



2025-2026 Phase Two: The Needs Assessment for Districts_10152025_12:33

2025-2026 Phase Two: The Needs Assessment for Districts

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Table of Contents

2025-2026 Phase Two: The Needs Assessment for Districts	3
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Understanding Continuous Improvement: The Needs Assessment for Districts

The Needs Assessment Diagnostic will facilitate the use of multiple sources of data to determine the current reality and establish a foundation for decision-making around district goals and strategies. Once completed, the diagnostic will lead to priorities to be addressed in the comprehensive district improvement plan to build staff capacity and increase student achievement. The needs assessment is to be conducted annually as an essential part of the continuous improvement process and precedes the development of strategic goals (i.e. desired state).

While the focus of continuous improvement is student performance, the aspects of teaching and learning that affect performance must guide the work. An effective improvement process should address the contributing factors creating the learning environment (inputs) and the performance data (outcomes).

The needs assessment provides the framework for all districts to clearly and honestly identify their most critical areas for improvement that they will address later in the planning process through the development of goals, objectives, strategies and activities. 703 KAR 2:225 requires, as part of continuous improvement planning for districts, each district to complete the needs assessment between October 1 and November 1 of each year and include: (1) a description of the data reviewed and the process used to develop the needs assessment; (2) a review of the previous plan and its implementation to inform development of the new plan; and, (3) perception data gathered from the administration of a valid and reliable measure of teaching and learning conditions.

Protocol

1. Clearly detail the process used to determine the priorities of this year's needs assessment. Include the following information in your response:

- names of district leadership teams and stakeholder groups (i.e., faculty, staff, representatives of school councils, Family Resource Youth Service Centers, community partners such as civic and business organizations, etc.) involved
- a timeline of the process
- the specific data sources reviewed and analyzed
- how and where the meetings were documented.

The process used to determine the priorities for this year's needs assessment was a collaborative, data-driven effort that included input from multiple district leadership teams and stakeholder groups. District leaders including the Director of Pupil Personnel (DPP)/Chief Academic Officer (CAO), Director of Special Education (DoSE), Supervisor of Instruction and Curriculum/District Assessment Coordinator (SIC/DAC), as well as school leaders, principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, attendance teams, School Based Decision Making (SBDM) Councils, and the MAP Committee all participated in the process.

The timeline for this work began at the start of the school year when district leadership reviewed the current district improvement plan and discussed spring 2025 benchmark data along with the anticipated timeline for Kentucky Summative Assessment (KSA) score reporting. In August, district leaders and school administrators reconvened once individual student KSA scores were released to analyze results and identify early trends. During the fall, school level teams examined baseline benchmark data from assessments such as iReady and STAR within their biweekly PLC meetings. School administrators then summarized and shared these findings with the Board of Education during the October meeting.

In October, all stakeholder groups including district leaders, school administrators, instructional coaches, attendance teams, SBDM members, and the MAP Committee met collectively to create the formal needs assessment. This meeting focused on aligning priorities across schools using the collected data. A follow up meeting is planned once the public KSA results are released to review and if needed revise the needs assessment based on any new findings. Throughout this process, a variety of data sources were reviewed and analyzed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of district and school needs. These sources included academic benchmark data such as iReady and STAR, attendance reports, student profiles, behavior data, and teacher generated instructional data. All meetings were scheduled and documented using Google Calendar, and collaborative notes, data summaries, and action items were recorded and maintained in shared Google Docs to ensure transparency and accessibility for all involved stakeholders.

Review of Previous Plan

2. Summarize the implementation of the goals, objectives, strategies and activities from the previous year's comprehensive district improvement plan (CDIP). What was successful? How will your results inform this year's plan?

Implementation of the goals, objectives, strategies, and activities from the previous year's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) resulted in several notable successes and areas for continued growth. At the elementary level, individualized reading plans were implemented to target students who were not yet proficient. This approach allowed teachers to tailor instruction to specific student needs and contributed to measurable improvement in reading performance. Additionally, individualized skill plans in IXL were introduced, which proved to be effective in addressing learning gaps. Based on this success, the use of IXL skill plans will now be implemented districtwide.

