

To: Board of Education

From: Jerri Kemble, assistant superintendent, leading, learning & technology, ext. 2755
Dr. Terry McEwen, director, assessment, research & accountability, ext. 2613

Re: Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) update

Date: July 20, 2017

Background:

Board of Education Goal #1:

Develop and align district expectations for curriculum and instruction to raise the achievement of all students; and Board of Education

Board of Education Goal #4:

Expand communication and community connections through increased engagement.

Historical Perspective-

The State of Kansas began using the Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) system for individual school buildings in 1992 as part of the School District Finance and Quality Performance Act. As part of the legislation, the state developed curriculum standards and state assessments in a minimum of three grades in the subject areas of mathematics, science, communications (including speaking and listening), and social studies. In 1995, the act was amended to include curriculum standards for reading and writing, and improved standards for mathematics, science, and social studies as well as assessments in a minimum of three grades for each of the core content areas. All schools entered the QPA process in 1995. In 1998 the QPA regulations were again amended to include a results-based staff development plan for each school. Site Councils at each school site were also required under this act.

The QPA system was successful in assuring students were making academic progress. However, once No Child Left Behind (2001) became fully implemented, requiring reading and mathematics assessments for every student in Grades 3 – 11 (2006), the “Q” (Quality Criteria) became much less important, and the only criteria for accreditation was whether a building met the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) target. If the school made the AYP target, they were accredited with no additional requirements in the Quality arena, save a checkbox of items that the school could simply access and check “yes”.

The Current Accreditation System:

With the expiration of No Child Left Behind in front of Kansas schools, the Kansas State Department of Education began exploring a new method for accrediting schools; one that would be more meaningful and robust. As explorations continued, it was decided that it would be more meaningful to accredit districts rather than individual school buildings – with a new focus on Systems Thinking.

The multi-year work on a new accreditation system came to fruition with the development of the *Kansas Education System Accreditation* (KESA) plan, a five-year cycle of continuous improvement. KESA changes the focus of measuring school and student success from a single score on one assessment (NCLB) to four large-scale areas: *Relationships*, *Relevance*, *Responsive Culture*, and *Rigor* – all of which lead to a fifth area, *Results*. This accreditation system will require stakeholder involvement from parents, community, and business and industry, as well as an outside validation team who will work with the district throughout the process. The focus will always be on the quality and depth of the process used throughout the five-year cycle.

The report will focus on the “Five R’s”, as well as the criteria areas for measurement: Kindergarten Readiness, Graduation Rates, Post-High School Success, Individual Plans of Study, and the Social/Emotional well-being of students. The report will also include the vision of the State Board of Education for Kansas graduates: each graduate will have the academic, cognitive, technical and employability skills, as well as being civically engaged, to be successful adults.