition to work, post-secondary education, and the military.
- (2) The Kentucky Board of Education shall disseminate to local school districts and schools a model curriculum framework which is directly tied to the goals, outcomes, and assessment strategies developed pursuant to this section and KRS § 158.645 and § 158.6453 ... (KRS § 158.6451)

These two statutory quotes exemplify the foundation and intent of all other statutes related to the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act. Together the statutes form the basis for curriculum development and address agency authority for creating and promulgating curriculum and maintaining high standards for teaching.

The KERA structure for agencies designed to implement curriculum followed a traditional model for state government. The Kentucky General Assembly delegated operational authority to the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE). In turn, the Kentucky Board of Education provides oversight and directs activities of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). As designed in the 1990 legislation, authority for teacher certification rests in the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB), which is housed, with the Office of Teacher Education and Certification (OTEC), within KDE. Figure 1 shows an organizational map of these relationships.

Figure 1



These relationships appear complex in Figure 1, and the complexity is not fully drawn here. Figure 1 shows only the legislated design of the relationships at the state level. The intended effects and activities associated with these agencies are not depicted in Figure 1. Such will be explained below. This section deals only with the legal requirements and as required, Figure 1 illustrates the organizational distribution of state authority for the improvement of teaching and learning under the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act. As pointed out by Scollay (1997), the expectations and decisions of these agencies have tremendous “ripple effects” (p.223). Figure 1 fails to depict the practical interconnections that surround teaching and learning in Kentucky’s public schools. These interconnections impact implementation of the best intentions in improving Kentucky’s teachers’ instruction and students’ achievement.

### What has been implemented?

Previous reports on the implementation of improved curriculum and teaching under the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) have focused on specific initiatives. The confounding effects of these implementation events have yet to be assessed. Previous reviews of research on KERA have treated these aspects of the 1990 education reform as separate and isolated stories<sup>2</sup>. This chapter attempts to describe the coincidental events that have affected Kentucky’s education policy on curriculum and teaching since 1990. The current report will address multiple initiatives at the core of KERA by a two-part analysis of implementation. The first section will focus on the organizational and agency structures tasked with improving teaching and learning under KERA. The second part will list the specific accomplishments and achievements regarding teaching and learning initiatives.

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<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to the previous reviewers of each aspect of the reform covered in this chapter : Curriculum – Peter Winograd (1994) and Brad Matthews (1997); EPSB – Traci Bliss (1994) and Susan Scollay (1997); and KDE – Eddy Van Meter (1994 and 1997).

## Organizing to Improve Teaching and Learning

With a statutory design principle that deliberately projected the influence of assessment on curriculum<sup>3</sup>, the timetable for curriculum development was exceedingly brief – only 18 months (Foster, 1999). Constricting the time for curriculum design even further was the complete dismantling of the Kentucky Department of Education effective June 30, 1991 for a reconfiguration focused on technical assistance to school districts effective July 1, 1991 (KRS §156.016; Winograd, 1994). Simultaneously, the placement of the Office of Teacher Education and Certification within the “new” KDE also affected the pace for designing and implementing standards for teaching the new curriculum.

While most accounts of KERA implementation agree that timelines for curriculum development were met, it is clear that realization of curriculum implementation has been questionable (Appalachian Education Lab, 1994; Matthews, 1995; Neufeld, 1995, 1996). Part of the problem in appraising implementation of the curriculum is the confounded design of the reform. While the intent was that state assessment would drive the curriculum, the design also provided authority for curriculum policy and development at the most decentralized, local level – the school (Foster, 1999; KRS § 160.345; Steffy, 1993). The simultaneous top-down, bottom-up curriculum design and implementation proved confusing to teachers (Appalachian Education Lab, 1995; Wilkerson & Associates, 1995). Nevertheless, the state agencies proceeded as specified by the legislature.

