

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)  
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

**KANSAS**

*This profile was verified by the staff of the Kansas Department of Education in June 2000.  
All information was current as of that date.*

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**State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)**

*1. Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.*

Effective July 1, 1995, the legislature directed the State Board of Education to:

- provide for statewide assessments in the core academic areas of mathematics, science, reading, writing, and social studies.
- administer the assessments at three grade levels
- establish curriculum standards for mathematics, science, reading, writing, and social studies
- ensure compatibility between the statewide assessments and the curriculum standards
- determine performance levels on the statewide assessments, along with specified levels of performance representing excellence for both individual students and the school building
- prepare a public education performance report card consisting of statewide aggregated data pertaining to performance on statewide assessments and other measurable performance indicators and showing comparative data over multiple years
- prepare a report card for each school building and provide the local school board with information showing, for multiple years, both statewide and school building data.

*2. What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:*

- *Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s)* **Kansas Assessments**
  - *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested*
    - Mathematics (annually at grades 4, 7, 10)
    - Reading (annually at grades 3, 7, and 10)
    - Writing (annually for grade 5; even numbered fiscal years at grades 8 and 10)
    - Science (fall of odd numbered fiscal years at grades 5, 8, and 10)
    - Social Studies (odd numbered fiscal years at grades 5, 8, and 11)
    - Finally, the state requires locally-administered 2nd grade diagnostic reading assessments.
  - *Norm or Criterion Referenced* Criterion-referenced, based on Kansas curriculum
  - *Matrix or Census Testing* Census (all students at the designated grades)
  - *Item Types (including proportions if available via Internet or interview) such as: traditional or enhanced multiple choice, performance tasks, open-ended questions, portfolios, essays, etc.* All of the assessments are multiple choice with the exception of direct writing.
  - *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window).* All of the assessments are administered in the spring. The 1999-2000 testing schedule included a February 28 – March 31 testing window for mathematics, reading and writing.
  - *High School Exit Exam (date of implementation and/or phase-in timeline)* Kansas does not administer a high school exit exam.
  - *Other Assessments* Kansas has administered NAEP twice in the past.
  - *Transitional or Final Assessment System* Final Assessment system, but modified regularly.
3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state? Probe on:*
- *State Department of Education*
  - *Commercial Testing Organization*
  - *State teachers and administrators* The state assessments are developed by Kansas educators identified by their districts and state professional association leaders. The assessments are a product of Kansas educators whose development is coordinated by the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation at the University of Kansas. The approach to development of an assessment relies almost entirely on Kansas educators and resources.
  - *Assessment Committee*
4. *What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?*

The primary requirement for local assessment is that districts comply with state rules for state testing and reporting. In addition, the State Board of Education requires the administration of local performance assessments.

With regard to the grading of writing assessments, districts are required to provide either one or two local reads for all papers. If a district provides a local read, all papers should be returned to the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation (CETE), and a state read will be provided for each one. If two local reads are provided, districts should send a 10% random sample or 25 randomly selected papers, whichever is greater.

Finally, districts and schools are required to conduct a second grade diagnostic reading assessment. Each building will determine which reading assessment will be used, in consideration of the suggest list of assessments approved by the State Board of Education.

*5. Is the state assessment system aligned with the state standards? Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned?*

- *Refining standards* The assessments grow from the Kansas Curriculum Standards in the five subject fields. Curriculum standards are reviewed every three years and changes are made as determined by state curricular advising committees.
- *Revamping assessments* Using the Kansas Curriculum Standards as the beacon, the state assessments are crafted annually by Kansas educators and association leaders. Each year in which a content area is to be assessed, a new form is used in the different content areas. Typically, a set of questions on each examination is carried forward in order to evaluate performance trends over time. The revised mathematics, reading, and writing assessments will be ready for administration in the spring of 2000. The revised science and social studies assessments will be ready for administration in the 2000-2001 school year.
- *What is the timeline for completion of the alignment?* This is an ongoing process, as the curricular standards and aligned assessment are regularly reviewed and revised.

*6. What is the state's approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?*

Kansas goes through a detailed process as they develop test items to ensure content validity. Educators and officials who work on standards committees are involved in the assessment development. When they conduct standards setting, they have teachers examine the items to ensure they are aligned. Finally, curriculum staff spend a week over the summer reviewing the assessments to confirm they are aligned.