At the middle school level, students were tracked in reading and math using STAR data, which allowed teachers to monitor progress and make timely instructional adjustments. Due to the success of this strategy, the same model will now be utilized at the high school level for both reading and math. At the high school, biweekly PLCs were established to focus on unit plans, lesson planning, and data analysis. This model was highly effective in promoting collaboration and improving instructional alignment and has now been adopted districtwide as a continuous three-cycle framework for planning and reflection.

Teachers across all grade levels developed pacing guides based on state standards and aligned them with high-quality instructional resources (HQIRs). As a result, all subjects and grade levels now have established HQIRs to guide instruction. Districtwide non-negotiables have been implemented to ensure consistency in instructional expectations and practices. Data analysis has become more frequent and meaningful, expanding from quarterly benchmark reviews to include regular analysis of unit assessment data.

Schools across the district have also implemented fluid “Jacket Block” rotations to provide targeted support for students with identified learning gaps. Attendance improved overall, and the district will continue the work of attendance teams with a more strategic focus on addressing chronic absenteeism.

While the district experienced overall improvement in reading and math across all grade levels, writing in grade 5 remains an area of need. To address this, the district has hired a writing consultant who will be working closely with grades 3-5 with funding support from PRI, IAL, and GEAR UP grants. Additionally, high school science and middle school social studies continue to be areas of focus for instructional improvement.

The successes and lessons learned from last year’s CSIP have directly informed this year’s plan, guiding the district toward continued alignment of instructional practices, deeper data use, and targeted interventions to support all learners.

Trends

3. After analyzing data trends from the previous two academic years, which academic, cultural and behavioral measures remain significant areas for improvement?

Example of Trends

- Behavior remains an area for improvement, as referrals have increased in the last two years from 204 in 2023-2024 to 288 in 2024-2025.
- Reading for students in our gap groups remains an area for improvement because the district saw an 11% increase in novice scores in reading among students with achievement gaps from 2024-2025.
 - **Math remains a significant area for improvement across grade spans.**
 - At the elementary level, novice math is still very high at 36% in 2024–2025, even after a 12-point drop from 44%, and only 22% of students are proficient/distinguished combined. KSA Change Comparison
 - At the middle school level, novice math increased from 38% to 41%, showing a negative trend despite small gains in proficient/distinguished. KSA Change Comparison
 - At the high school level, math novice decreased (27% → 22.5%), but distinguished fell from 11% to 9% and over half of students remain below proficient (novice + apprentice = 55%). KSA Change Comparison

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- **Middle school reading remains an area for improvement.** Even with a drop in novice (30% → 25%) and a rise in distinguished (11% → 15%), proficient reading declined from 29% to 27%, leaving 58% of students still novice/apprentice. KSA Change Comparison
 - **Social Studies is a continued concern at the middle school level.** Novice Social Studies rose slightly from 46% to 47%, while proficient declined (23% → 20%). This means 70% of students are still below proficient, making it one of the most urgent academic needs. KSA Change Comparison
 - **Science performance shows improvement but still needs focus on moving students out of apprentice and increasing distinguished.**
 - Elementary science proficient increased strongly (15% → 33%), but distinguished dropped from 3% to 1% and 54% remain apprentice. KSA Change Comparison
 - Middle school science novice decreased (31% → 24%) and proficient rose (22% → 26%), yet 71% of students are still novice/apprentice, and distinguished stayed flat at 3%. KSA Change Comparison
 - High school science has only 2024–2025 data reported (31% novice, 41% apprentice, 25% proficient, 3% distinguished), so trend comparison isn't possible, but the current distribution shows 72% below proficient, indicating a clear improvement need. KSA Change Comparison
 - **Overall Combined Writing performance (especially MS and HS) suggests continued work on increasing proficient/distinguished.**
 - Middle school combined results improved slightly (novice 37% → 33%), but 72% remain below proficient. KSA Change Comparison
 - High school combined results improved (proficient 34% → 53%), yet 40% are still novice/apprentice, so sustaining and extending gains is important.