The Task Force on Performance Standards worked as the Kentucky Department of Education was recreated. The fever-pitched pace felt within the Task Force was mirrored in the long-hours established in the “new” KDE (Lusi, 1994).

The Kentucky Department of Education established itself in 1991 as a three-pronged “matrix” structure. While the legislative intent was clearly to provide assistance directly to districts and schools through the eight Regional Service Centers, complaints abounded that KDE was micro-managing from Frankfort (Lusi, 1993, 1994). Moreover, the Regional Service Centers were thrice removed from the Commissioner’s Office in a

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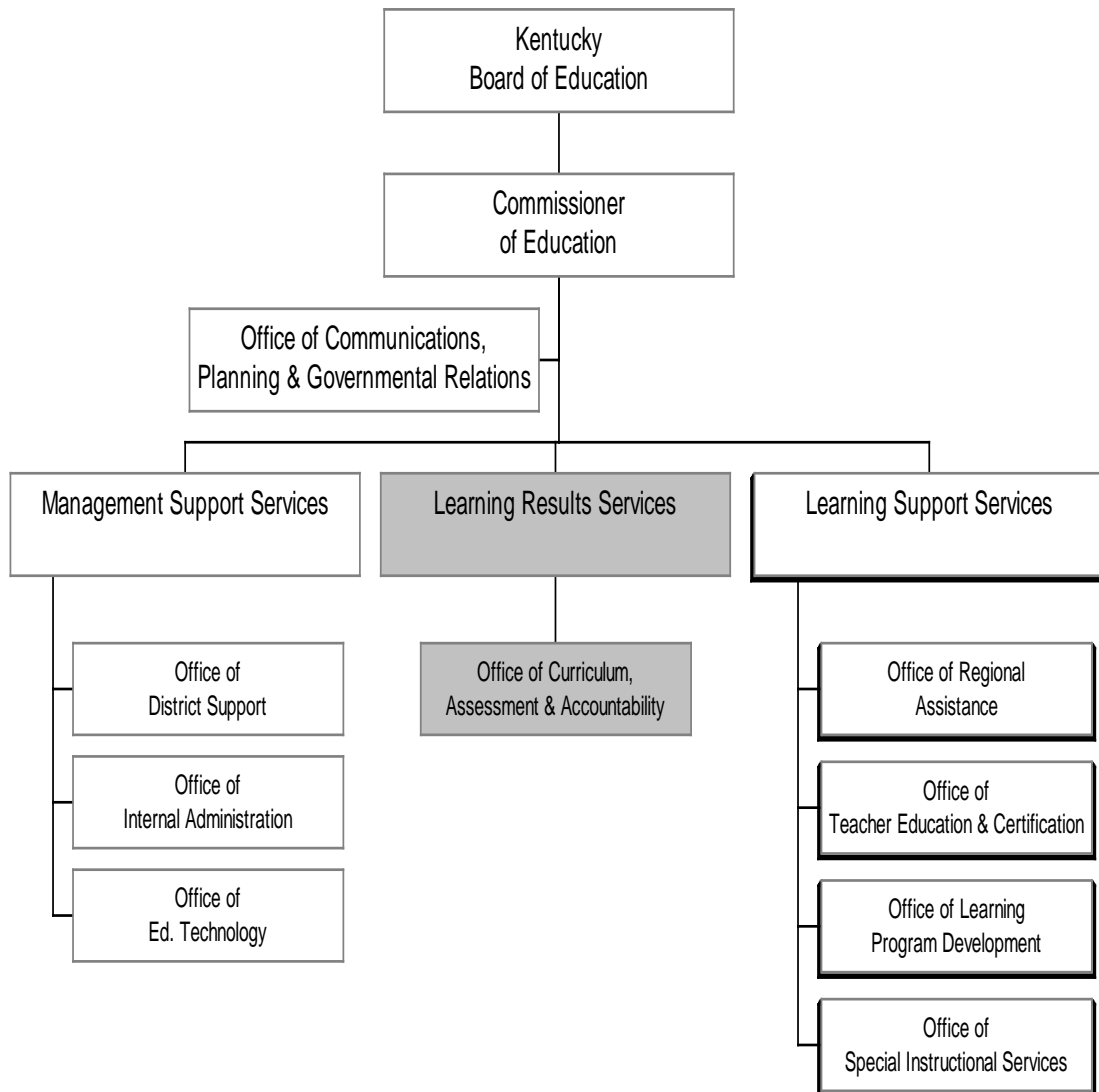
<sup>3</sup> **Principle X: What is tested with heavily influence what is taught.** This principle requires that our assessment efforts be as rich and varied and multi-dimensional as the high outcome expectations we have for our children.