*7. How is the data included in the state assessment system used?*

- *Student Grade Promotion/Retention, Graduation, Diploma Certification* No, see below
- *Teacher, School and/or District accountability* No, see below
- *Program Evaluation (Identify federal, state programs)* Yes, Title I evaluation

- *Identification of students for programs like Title I, state CompEd, Bilingual, etc.* In part, see below
- *Instructional guidance to local administrators and/or teachers* Yes
- *School improvement (e.g., preparing a school improvement plan)* Yes

In recent years the assessments have been called upon to provide information to contribute to ongoing school accreditation status, and results from the reading and mathematics assessments are used to monitor annual progress to support Title I monitoring and evaluation requirements. In the future the state assessments are also to be used to identify students who are demonstrating achievement at the highest levels of excellence.

At this time the state assessments are constructed to provide input and assist with understanding a student's achievement with reference to the Kansas subject area Curriculum Standards and to inform official as to the performance of schools toward achieving these Standards. Any other use, actions or inferences based on performance on the Kansas assessments was not considered during the development of the assessments.

Kansas officials strongly discourage the use of assessment data for purposes such as promotion, retention, or accountability. If test data is used for the identification of students for special programs, it is only supposed to be one small part of that decision, and educators should rely on additional evidence as well.

*8. Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

The assessments evolve as the Kansas Curriculum Standards evolve; the state has just entered a new cycle during the academic year 1999-2000.

*9. What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.*

The pull between accountability and instruction poses a continual challenge for Kansas, although they try to maintain the emphasis on instruction. Kansas has always endeavored to resist political pressure to use assessment data for accountability purposes for which the assessment was not designed.

On a positive note, there has been a great deal of support from Kansas teachers for the writing assessment; they feel it has improved instruction and students' writing.

## **Inclusion Policies for Assessment**

*1. What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?*

Policies regarding students with disabilities: Students who have been identified as having a disability and who have an Individual Education Program (IEP) will participate in the state assessment unless the IEP team has determined that the student would be unable to take the assessment and the IEP specifically states that the student is exempted. All students are expected to be tested.

Policies regarding students with Low English Proficiency: Limited English Proficient (LEP) and Non-English Proficient (NEP) students are identified by a district-wide survey as having a background in a language other than English. The student's level of English proficiency must be determined by a standardized assessment (IPT, LAS, etc.) that includes reading, writing, and oral language proficiencies.

Schools are to use the following criteria for assessing LEP and NEP students:

- Former, Exited and Monitor-Status LEP students → Regular Assessment or Regular Assessment with Accommodations
- Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students → Any student who meets the district's criteria of being limited English proficient may take the Kansas Assessments or the Kansas Assessments with accommodations. A review team must be established to determine which, if any, of the approved accommodations are needed for individual LEP students.
- Non-English Proficient Students → Any student who meets the district's criteria of being non-English proficient may be exempted from the Kansas Assessments. Students who are enrolled in the district on a temporary basis of one year or less – such as foreign exchange students – may be exempted from the Kansas Assessments.

2. *What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?*

According to Kansas guidelines, an accommodation is a change in procedure for test administration which allows an individual to take an assessment in such a manner that the test reflects the student's ability rather than any disability not related to what is being tested.

The state policy for allowing accommodations is as follows:

- An accommodation must not change what is being measured.
- Accommodations are not limited to students with disabilities. This will allow students with 504 plans, limited English proficiency or Title I status to have accommodations. Occasionally, a general education student may need an accommodation.
- Any student may receive an accommodation when it is appropriate for that student; however, that student must receive the accommodation routinely during all classroom instruction and assessment activities.
- Accommodations are given on an individual, rather than on a group basis, unless approved by KSBE.
- If any student receives an accommodation(s), then that accommodation(s) must be identified on the answer sheet.

- Accommodations must be documented by each building, whether in the IEP of a student with a disability; on a student's 504 plan; or on the form provided by the state for LEP students, Title I student and other general education students.

The following accommodations are authorized:

Test Administration Setting: Individual, small group, study carrel, or separate location; special lighting; special acoustics; colored filters; students may take frequent breaks during each part of the assessment, but must complete the section(s) of the assessment scheduled to be administered during that session.

Test Presentation: Key words or phrases in directions highlighted or underlined, one complete sentence per line, on item per page, templates to reduce print, large print, visual magnification.