Current State of Academics and Climate and Culture

4. Describe in narrative form the current academic state of the district using precise numbers and percentages as revealed by multiple sources of your most recent outcome data. Cite the source of data used. Consider the following data sources:

- Kentucky Summative Assessments
- Benchmark assessments
- Formative assessments
- Graduation rate
- Progress in achieving English language proficiency
- Student access to high quality instructional resources, advanced placement courses, dual credit courses, career and technical education courses, before/after school and

summer programs, preschool, full day kindergarten

Example of Current Academic Narratives:

- Thirty-four percent (34%) of students in the achievement gap scored proficient on Kentucky Summative Assessment (KSA) in reading. Local benchmark data indicates that 32% of all students receive Tier II intervention in reading.
- Fifty-four percent (54%) of our students scored proficient in math on the KSA compared to the state average of 57%. Local formative assessments show 53% of students are on grade level in math.

According to KSA change comparison form the past two years, Middlesboro Schools' most recent outcome data show a district that is making real gains in several areas but still has large portions of students performing below proficiency. At the elementary level, reading improved meaningfully: 23% novice, 33% apprentice, 31% proficient, and 13% distinguished in 2024–2025, compared with 31% novice and 6% distinguished the year before. This means 44% of elementary students are now proficient or distinguished in reading, up from 36% in 2023–2024. Mathematics at the elementary level also improved, but remains a significant concern: novice math decreased from 44% to 36%, while proficient/distinguished rose to 22% combined (20% proficient, 2% distinguished), leaving 78% still below proficient in math. Elementary science shows the strongest shift into proficiency: 33% proficient in 2024–2025 (up from 15%), with novice at 12% and apprentice still high at 54%, so a majority remain below proficient even with the gain.

At the middle school level, outcomes are mixed. Reading novice dropped to 25% and distinguished rose to 15%, but proficient slipped to 27%, so only 42% are proficient/distinguished, while 58% remain novice/apprentice. Middle school math is an urgent weakness: novice math increased to 41% (from 38%) and only 31% are proficient/distinguished (24% proficient, 7% distinguished), meaning 70% are below proficient. Social Studies is the most critical middle school academic gap, with 47% novice and 23% apprentice, so 70% of students score below proficient, and proficient fell to 20%. Middle school science improved modestly (novice 24%, proficient 26%), but 71% are still novice/apprentice and distinguished remains 3%. Overall middle school combined writing performance is 33% novice, 39% apprentice, 23% proficient, and 5% distinguished, so 72% of middle school students are below proficient across tested areas.

High school results indicate the district's brightest spot in recent outcomes, especially in reading, math, and combined writing performance. Reading improved to 38% proficient and 19% distinguished (57% proficient/distinguished total), with novice down to 17.5%. Math also improved to 36% proficient, though distinguished dipped to 9%; still, 45% are proficient/distinguished in high school math, while 55% remain novice/apprentice. Social Studies shows major growth: novice dropped from 46% to 22%, and proficient/distinguished rose to 43% total (31% proficient, 12% distinguished). The high school combined writing index moved strongly upward, with 53% proficient and 8% distinguished in 2024–2025; that is 61% proficient/distinguished overall, compared to 40% the prior year. High school science was only reported for 2024–2025 in this file (31% novice, 41% apprentice, 25% proficient, 3%

distinguished), showing that 72% are below proficient in science, and signaling a continued need for targeted improvement there.

Local benchmark and formative assessments mirror these KSA patterns, indicating that the improvement in high school performance and the persistent elementary/middle math weaknesses are consistent across assessment systems. Graduation outcomes are a district strength, with a 95.8% graduation rate, suggesting strong high school completion and credit attainment despite ongoing proficiency gaps.

In terms of access and opportunity, the district provides high-quality instructional resources through Advanced Placement courses (percentage of students participating: 18%), Dual Credit courses (40%), and Career & Technical Education pathways (64%). The district also offers extended learning through before/after-school programs (29.7%) and summer learning programs (23%), ensuring additional academic support aligned to the demonstrated needs in math, middle school literacy, and science. Early learning access is universal in key entry grades: the district offers preschool and full-day kindergarten for 100% of students, giving all learners an early foundation before KSA-tested grades begin.

5. Describe in narrative form the current climate and culture conditions of the district using precise numbers and percentages as revealed by multiple sources of your most recent data. Cite the source of data used. Consider the following data sources:

- Educator and school staff retention rates
- High-quality professional learning opportunities
- Chronic absenteeism
- School climate
- Behavior
- Staff and student access to mental healthcare
- Family and community involvement

Example of Current Climate and Culture Narratives:

- Teacher attendance rate was 84% for the 2024-2025 academic year. 2023-2024 Impact survey data shows that 71% of staff feel like they belong at their school.
- Survey results and perception data indicated 74% of the district's teachers received adequate professional development.