highly bureaucratic configuration (KDE, 1996; Van Meter, 1995). Adams-Rodgers (1994) noted that the design was not to be as hierarchical as depicted. Instead, the three service areas were conceived as interlocking spheres of influence. Yet, the constraints of the state's personnel system ensured a more bureaucratic structure (Adams-Rodgers, 1994). On the other hand, the design of the three prongs was consistent with legislated intent (Steffy, 1992; Van Meter, 1992). From 1991 through 1997, the three-pronged organization operated within the structure illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2

KDE 1991 to 1997



As depicted in Figure 2, the design of curriculum was closely associated with the design of assessment found under the auspices of the Deputy Commissioner for “Learning Results Services.” The offices for these services are highlighted in gray in Figure 2. The Office of Teacher Education and Certification (OTEC), found among Figure 2’s shadowed boxes, located in the bureau under the auspices of the Deputy Commissioner for “Learning Support Services.” With an “overlapping sphere” philosophy, the work of OTEC and the Division for Curriculum and Assessment theoretically could bond over improved curriculum and teaching standards. But Figure 2 is not complex enough to depict the complicated relationship of the Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB) with OTEC.

EPSB is not shown in Figure 2 because it operated as a board independent of the Kentucky Board of Education and yet interdependent with KDE in establishing the certification requirements and regulations administered by OTEC (KRS § 161.028). EPSB is composed of governor-appointed members including nine classroom teachers, two practicing school administrations, two deans of colleges of education, a local school board representative and in addition to these members, ex-officio members include the Commissioner of Education and the Executive Director of the Council on Postsecondary Education. Although the Commissioner of Education is ex-officio, he (or perhaps someday, she) hires the OTEC staff and provides funding for the activities of the EPSB (Bliss, 1994). This confusing interdependent structure has created tensions within KDE and among OTEC, EPSB, KDE, and the Kentucky Board of Education. These tensions exacerbated due to turnover in the EPSB’s Executive Secretary position at a rate of nearly every 2 years since 1991 (Scollay, 1997).

Adams-Rodgers’s (1994) observation that state structures external to state agencies tasked with KERA implementation hindered the flexibility necessary for radical educational reform was reinforced by Lusi’s (1995) assessment that bureaucratic rigidity seemed to permeate KDE. For the purposes of this review, Figure 2 is illustrative of the bureaucratic chasms separating the primary state agents that were delegated the responsibility of improving teaching and learning under KERA.

Figure 3 fares little better in representing a clear focus on teaching and learning. Partly as a result of a new Commissioner of Education, the second since the inception of

KERA, and partly as a political response to major attacks on the accountability system in the 1998 legislative session, KDE was reorganized once again.