Student Response: Students point to answer, tape record for later verbatim translation, use of recorder to mark information or answer responses, dark or heavy raised lines on entire response booklet.

Assistive Devices: Magnifying equipment, computer, tape recorder.

Other acceptable testing practices include: Allowing additional time; paraphrasing or simplifying directions; allowing scratch paper and manipulatives; allowing adaptive furniture, glasses, and hearing aids; minimizing distractions/providing quiet location; and allowing translation dictionaries or electronic translators for the assessment.

*3. Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?*

No, however, Kansas is investigating the possibility of developing reduced language versions of the state assessments. These assessments would eliminate unnecessary wording of items, without changing the validity of the construct.

*4. Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages?*

An alternate assessment for approximately .75% to 1.5% of the students with disabilities is being piloted in the 1999-2000 school year. In addition, the state will be piloting a modified assessment, which will assess approximately 1.0% to 1.5% of students. Kansas is concerned with holding students with disabilities to high standards, but ensuring that the assessments are a valid measure of what these students know and can do.

*5. Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?*

Yes, the state has the goal of inclusion of SWD and LEP students. Schools are required to turn in an assessment answer sheet for every student, even those who do not take the state assessment and to state the reason why the student did not take the assessment. The percentage of students who did and did not take the assessments will be publicly reported.

*6. Are changes planned in the for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

Changes include the implementation of the alternate and modified assessments, and development of a reduced language assessment.

## **Performance Standards**

*1. How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?*

The state of Kansas has established five student performance levels: Advanced, Proficient, Satisfactory, Basic, and Unsatisfactory. These five levels are replacing the previous four levels of Excellent, Proficient, Basic, and Unsatisfactory. Cut scores will be determined for each grade and subject area. Cut scores are currently unavailable, as Kansas officials and educators are in the process of determining performance levels for the 1999-2000 assessment data.

*2. Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, drop-out rates or other measures (e.g. 70% of students in Maryland pass the MSPAP)?*

- *Target level*
- *Percentage of students expected to attain target level*
- *Time period in which to attain level*
- *Annual increase required*

Kansas is in the process of setting “**Standards of Excellence**” for the school building level, by subject area. The standard of excellence will be defined as percentages of students in each of the performance levels, by subject. The school-level standard of excellence will establish a target level of performance for each school, and each school will be identified as having achieved the standard of excellence or not. These standards create high-level expectations as goals for all schools to achieve. It is expected that a small number of schools will achieve the building Standards of Excellence initially, with growth as a long-term goal. Kansas has not established a target level of growth for the state, this is determined at the school level.

The **Standard of Excellence** is formally defined as follows:

Student performance demonstrates capability with rigorous subject matter. Comprehensive application and integration of knowledge, concepts and processes to new, unfamiliar or highly complex real world situations is evident and meets achievement expectations at world class standard levels.

Capability with information and skills in the content area is at a high level. Breadth as well as depth of understanding are evidenced. The ability to go beyond routine application of appropriate information to achieve solutions is in evidence; proficiency to deal with difficult, rigorous and formidable material is observed.

*3. How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?*

The performance standards are calculated on the basis of the Kansas state assessments. The final unit of analysis for reporting is percentage of students in a performance level.

*4. Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?*

The standards of excellence will be based on the distribution of students in the various performance categories, by subject area. This will include all students who participate in statewide assessments.

*5. Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

Performance standards will have to be set again when the curriculum and assessments are fully updated.

*6. What proportion of schools and/or districts fail to meet acceptable levels on performance targets?*

As of January 1999, four schools were conditionally accredited.

## **Reporting Performance Data**

*1. Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience) for each of the following levels:*

- *Student reports* The legislature did not appropriate money for “parent reports” of assessments. Schools are strongly encouraged to share student performance results with parents.
- *School reports*

**Kansas School Building Report Cards** are accessible on the Department of Education website. These reports include the following information:

- ✓ enrollment data, disaggregated by gender, SES, American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, White
- ✓ attendance, graduation and dropout rates
- ✓ violent acts against students
- ✓ violent acts against teachers
- ✓ state assessments in reading, mathematics, writing and science, by grade, including general and special education students.
- ✓ Standard of Excellence for each subject by building and state

- *District reports*

District reports are sent from the state Department of Education to the districts at the same time as school reports, and contain similar data. However, these are not available on the web. Because the Kansas Quality Performance Accreditation system focuses on the school level, district data is not emphasized. Officials note that there can be a great deal of variation within a district and prefer to focus on schools.

