



2025-2026 Phase Two: The Needs Assessment for Districts_10282025_09:16

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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 Hickman County School District conducted its annual needs assessment to identify district priorities for improvement in student achievement, instructional practice, and overall school effectiveness. The process was data-driven, collaborative, and inclusive of multiple stakeholder groups to ensure a comprehensive understanding of district strengths and areas for growth.

District Leadership Teams and Stakeholder Groups Involved The following groups actively participated in the development, review, and prioritization of the needs assessment:

District Leadership Team: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, District Assessment Coordinator, Directors of Special Education, Federal Programs, Curriculum and Instruction, Technology, and Finance.

School Leadership Teams: Principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, counselors, and grade-level/department chairs from each school.

Faculty and Staff: Certified teachers, classified staff, and instructional assistants participated in building-level data review sessions and surveys.

School-Based Decision Making (SBDM) Councils: Teacher and parent representatives reviewed school-level data and provided feedback on identified needs and goals.

Family Resource and Youth Services Center (FRYSC) Coordinators: Provided insight on student and family engagement, attendance, and social-emotional needs.

Community Partners: Representatives from local civic and business organizations, early childhood programs, and higher education partners offered input on workforce readiness and community engagement priorities.

Timeline of the Process:

August–September 2025/ Initial data collection and review of district and school performance metrics District Leadership

October 2025/Building-level data meetings to analyze trends in achievement, attendance, behavior, and climate surveys Team Members: School Leadership Teams, Faculty, Staff

October–November 2025/Stakeholder input gathered through surveys and focus group discussions Team Members: SBDM Councils, Parents, Community Partners, FRYSC

November 2025/District Leadership Team prioritization meeting to identify major areas of focus for the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan Team Members: DLT, School Administrators

December 2025/Presentation of findings and priorities to the Board of Education and publication for public review Team Members: DLT, Board Members

Community Data Sources Reviewed and Analyzed The following quantitative and qualitative data sources were reviewed to inform the needs assessment: Academic Performance Data: State assessment results (KSA), i-Ready, classroom benchmark assessments, ACT results, and graduation rates

Demographic and Enrollment Data: Student population trends, subgroup performance, attendance, and mobility Behavioral and Social-Emotional Data:

Infinite Campus behavior reports, FRYSC data, discipline trends, and student climate surveys

Program Effectiveness Data: Title I and ESSER program evaluations, intervention effectiveness reports, and special education performance indicators

Stakeholder Feedback: Staff surveys, parent/community feedback forms, student voice surveys, and SBDM input Operational Data: Staffing patterns, professional development participation, budget and resource allocation reports

Documentation of Meeting Records: All district and school-level meetings were documented through official agendas, minutes, and sign-in sheets maintained in the district's Google Workspace system and archived in the District Improvement Planning folder.

Survey Data: Stakeholder survey responses were compiled using Google Forms and analyzed through district data dashboards.

Public Documentation: Finalized needs assessment summaries and improvement priorities were included in the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan (CDIP) and uploaded to the Kentucky Department of Education's eProve platform for public access.

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?

Summary of Major strategies and activities implemented

- Targeted literacy block and small-group intervention (daily 45+ minute targeted reading groups, tiered interventions). This came from the district's Foundational Literacy Skills Plan and was implemented K-12 with progress monitoring.
- Systematic use of benchmark/formative assessments (district benchmarks + classroom formative checks) to identify students for intervention and to target professional learning for teachers.
- District-level coaching and job-embedded PD focused on standards-aligned instruction and small-group intervention (part of CDIP implementation and PD schedules).
- Strengthening discipline policy and family supports (updated Discipline Code manual; coordination with FRYSCs and community partners for students with attendance/behavior needs).

What was successful:

- Graduation & College/Career outcomes: High school outcomes remained strong — the district/high school shows a four-year graduation rate at or above state averages and strong college-going indicators in state HSFR documents (historically 90%+; recent HSFR shows continued strong college-going and readiness indicators). These outcomes show that secondary interventions, dual-credit/CTE partnerships, and targeted advising are working.
- Targeted literacy implementation produced gains in several grade bands. District-reported Kentucky Summative Assessment proficiency levels show modest gains at particular levels (for example, high-school reading proficiency above elementary/middle levels), indicating that focused literacy time and interventions moved some students toward proficiency. (District KSA summary: Elementary reading proficient 40%, Middle 34%, High 47%.)