Figure 3

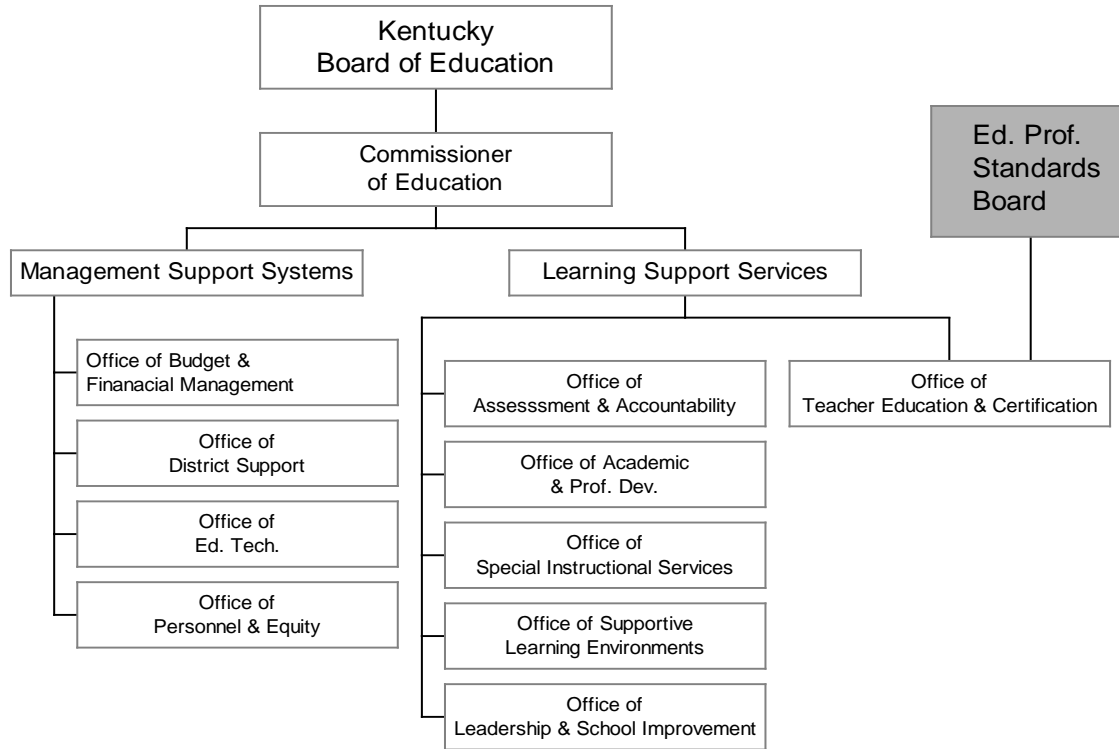


Figure 3 depicts the recent reorganization of the Kentucky Department of Education as ordered by the Governor (Executive Order 98-1671). Most of the attention in the 1998 session of the Kentucky General Assembly focused on the assessment and accountability system. As explained in this volume and elsewhere, debate vacillated between technical concerns over the performance design of the commonwealth's assessment system and concerns over fairness of the accountability indicators (Lindle, 1999). While plans for reorganizing KDE pre-dated the 1998 session, the Executive Order was accomplished after the close of the General Assembly. Legislative members of the General Assembly's Interim Joint Committee on Education raised questions about the timing and process of this reorganization (Field notes, February 4, 1999; Minutes of the Interim Joint Committee on Education, February 4, 1999). The then-Commissioner of Education, Wilmer Cody, cited KDE's refocused efforts on academic content. Given those premises, the chart in Figure 3 differs from Figure 2 in a couple of important ways.

First, the position of Deputy Commissioner for Learning Results was abolished. Assessment & Accountability was subsumed in an office under the bureau for Learning Support Services. Curriculum was removed from the Office of Assessment & Accountability and placed in division under a new Office for Academic & Professional Development. Also the organizational chart depicted in Figure 3 now displays the quasi-autonomous Educational Professional Standards Board. Despite the proposition that this reorganization of KDE realigned resources for better teaching and curriculum support, Figure 3 shows a remaining chasm between the Office of Teacher Education and Certification (OTEC) and the new Office of Academic & Professional Development. The fact the OTEC still served two masters is also obvious in Figure 3.