- *State reports*

Kansas produces an **Accountability Report** with information on the following indicators:

- ✓ ACT scores from 1993 on, by subject and composite; also data on percent of students taking the test
- ✓ SAT scores from 1994 on, by subject.
- ✓ State mathematics assessment compared over four years; disaggregated by gender, ethnicity/race (Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander, African American, Hispanic, White), socioeconomic status; student performance at different level; schools achieving the standards of excellence.
- ✓ Students passing math courses
- ✓ State reading assessment compared over three and four years, disaggregated, by performance level, schools achieving the standards of excellence.
- ✓ State writing assessment compared over two years, disaggregated, schools achieving the standard of excellence, and by performance level
- ✓ Graduates passing advanced science courses 9-12
- ✓ Attendance rate
- ✓ Graduation rate
- ✓ Dropout rate
- ✓ Violent acts against students and teachers
- ✓ Implementation of staff development.

- *Title I reports*

Kansas produces Title I reports in accordance with federal regulations, including enrollment, disaggregated assessments results.

2. *How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?*

State reports and individual school reports are available in print format are available for viewing or download from the state Department of Education website. Most information is published in local press as well.

*3. At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported (see Internet sites for state, district and school level report cards)?*

Kansas disaggregates state exams by gender, race, socio-economic status, and special education and LEP. The disaggregated results are published in public reports and are accessible on the state Department of Education website.

*4. Does trend data exist from the state assessments (example: Texas State Assessment data is available from “1996-97 on”)?*

The School Building Report Cards, accessible on the state Department of Education website include trend data from 1996-1999. In 1999-2000, a new assessment cycle began, so there is no trend data for this new cycle.

*5. How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?*

The scores of students are reported in four ways:

- ✓ General education students and gifted students together
- ✓ Special Education students only
- ✓ Limited English proficient students only
- ✓ All students

In the state Quality Performance Accreditation manual, Kansas reaffirms compliance with IDEA requirements for the reporting of data on the academic performance of students with disabilities.

*6. What are the state’s requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?*

As part of the Quality Performance Accreditation process, each school is to develop a school improvement plan. Each school will determine priorities among possible improvement plan outcomes and then prioritize the outcomes according to local needs. The targeted outcomes are based on school strengths and weaknesses, as identified through analysis of the disaggregated data contained in the school profile.

*7. Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?*

In the future, results for schools will be reported as the percent of students in each performance level, rather than by building mean.

8. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.*

One challenge in the area of reporting concerns the public use and interpretation of data: Kansas schools are judged based on the progress they have made, hence they are compared only against themselves and their past performance. However, the public likes school-to-school comparisons, so groups such as realtors or newspapers will acquire assessment data and try to make comparisons that are not entirely valid.

### **State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)**

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.*

The accountability system in Kansas is based on a system of accreditation: **Quality Performance Accreditation**. The major focus of the QPA system is the continual improvement of students' academic performance. The education system is expected to move all schools and all students towards higher levels of performance.

The QPA program was first adopted by the State Board of Education in 1991, amended by the legislature in 1993, and final regulations were adopted by the State Board in 1996. During the 1995-96 school year, all public schools had entered the QPA process, based on five-year cycles.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state accountability system?*

*Probe on:*

- *Who is held accountable (students, schools, districts)?*
- *For what are they held accountable (adequate yearly progress, student achievement, processes, multiple non-cognitive indicators, etc)?*
- *Using what criteria (state assessments, local assessments, both state and local criteria)?*
- *To what targets or performance levels?*
- *With what consequences (promotion or graduation, program improvement, additional planning, state takeover, rewards, assistance, etc.)?*

*Organize the response into the following subsections:*

- *Student Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

There are no student accountability policies currently in place.

- *School Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

The Quality Performance Accreditation process focuses on the school building. The QPA process is based on five year cycles, which must include the following elements:

- Development of a building profile
- Establishing a mission
- Setting student exit outcomes
- First onsite visit
- School improvement plan
- Accreditation visit.