The current climate and culture of the district reflects a combination of strengths and areas for growth, as revealed by multiple sources of recent data. Educator and staff retention rates currently stand at 96%, indicating that while a majority of staff remain committed to the district, ongoing attention is needed to support long-term retention through professional growth, work-life balance, and school culture initiatives.

High-quality professional learning opportunities have been accessed by 100% of staff, with 100% reporting that these opportunities have positively impacted their instructional practices and ability to meet student needs. Chronic absenteeism among students is currently at 29.28%, emphasizing the importance of targeted

interventions to ensure consistent attendance, particularly for students identified as at-risk.

Data on school climate indicates that 74% of students and 82.5% of staff feel safe, respected, and supported within their school environment. Behavior data shows that an average of 16 students have experienced disciplinary incidents, prompting the implementation of targeted behavior supports and positive interventions to promote a constructive learning environment.

The mental and emotional health of students and staff is a school priority. In addition to the school guidance counselor, the students have access to a district social worker and district mental health counselor. The middle and high school also has a Comp Care counselor who operates within the school. The combination of these resources allows students the ability to seek help for a variety of issues related to their mental and emotional health. Family and community involvement is reflected in 48% of families participating in school events highlighting the importance of strengthening partnerships to support student success.

Together, these data points provide a comprehensive view of the district's current climate and culture, illustrating areas of success as well as opportunities for continued improvement. This information will be essential in guiding strategic initiatives, professional learning, and district policies designed to foster a supportive, equitable, and engaging environment for all students and staff.

Strengths

6. Plainly state, using precise numbers and percentages revealed by current data, the strengths of the district.

Example:

- We have active partnerships with twelve community organizations and businesses.
- Eighty-three percent (83%) of certified staff have participated in high-quality professional learning through the Kentucky Reading Academies.
 - High school achievement is a clear strength, with 61% proficient/distinguished in combined writing, up from 40% last year, and strong gains across subjects.
 - High school reading is strong and improving: 57% proficient/distinguished (38% proficient, 19% distinguished) with novice down to 17.5%.
 - High school Social Studies showed major growth, with novice dropping to 22% and 43% proficient/distinguished (31% proficient, 12% distinguished).
 - Elementary reading is trending positively, reaching 44% proficient/distinguished (31% proficient, 13% distinguished).
 - Elementary science made the largest proficiency jump, rising to 33% proficient (from 15%), with novice down to 12%.
 - Graduation rate is a district strength at 95.8%.

We have sixteen active partnerships with community organizations and businesses.

96% of our staff have been professionally trained in their HQIR. Of the 4% that have not been that is due to their HQIR being purchased after the school year had begun. We have their training scheduled it just hasn't occurred yet. 100% of our staff received high quality training at our summer professional development hosted by the district (Middlesboro U). We partnered with our HQIR for curriculum pd as well as our co-op for high quality instructional practices PD. In addition our new hires are a part of an onboarding system that assigns them a mentor that works with them and provides training throughout the year. We have a high retention rate amongst staff of 96%.

Leverages/Assets

7. Explain how the district will utilize its strengths and leverages, including community resources and assets (i.e., colleges, community partnerships, businesses, industry, etc.) to improve areas for improvement listed above.

Examples:

- We will coordinate efforts with our community partners to meet the behavior needs of more students.
- We will utilize the knowledge gained from the Kentucky Reading Academies to develop a reading action plan to target students in our achievement gap groups.

Middlesboro Independent Schools will strategically leverage its strengths, resources, and community partnerships to address areas for improvement and promote student success across the district. We will use the knowledge and insights gained from ongoing data analysis to identify students in need of targeted interventions. Programs and tools available within the district will be utilized to develop individualized plans for these students, and their progress will be monitored through regular benchmark assessments to ensure continuous growth. Grant resources will be maximized to provide additional tutorial support, instructional materials, and opportunities for college and career experiences.

We will build strong relationships with students and families through a structured relationship-building network, promoting both improved attendance and academic achievement. These will be monitored through both our MTSS meetings and attendance team meetings. Partnerships with local businesses and community members will be utilized to develop creative attendance incentives for students who are chronically absent, reinforcing the connection between community support and student engagement. These partnerships are also leveraged for community wide events, and school events in partnership with FRYSC and our Parent Family Engagement Liaison.