The 2000 Session of the Kentucky General Assembly turned its attention to questions of teacher quality. In the face of an omnibus bill that addressed ambitious changes in standards for teaching, the Kentucky Education Association effectively lobbied for dismantling the most far-reaching provisions including one that would have severed OTEC from the Kentucky Department of Education and ensured EPSB as an autonomous board with its own operational budget (Lindle, 2000). Even with these defeats, the autonomy of EPSB was established by yet another Executive Order from the governor (Blackford, 2000). The EPSB now reports to the Governor's Office, which allows it an independent budget and effectively split the OTEC staff from KDE.

Two ancillary aspects of education expand the structure and organization of education in Kentucky. In 1997, Governor Paul Patton called a special session of the Kentucky General Assembly to address reform in higher education. On May 30, 1997, he signed into law a bill that reorganized governance of all post-secondary institutions in Kentucky. While the bill left relatively undisturbed the governance of Kentucky's eight public universities, the birth of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System represented a realignment of Kentucky's separate vocational and community college systems. According to Patton, economic development drove the organizational reconstruction of postsecondary education (*Governor Patton Celebrates*, 1997; Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, 2000).

One response to this reorganization was the creation in 1999 of the P-16 Council. The P-16 Council links members of the Kentucky Board of Education with members of the Council on Postsecondary Education. Part of the impetus for this linkage presumes a

necessary alignment of high school curricula with requirements for admission and retention in Kentucky's postsecondary institutions. Another impetus includes alignment of teacher education and professional development in higher education with the job requirements and expectations in Kentucky's elementary and secondary schools (*Frequently Asked Questions*, 2000).

The other ancillary development focused on early childhood education. The 2000 session of the Kentucky General Assembly included passage of a law designed to support early education and interventions in child development birth to school age (Governor's Early Childhood Task Force, 1999; *House Bill 706*, 2000). Presumably, the "P" in the P-16 Council will now address some of the initiatives associated with teaching and learning at the preschool and early childhood ages.

The shifting formal and informal organizational arrangements surrounding teaching and learning under KERA raise a number of questions about implementation. Bureaucracies are notoriously slow-moving creatures. The timelines associated with KERA have been variously described as demanding and breath taking (Foster, 1999, Holland, 1998; Steffy, 1993). Did organizational turmoil affect the implementation of reforms in curriculum and instruction?

#### Accomplishments in Improving Curriculum and Teaching

Curriculum and instruction were affected by the demanding pace required to implement an assessment and accountability system by the spring of 1992. Curriculum documents rolled out of the Kentucky Department of Education rather quickly. Changes in teaching have proceeded more sedately.

Tasked with the construction of a curriculum for the assessment system, the Task Force for Performance Standards produced 75 Valued Outcomes for student achievement by 1991 (Foster, 1999). Controversy generated by conservative religious groups over the term "outcome" and concerning 18 achievement indicators related to "self-knowledge" and "responsible group membership" changed the name of the achievement goals to "Academic Expectations" and reduced the overall number for assessment to 57 in 1995 (Foster, 1999; Lindle, 1995). Controversy over Kentucky's curriculum terminology continues as evidenced by the recent 1999 storm over use of the term "evolution" and the

Kentucky Department of Education's poorly explained revision of that term to "change over time" (*Evolution Cut*, 1999; *No Other Word*, 1999; *Evolution Still a Word*, 2000).

KDE's first curriculum product was the hefty two-volume *Transformations: Kentucky's Curriculum Framework* (1993). While the document outlined the academic expectations and suggested activities at different age and grade levels, the two volumes were intended as teacher desk references in designing their own units of study and lesson plans. The design of the document was heavily interdisciplinary and oriented toward more constructivist rather didactic pedagogy (Blank & Pechman, 1995). Teachers reported finding these documents overwhelming and not user-friendly (AEL, 1995). *Transformations's* use seems sporadically implemented (AEL, 1994, 1995; Ceperly & Penn, 1996, Corcoran, 1995; Matthews, 1995).