The QPA manual describes the process in the following manner: School improvement is the framework upon which Quality Performance Accreditation is built. It provides a problem-solving approach to designed school programs for increasing student learning performance. It is a model which recognizes the difference between current conditions and a desired future state and provides a plan for moving in the desired direction. The three key questions that comprise this improvement process are:

- 1) Where are we now – relative to student performance?
- 2) Where do we want to be?
- 3) How do we get there?

Once schools have completed Quality Performance Accreditation’s school improvement cycle, they will be in a position to clearly demonstrate the level of academic performance of their students and the overall performance of their school. Through the process of specifically identifying and aligning their curricular expectations and targeting weak areas for improvement, the product of Quality Performance Accreditation is the higher performance of all students in academic areas and a clear accountability to the public for meeting the school’s mission.

More specifically, accreditation shall be based on:

- Continuous improvement of performance of all student groups in the target areas, which must include all academic areas over time.
- Sustained effort measures: graduation rate, dropout rate, attendance rate, violent acts against teachers and students, performance of all student groups on state assessments measured against standards of excellence, local assessments in communications, mathematics, science, and social studies, students passing advanced math and science courses in grades 9-12, and student mastery of algebraic concepts.
- Local data, continuous improvement, and state assessment data are all to be considered in the accreditation evaluation, and
- Status on a single indicator will not determine accredited status.

#### Accreditation Status

Each school shall be classified as one of the following:

- (1) a candidate
- (2) accredited
- (3) accredited conditionally; or
- (4) denied accreditation

If a school is granted accredited status, the status shall be effective for five years and the school shall proceed with its next quality performance accreditation improvement cycle.

The accreditation status of any school may be extended until the school’s accreditation status is determined by the state board.

If a school is accredited conditionally, the school shall develop and implement a one-year modified improvement plan which shall be approved by the state board. Following implementation of the one-year modified improvement plan, the state board shall conduct an

accreditation visit and shall determine whether the school shall be accredited or denied accreditation.

Schools which have unsuccessfully completed the cycle of school improvement by having experienced numerous deficiencies and not having adequately addressed the Kansas State Board of Education criteria which is used to determine a school's accreditation status. Sanctions are applied to a school when it is denied accreditation.

- *District Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

There are no district accountability policies currently in place.

3. *What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?*

- *Relative growth*
- *Absolute target*
- *Narrowing the Gap between high and low achievers*
- *Other*

Kansas has an absolute target for measuring progress: the state encourages/requires schools to work toward the standards of excellence established by the state board. In addition, the state measures growth on the Continuous Improvement Scale.

More specifically, as part of the QPA process, schools are required to identify targets in their school improvement plan. Each school will determine priorities among possible improvement plan outcomes and then prioritize the outcomes according to local needs. The improvement plan must reflect mandated targets and local targets:

- Mandated targets: Each school is to develop a school improvement plan which targets for improvement specific academic areas reflective of state outcomes. Until the building Standards of Excellence, established by the KSBE, are met in each subject area, each school is required to target for improvement three of the following academic areas: math, reading, science, social studies, and writing. Two of the three areas targeted for improvement shall be math and reading, until the school has achieved the Standards of Excellence for those academic areas.
- Local targets: Each school may also use local district and school outcomes and related data to determine additional improvement plan targets for the school. Schools should target the outcomes which will receive immediate action based upon local needs and resources.

4. *Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded (probe on inclusion of SWD and LEP students)?*

QPA requirements state that data for the QPA process are to be collected about all students, and to be disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, and other identified as pertinent to the local student population. The QPA manual notes that the process focuses upon the learning performance of all students. All students includes students of special populations, i.e. special education, vocational programs, support programs like Title I, etc.

*5. How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?*

The links between QPA and Title I schoolwide programs are clear: both focus on continuous improvement of student achievement and on the use of a comprehensive school improvement plan. However, the Title I accountability system has a stricter definition of adequate yearly progress.

*6. Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?*

Specific populations may be addressed in the improvement plan, but not to the exclusion of the general population. The goal of Quality Performance Accreditation is for all students to improve; therefore, targets and/or strategies should not exclude any students. A specific population may also be addressed through student improvement plans.

*7. Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?*

Non-public schools may be included in the QPA process.

*8. Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

Kansas is in the process of developing an “early warning” system for the accreditation process. Under this system, schools would engage in a self-evaluation, which would eliminate surprises in accreditation standing. Schools would evaluate themselves on the basis of fifteen indicators that fall into the following categories: state assessments, local assessments, and non-cognitive indicators (dropout rates, attendance, etc.). Kansas is also encouraging schools to look more closely at their data to identify ways in which they could narrow the gap between low and high achieving students. However, this system is still under development and no official changes have been approved or implemented.