How the Results Inform This Year's Plan:

- Continue and scale what worked (graduation supports, targeted literacy groups, and career/college pathways), and shift/add resources to math (elementary) and behavior/attendance supports: more intensive math interventions, coaching focused on math instructional practice, expanded tiered behavior supports, improved chronic-absence monitoring and family outreach via FRYSC. Implementation goals will include clearer fidelity checks, explicit interim benchmarks for math, and a district-wide behavior RTI framework.

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.

Where implementation fell short / limited impact:

- Elementary math proficiency remains low. District KSA math proficiency at the elementary level was reported at ~33% proficient (distinguished 10%); math did not show the same gains as some reading measures. This indicates either

insufficient math intervention intensity, curriculum-implementation fidelity, or gaps in teacher supports in math.

- Behavior and attendance remained a problem. While the district updated discipline policy and increased family supports, discipline referrals and chronic absenteeism continued to be meaningful barriers for learning (see district discipline code updates and statewide/chronic absenteeism trends). Local review of behavior data indicates the need for more intensive Tier II/Tier III supports and SEL/mental-health access.

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.

Two-year trend analysis — academic, cultural and behavioral measures that remain significant

Documentation used:

- District documents and public postings: District assessment summaries, Foundational Literacy Skills Plan, Discipline Code Manual, District Improvement Plan and Finance/Audit reports are posted on the Hickman County Schools website and the district's Google Workspace. Meeting minutes and agendas (board and DLT) are archived in the District Improvement Planning folder and in board packet archives. (hickman.kyschools.us)
- State sources: Kentucky HSFR and School Report Card dashboards and KDE public datasets informed proficiency and graduation rates. These are the

official sources for accountability and were used for benchmarking. (Kentucky Statistics)

- External analyses: Education recovery / district-level trend PDFs and national attendance trackers provided context for pandemic recovery and chronic absenteeism trends used when setting targets. (Education Recovery Scorecard)

Academic measures

Current academic state — narrative with precise numbers (most recent outcome data)

- Kentucky Summative Assessment (district summary, 2024): Elementary Reading — 40% proficient (13% distinguished); Elementary Math — 33% proficient (10% distinguished). Middle Reading — 34% proficient (21% distinguished); Middle Math — 40% proficient (10% distinguished). High School Reading — 47% proficient (6% distinguished); High School Math — 40% proficient (2% distinguished). These figures come from the district's public assessment summaries. The pattern: higher HS reading proficiency relative to elementary/middle; math proficiency is low at elementary and only modest at middle/high. (hickman.kyschools.us)
- Graduation: High school graduate outcomes remain a strength. State reporting and HSFR documents indicate four-year cohort graduation and college-going metrics that are at or above state averages in recent reported datasets (historically reported $\geq 90\%$ graduation). These outcomes indicate strong secondary completion efforts.
- Benchmark & formative data: The district's Foundational Literacy Skills Plan documents daily intervention minutes and benchmark windows; those internal benchmarks guided identification and demonstrated movement for many students — but benchmark aggregates still show notable numbers below proficiency and will be used to set interim math targets this year.
- Elementary math proficiency: 33% proficient (elementary KSA math proficiency; distinguished 10%). This level is well below where the district needs to be to close learning gaps and achieve state targets. Continued focus on foundational math instruction and intervention is required. (hickman.kyschools.us)
- Middle school reading and math: Middle school KSA shows 34% proficient in reading and 40% proficient in math, indicating mixed performance by level and subject; gains are uneven across grades. (hickman.kyschools.us)
- High school reading: Higher relative performance at HS (reading 47% proficient) suggests that remediation and targeted supports in secondary grades have helped many students; however, that still leaves a substantial portion of students not proficient. (hickman.kyschools.us)
- Subgroup gaps: Disaggregated reporting (district and KDE report card tools) indicates persistent achievement gaps for economically disadvantaged students and other gap groups. State and independent analyses (education recovery dashboards) show that districts with higher poverty had slower recovery post-pandemic; Hickman shows the same pattern. Specific subgroup

numbers are available on the KDE School Report Card and district data files for use in target setting. (Education Recovery Scorecard)

Cultural & behavioral measures

- Discipline referrals & suspensions: District discipline manual and recent board materials show updated discipline procedures for 2024–25 and ongoing tracking of referrals — local meeting minutes and plans note behavior as an active concern.
- Chronic absenteeism & engagement: Chronic absenteeism remains a statewide and local concern; national/state trackers show elevated chronic absence post-pandemic and KDE continues to incorporate attendance into accountability. Local attendance patterns must be monitored monthly and tied to FRYSC outreach and family engagement.