In 1995, in the midst of the second accountability cycle for assessments, and the first cycle that was to end in full rewards and sanctions as provided under KERA (KRS § 158.6453, KRS § 158.6455, KRS § 158.648), KDE distributed the *Core Content for Assessment* (KDE, 1996). While the *Core Content* was praised for including linkages to national standards in various subject matters, some viewed the distribution as too-little-too-late in helping students perform well on the state assessments (Matthews, 1997). Others were confused over the applied knowledge nature of the tests, and the knowledge-based, content focus of the *Core Content* (AEL, 1995; Wilkerson & Associates, 1997). Like *Transformations*, *Core Content* was released in a hard copy, loose-leafed notebook format.

Some teachers found using these resources daunting, and parents involved on School-Based Decision Making Councils charged with designing school curriculum policy were just as baffled by the accumulation of over-sized KDE notebooks. Two accommodations to using these materials were developed independently from the Kentucky Department of Education.

First, about 1993, resource teachers, working in the Fayette County (Lexington, KY) Public Schools' central office, excerpted major components of *Transformations, Volume 1*, and copied them on 5" by 8" index cards color-coded by subject area and slung them on a "key ring." Eventually, Distinguished Educators, some of whom were former Fayette County resource teacher, were introduced to these cards-on-a-ring, and they distributed these versions of *Transformations* across the state.

The other accommodation focused on practical use of *Core Content* by SBDM Councils. Staff at the Kentucky Association of School Councils (KASC) developed a by-subject, color-coded 2” by 3” set of cards for each school level (elementary, middle and high schools). The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence helped with production and distribution of these cards through their program for parents, the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership.

Meanwhile, the Kentucky Department of Education began to offer two other support documents through its website. The *Criteria for Developing a Unit of Study* (1995) and *Designing an Effective Performance Task for the Classroom* (1994) were first distributed in hard copy. The website versions opened up more possibilities for direct-to-teachers technical support for curriculum and instruction.

A pre-KERA portion of Kentucky’s education law required the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) adopt a “Program of Studies” for high school graduation requirements (KRS §156.160, 704 KAR 3:304 & 3:305). Although KBE approved and adopted a report emphasizing a standards-based graduation system from the High School Restructuring Task Force in 1993, the provisions remain insubstantially implemented (Fischetti, 1995; Fischetti & Dittmer, 1997). In 1997, KBE adopted graduation requirements, effective with the class of 2002, that remained heavily tied to Carnegie units rather than a standards-based curriculum (Matthews, 1997).

The immediate result of the new graduation standards was a comprehensive *Program of Studies* (1998a) from primary through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In hard copy, this document represented another 212 loose-leaf pages. Each school level, elementary, middle, and high school also received a *Program of Studies Implementation Manual* (1998b) representing another 200 to 1000 hard copy pages. Recognizing the intimidating nature of its proliferation of curriculum support documents, KDE not only put the *Program of Studies* documents on its website, the Department issued a CD-ROM version (1998c) that incorporated all of its curriculum materials. Compared to the loose-leaf notebook approach, the website and CD-ROM versions demonstrated more popularity among teachers and others. As a result, KDE has produced other CD-ROMs to support other KERA programs (e.g. *Synergy*, 1999; *Writing Portfolio Scoring Training—grades 4, 7 and 12*, 2000).

However, the dissemination of the *Program of Studies* aggravated the confusion over the top-down, bottom-up curriculum design issues. In particular, SBDM Councils, while slow getting started in addressing curriculum policy issues, were now confronted with what looked like a state-mandated curriculum scope and sequence (Ceperly & Penn, 1996; Kannapel, Coe, Moore & Aagaard, 1995; Lindle, Gale, & Curry-White, 1994, 1995; Matthews, 1995). Teachers still complained that they were ill prepared to address standards-based curriculum (Wilkerson & Associates, 1997; 1998).