In addition, beginning in the summer of 2000, Kansas will embark on a year-long study of the accreditation system to determine what has worked well, what has not worked as well as hoped, and how the system could be changed to better address the needs of Kansas schools.

*9. What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.*

One of the challenges in Kansas is refining the accountability system to ensure that it drives instruction. Officials highlight the tension between an accountability system that determines whether students have mastered subject matter, or one that promotes teachers and encourages them to build their capacity and provide better instruction.

## Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts

*1. How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?*

Through the accreditation system, some schools will be identified as low-performing, that is, they will receive conditional accreditation. This is based on criteria included in QPA guidelines and applies to all schools, regardless of Title I status.

*2. Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?*

It is the State Board which awards the accreditation status by acting upon the recommendation submitted by the onsite team.

*3. What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?*

- *Evaluation and Planning* yes.
- *Financial* yes; public schools that are conditionally accredited are eligible to receive Goals 2000 grant money.
- *Expert Assistance* yes.

*4. Who provides the state assistance?*

- *School/district support teams*
- *Regional centers* yes, see below
- *Distinguished educators*
- *SDE staff* yes, see below
- *Other – Explain*

Schools that are conditionally accredited receive assistance from the state in conducting a self-assessment and in developing a corrective action plan that addresses areas of concern. The QPA team members provide advice and council on key aspects of QPA and make recommendations regarding the school's implementation of the QPA system. The plan must be implemented by September 30. Staff from the state department of education follow up with monthly visits to provide assistance as needed. In addition, the state cooperates with area service centers, the North Central Association, and KNEA.

*5. Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?*

The QPA process applies to all schools regardless of Title I status, and support services apply to all schools. However, there is a slightly different system of support specific to Title I schools, although there is a great deal of overlap. Additional details are provided in the section on Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress, below.

6. *Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?*

A school that receives conditional accreditation must work throughout the school year to address the areas in which its performance was insufficient to obtain full accreditation. When the school has met state guidelines, its accreditation will be renewed.

7. *Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?*

Schools that are conditionally accredited must use the accreditation self-assessment guide as well as develop and implement a one-year modified improvement plan, and the State Board will conduct a second accreditation visit at the conclusion of the additional year in order to determine whether the school shall be accredited or denied state accreditation.

The major components of the school improvement plan are as follows:

- Section 1: School mission, academic areas reflective of Quality Performance Accreditation outcomes/standards, and district learner exit outcomes.
- Section 2: Analysis and interpretation of data and selection and evaluation of targeted outcomes.
- Section 3: Strategies
- Section 4: Results-based staff development plans

8. *Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

Any changes to the system of identifying and assisting low performing schools are the same as those that are proposed for the QPA system. For more information, please refer to the section on Accountability, earlier in this profile.

## **Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress**

1. *What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?*

- *What measures are used (relationship between cognitive/non-cognitive data)?*
- *What targets have been established?*
- *Are local assessment systems included as criteria? If so, does the state provide guidance? Monitor their use?*
- *Is subgroup performance included in the criteria?*

Evaluation of Title I schools is no longer based on individual student scores from year to year. Rather, the evaluation system is now focused upon the performance of the entire school.

All Title I buildings will be required to use the Kansas Assessments in reading and mathematics as the primary indicators of program success. Each building has the option of using the test

scores of all the children in the building taking the test or just the identified Title I children. By selecting the entire pool of students taking the test, the school will have a larger base from which to evaluate the program. However, the school may choose to be evaluated on just the scores of identified Title I children.

Two additional local indicators selected by the LEA and school may be used to show adequate yearly progress if it was not demonstrated on the Kansas Assessments. These indicators will be used to measure the success of schools in enabling all children served to meet the State's student performance standards. Both the indicator and the rate of growth must be approved by the State.