The district will continue to leverage partnerships with postsecondary institutions such as KCTCS to provide dual enrollment and early college programs, offering students advanced learning opportunities and college readiness experiences. Collaboration with Appalachian Regional Healthcare (ARH) will provide students

with shadowing opportunities to explore potential career pathways and gain real-world exposure to professional environments. Additionally,

Middlesboro Independent Schools will utilize the resources of the Southeast Educational Cooperative (SESC), including professional development trainings and cohort groups, to build staff capacity in guiding student achievement as well as behavioral interventions and SEL needs.

By intentionally aligning these district strengths, community assets, and strategic partnerships, Middlesboro Independent Schools aims to address areas of improvement while promoting a culture of academic excellence, engagement, and opportunity for all students.

COMMENTS

Evaluate the Teaching and Learning Environment

- Consider the processes, practices and conditions evident in the teaching and learning environment as identified in the six Key Core Work Processes outlined below:

KCWP 1: Design and Deploy Standards

KCWP 2: Design and Deliver Instruction

KCWP 3: Design and Deliver Assessment Literacy

KCWP 4: Review, Analyze and Apply Data Results

KCWP 5: Design, Align and Deliver Support Processes

KCWP 6: Establish Learning Environment and Culture

8a. KCWP 1: Design and Deploy Standards

Schools continually assess, review, and revise school curricula to support the assurance that all students have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for future success.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

☒ No

☐ Yes

COMMENTS

n/a

8b. KCWP 2: Design and Deliver Instruction

Instructional programs include consistent implementation of evidence-based instructional practices essential for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional competencies that are aligned to Kentucky Academic Standards and current research.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

☒ No

☐ Yes

COMMENTS

n/a

8c. KCWP 3: Design and Deliver Assessment Literacy

Schools have a comprehensive, balanced assessment system that provides a variety of evidence to support educational decision making and includes four primary assessment purposes: formative, diagnostic, interim/benchmark, and summative.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

☒ No

☐ Yes

COMMENTS

n/a

8d. KCWP 4: Review, Analyze and Apply Data Results

Schools communicate and implement a sustainable system for reviewing, analyzing, and applying data results to ensure a uniform way to elicit, interpret, and act on meaningful evidence of student learning.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

☐ No

☒ Yes

COMMENTS

Grade-level and content PLCs meet bi-weekly, and MTSS teams convene regularly to make instructional and placement adjustments as needed. School data is continuously tracked through universal screeners, benchmark assessments, unit assessments, and formative assessments. Within PLCs, teachers analyze data using the calculator tool to project novice, apprentice, proficient, and distinguished performance levels. Teachers then use this information to determine appropriate MTSS tier placements and develop strategies to support student growth toward higher proficiency levels.

8e. KCWP 5: Design, Align and Deliver Support Processes

Schools establish a framework that organizes systems, data, and practices to promote positive, equitable and inclusive learning experiences for all students.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

☐ No

☒ **Yes**

COMMENTS

Teachers will participate in bi-weekly PLC meetings following a three-cycle process. Cycle One: Teachers will unpack the standards and plan assessments for the upcoming unit. During this phase, teachers will collaboratively identify the knowledge and skills required for mastery, define levels of performance (approaching, mastery, and exceeding), and determine appropriate types of assessments. Cycle Two: Teachers will plan instructional strategies. They will share effective teaching practices and resources, align instructional pacing, and develop differentiation plans to meet diverse student needs. Cycle Three: Teachers will analyze student work and reflect on instructional effectiveness. They will review learning outcomes by proficiency levels, utilize the data calculator to examine results, and identify reteaching needs, enrichment opportunities, and necessary instructional adjustments. In addition, Student Profiles will be reviewed throughout the process to identify and address any additional student needs.

8f. KCWP 6: Establish Learning Environment and Culture

Schools intentionally design the learning environment to be inclusive and accessible for all students within a culture where learning and continued growth is the primary focus and foundation for all actions.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

☒ **No**

☐ Yes

COMMENTS

n/a

Attachment Summary

Attachment Name	Description	Associated Item(s)
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