As noted before, KDE was not directly responsible for teacher preparation. The Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB) relied on KDE staff in the Office of Teacher Education Certification (OTEC) to implement EPSB requirements. Early in the structure of the initially reorganized KDE, professional development held division status, three tiers down from the Commissioner's Office. In the 1998 reorganization, professional development was moved up a tier, but remains separated from OTEC and the EPSB. Both pre-service teacher education and professional development have endured continuing criticism since the inception of KERA (Cody & Guskey, 1997; Wilkerson & Associates, 1997; 1998).

Despite the criticism, EPSB has addressed a number of modifications in teacher preparation necessitated by changes in the public school system. In 1993, the EPSB rolled out a set of standards for new teachers. In 1994, EPSB promulgated Standards for Kentucky Administrators and Experienced Teachers and amended the New Teacher Standards by adding an eighth standard for content knowledge. Experienced Teacher Standards included the eight New Teacher Standards plus a standard on leadership. In 1995, the EPSB affirmed the requirements of the Experienced Teacher Standards for graduate-level teacher education programs and professional development; yet, shied away from adopting the standards for tenured teacher evaluations. Legislation (KRS 156.101) clearly tasks the Kentucky Department of Education with designing evaluation for certified personnel. In 1998, EPSB revoked the Kentucky New Administrator Standards and adopted the Instate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996). At the same time, EPSB lowered the degree requirements for attaining an administrator's certificate moving the postmaster's requirements down to a Master's Degree. The adoption of standards for various roles in



education is not complete, but draft standards do exist for nearly every certificated position.

By 1994, EPSB met a mandate to reduce 156 options for educational licenses to roughly more than 30 different certificates. In spite of this heroic assault on red tape and the paper chase, EPSB was soundly criticized in 1998 by then-Commissioner Cody, members of the Kentucky General Assembly and others. The critics accused the EPSB of creating relatively content-free certification that rendered teachers incapable of teaching “deep” knowledge and ultimately hindered students, especially at the middle school level, in performing well on tests (*Algebra Makes A Difference*, 1998; *Cody’s Plan Would Help Teachers*, 1998; *Prichard Turns its Focus*, 1998; *Solving Math Problem*, 1998; *Teacher Education Part of Cycle of Mediocrity*, 1998). Given these criticisms, the Governor and General Assembly appointed a Task Force on Teacher Quality in 1999. The Task Force made several recommendations to the 2000 General Assembly, but few provisions were adopted in the final hours of the session (*Senate Bill 77*, 2000).

Despite the controversy over fundamental philosophies concerning teacher preparation, the EPSB has accumulated other achievements. In 1991, EPSB published a Professional Code of Ethics. The Code is distributed with each new professional certificate and serves as the foundation for revocation, suspension and dismissal of certification cases. Each year, the EPSB is faced with a massive case load of certificate reviews involving questions of fitness, character and professional ethics. At least one-third to a half of each of the two-day, bi-monthly board meetings are devoted to such reviews.

The EPSB also entered into a state-based partnership with the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) to define and implement standards-based accreditation processes for teacher education programs. The pilot project began with the University of Kentucky’s College of Education in 1995 and expanded to the University of Louisville and Murray State University in the fall of 1996 (Scollay, 1997). Other Kentucky teacher education programs expressed concern over the direction of NCATE and the EPSB’s deliberate collaboration with it (Worthy, Nystrom & Ward, 1995). Such controversy mirrors national debate over the role of accreditation agencies in a standards-based environment (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Murray, 2000).

The organizational configuration of state agencies charged with implementing teacher and learning reforms probably has had an impact on the efficiency of implementation. While the shifting configurations of these large Kentucky bureaucracies have occurred surprisingly often over the past 10-year period, the jury is still out on what optimum configurations might be. Roughly 20 % of the states in the U.S. have tried autonomous certification boards, and little documentation explains their effectiveness or even what measures might indicate effectiveness (Scannell & Metcalf, 2000; Scannell & Wain, 1996). Furthermore, the tensions and gaps between higher education institutions and state agencies are well documented in other locations (Case & Norlander, 1993; Guthrie, 1999; Soder & Sirotnik, 1990). Given these conditions nationally, Kentucky's experiments with various organizational configuration for education again lends credence to claims that the 1990 reforms qualify as 'systemic' (Steffy, 1993).