2. *What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress for the following:*

- *Title I schools and non-Title I schools*
- *Targeted vs. schoolwide programs, charter, non-public and small schools*
- *Districts*

*Are these transitional or final definitions? If transitional, when will the final definitions be in place and what criteria and processes will they include?*

Each building has been evaluated against the State definition of adequate yearly progress. For schools in Kansas that means within any two years, a building must show at least one year with a 4% increase in percent of answers correct. The definition of adequate yearly progress is based on the continuous improvement standards set by the Kansas State Board of Education. The **Continuous Improvement Scale** uses the following identifiers:

- the school's performance in the assessment area shows a decline from prior performance
- M** no change from prior performance levels is observed. Delineated as:
  - Ma** maintenance of performance at or above the Standard of Excellence.
  - Mb** maintenance of performance below the Standard of Excellence.
- + gains and advance toward the Standard of Excellence are evidenced (Continuous Improvement Value of + 4%)
- ++strong gains are noted to indicate commendable progress toward the Standard of Excellence. (Continuous Improvement Value of + 9%)

Kansas has the same definition for targeted and schoolwide programs.

3. *What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the districts plays a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?*

Each district is responsible for monitoring the progress of each Title I school. The district must evaluate each building to see whether it has made adequate yearly progress. After two years of not making adequate yearly progress, the district must place the building on school improvement.

The Kansas State Department of Education monitors each district, rather than each Title I building, for adequate yearly progress.

4. *What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?*

Any year with a (+) has been considered adequate progress for school buildings. Any combination over a two year period without a plus has been inadequate and targets a school for improvement. Those districts not demonstrating progress for two consecutive years will be required, by the State, to complete a district Title I improvement plan.

As the District Improvement Plan is developed the State Department of Education suggests that each building identified for school improvement review its School Improvement Plan developed under Quality Performance Accreditation. Rather than having the identified school(s) write a separate Title I School Improvement Plan, each school should examine and then include an addendum to its Quality Performance Accreditation school improvement plan that explains, if appropriate, how it is modifying its plan.

5. *What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?*

- *Evaluation and Planning* yes
- *Financial* yes
- *Expert Assistance* yes

6. *Who provides the assistance?*

- *School/district support teams* yes, see below
- *Regional centers* In the implementation process
- *Distinguished educators* yes, see below
- *SDE staff* yes, see below
- *Other – Explain*

The Federally-mandated Title I School Support Teams are used in Kansas to support the development of schoolwide Title I programs. These Support Teams have been designed to draw upon the skills and expertise of educators throughout Kansas. Because of Kansas school reform initiative Quality Performance Accreditation, there already exists a strong base of educators experienced in school improvement planning and implementation.

Each district is also assigned a Kansas State Department of Education Program Consultant who provides technical assistance in response to school needs.

In addition, the state identifies Distinguished Educators, who were first selected and trained in 1996-97, and began working with Title I schools and teachers in the 1997-98 school year. They were selected based upon their experience and success in working with disadvantaged students, as well as working with their professional peers. Finally, the Kansas State Department of Education is in the process of implementing an intensive assistance system through its Regional Service Centers.

7. *Have waivers played a role in this process?*

Waivers have played a role in Title I in Kansas, particularly in reference to schoolwide vs. targeted assistance programs, and the 50% poverty requirement.

*8. Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

Kansas anticipates modifications to the definition of adequate yearly progress. State officials are reviewing a definition of adequate yearly progress which may include the following indicators:

- The overall performance distribution of proficiency levels on the State Mathematics Assessment will improve on an annual basis. (Standard of performance to be determined).
- The overall performance distribution of proficiency levels on the State Reading Assessment will improve on an annual basis. (Standard of performance to be determined).
- A formula will be utilized to determine annual targets for decreasing the percent of students in the unsatisfactory level. A timeline will be used based upon the percent of students in the unsatisfactory level during the baseline year.
- Local indicators
- Additional criteria are under review.

Please note that the above modifications are under review and have not been approved.

*9. Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?*

The systems are somewhat aligned: Both systems of adequate yearly progress are based on the Continuous Progress Scale developed by the State Board of Education, and both focus on improving student achievement by the use of school improvement plans. However, both systems anticipate modifications; the Continuous Progress Scale is likely to be discontinued, and the definition of adequate yearly progress will be modified as described above.

*10. What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.*

Kansas officials hope to ensure that Title I programs are implemented in a manner which will help all students to achieve at a higher standard. This process has been implemented in the 190 Title I schoolwide programs through a comprehensive school reform approach. In the targeted assistance schools the goal is to effectively improve the achievement levels of the lowest performing students, in order to improve the overall performance of the school.

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