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.
 - Staffing & retention: District staffing patterns (NCES + district HR pages) indicate a small/rural district with approximately 700–750 students and a student/teacher ratio around 13–16:1; HR documents and budget summaries show teacher recruitment/retention has been a focus (salary adjustments and staffing planning in FY23–24 materials). Retention challenges in rural districts typically require targeted retention strategies (competitive pay, mentoring, and targeted PD).
 - Behavior & school climate: The district revised its Discipline Code for 2024–25 and has documented committee work and policy adoption; at least one district meeting and committee (Falcon Nights Committee / board minutes) recorded changes and follow-up activities. These policy updates show

attention to climate but do not yet reflect large-scale reductions in referrals — more targeted implementation is needed.

- Attendance / chronic absenteeism:

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.
 - Strong secondary outcomes and graduation/college-going structures. Use HS college/career advisers to expand early college/CTE access and bridge to middle grades. (Kentucky Statistics)
 - Existing FRYSC and community partners (local business and higher-ed relationships noted in district materials and community pages). These partners can provide tutoring, internships, and wraparound supports. (hickman.kyschools.us)
 - Established Foundational Literacy Plan and commitment to intervention time and progress monitoring. Use the literacy implementation model as a template to scale math interventions.

Specific action levers

- High-quality professional learning: Add a district PD focus on math instructional practice (K–5), with instructional coaching cycles, lesson study, and classroom walkthroughs emphasizing small-group math interventions and formative assessment use. Use state resources and regional PD providers to build teacher content knowledge and pedagogy. (MyConnectSuite)
- Behavior & mental-health supports: Build a multi-tiered behavior support system (Tier I universal SEL, Tier II small-group interventions, Tier III intensive supports) and expand school access to mental-health professionals through partnerships (local health providers, telehealth, FRYSC referrals). Tie discipline data to intervention teams and track reduction in referrals monthly. (Clouduary)
- Attendance/chronic absence: Use FRYSC case management and early-warning attendance dashboards to trigger family outreach, transportation problem solving, and targeted incentives or supports. Track chronic absence monthly and report to leadership. (Return to Learn Tracker)
- Expanded learning & access: Strengthen summer learning and before/after school programming with community partnerships and CTE opportunities, and expand dual-credit/advanced course access by coordinating with local community colleges (college partnerships are already part of the district's postsecondary work). (Kentucky Statistics)

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.

Leveraging District Strengths and Community Resources

Hickman County Schools will build upon its strong community partnerships and existing instructional frameworks to address identified areas for improvement. We will coordinate efforts with our Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSCs), local mental health providers, and youth-serving organizations to meet the behavioral and social-emotional needs of more students through expanded access to counseling, mentoring, and Tier II behavioral supports. The district will utilize the knowledge gained from the Kentucky Reading Academies and our Foundational Literacy Skills Plan to develop a targeted Reading and Math Action Plan focused on closing achievement gaps among students in our gap groups. We will partner with West Kentucky Community and Technical College and regional career and technical education centers to strengthen early college and career readiness opportunities, ensuring all students have access to high-quality, hands-on learning pathways. Collaboration with local businesses and civic organizations will continue to provide real-world learning experiences, internships, and resources that reinforce academic relevance and engagement. Additionally, we will expand high-quality professional learning through regional educational cooperatives to strengthen instructional practices and intervention strategies. By intentionally aligning these community assets with district goals, Hickman County Schools will improve student achievement, reduce behavior incidents, and foster a more positive, supportive school climate for all learners.

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

What we improve: Fidelity of core reading and math instruction (K-5) and daily small-group math interventions; implement structured math block, common math benchmarks, lesson planning templates aligned to success criteria; instructional coaching cycles with weekly classroom feedback; strengthen use of manipulatives and math talks. (Rationale: elementary math proficiency = 33%.)

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

What we will improve: consistent benchmark calendar and data-team protocols across schools; clearer interim targets for math and reading; data teams trained to disaggregate by subgroup and to convert data into short-term action plans for intervention (who, what, when). Use benchmark results to trigger Tier II supports within two weeks. (Rationale: need for timely assessment→instruction adjustments.)

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

NA

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

NA

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

What we will improve: job-embedded PD focusing on math pedagogy and classroom management/SEL integration; district coaching cadre expansion; retention supports (mentoring, induction, compensation strategies documented in district finance/HR plans). (Rationale: teacher practice improvements drive student outcomes and help retention.)

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

NA

Attachment Summary

Attachment Name	Description	Associated Item(s)
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