What have been the effects of the program area on students, schools, school districts, communities, educators, governmental agencies, and the public?

The research on curriculum reforms, the Kentucky Department of Education, and the Educational Professional Standards Board has been surprisingly sparse. With a philosophical focus on improved teaching and learning justifying KERA, most of the studies regarding implementation have been documentary. That is, most of the studies have recorded the activities of reform without assessing impact on teaching and learning. Even more disturbing is the paucity of research since the publication of the *1996 Review of Research on the Kentucky Education Reform Act* (Lindle, Petrosko & Pankratz, 1997).

Extant studies of KERA's curriculum pre-date 1996 ( ). In general they remain inconclusive regarding the application of Kentucky's curriculum reforms within classrooms.

Some recent studies focus on instructional issues. Interestingly, most of these studies have been research funded outside of Kentucky and conducted by researchers from other states with some assistance from Kentucky-based investigators.

## What are the implications of what we know for educational policy?

Most of the educational policy decisions described herein have been accomplished without benefit of research or data. Ideological positions and hypotheses about the effects of reorganizing KDE and EPSB have heavily influenced activities focused on curriculum design and teaching standards at the state agency level. Perhaps the most salient feature of such an ideological approach to educational policy is a failure to understand the interdependent nature of policy initiatives.

Legislative, executive and/or agency assertions dominate the statutory and implementation history of KERA's focus on teaching and learning. These assertions produced isolated products, such as curriculum documents, teaching standards, etc., which seem poorly implemented and/or understood. Each agency has met individual timelines and work orders, but has failed to design effective and interrelated implementation and dissemination plans. While all of the agencies involved, Kentucky Board of Education, Kentucky Department of Education, P-16 Council, Educational Professional Standards Board, can point to provision of public fora for discussion of policy initiatives, none produce evidence of comprehensive, systemic implementation designs. As but one example, KDE makes its documents available and holds regional professional development for school district or school level personnel, but often does not include EPSB members, P-16 members, or higher education faculty<sup>4</sup> in its dissemination plans. Yet, KDE has a better track record of inviting higher education faculty and other players to discussions about the initiatives in the pre-dissemination phases than some of the other agencies have in addressing their counterpart agencies or constituencies at any point in the policy process.

## What are the unresolved issues and research questions?

This chapter represents only one of very few attempts to describe the configuration of political and organizational agents involved in improving Kentucky's teaching and learning in public schools. Given these relatively minor attempts to analyze

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<sup>4</sup> The complexity of identifying appropriate faculty to include in its communications is difficult for KDE or any state agency. Most postsecondary institutions tend to name administrators as channels for state agency communications. Often, these administrators respond to invitations intended for faculty and sometimes faculty contracts limit their travel and attendance at such meetings since higher education schedules do not coincide with elementary and secondary school schedules.

the influence of these agents and the extent to which Kentucky's 1990 education reforms were systemic, several unanswered questions remain.

- To what degree will the new configurations of the Kentucky Department of Education and the Educational Professional Standards Board influence the improvement of teaching and learning in commonwealth schools?
- Has the 1998 reorganization of the Kentucky Department of Education allowed for more direct technical assistance to schools and school districts regarding teaching and learning?
- To what degree do the modifications in the assessment and accountability system affect the state curriculum frameworks and school-level curriculum policy?

### What research is in progress?

Future research is likely to derive from small independent research activities such as doctoral dissertations and perhaps a few school and school district internal evaluations and case studies. The Kentucky Board of Education is currently searching for a new Commissioner, and until that position is filled, the prognosis for more comprehensive research on the essential questions remaining about Kentucky's education reform is uncertain.

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