Students Who Need Added Support

Each child is unique, and some students will need added support as they learn. Kentucky schools have a number of resources in place to help struggling students succeed.

WHAT KINDS OF SUPPORT ARE AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS WHO NEED ADDED SUPPORT IN KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3?

The ***Brigance kindergarten readiness screener*** is now given to all students entering kindergarten. The screening results give schools some early insight into which students may need different or added support to succeed. Parents are notified of results for their own children, and school-wide results are available at openhouse.education.ky.gov/Data.

The ***continuous progress*** feature of the primary program means that all children should receive support to move steadily forward, without being penalized if their pace is a bit different from their classmates.

Response to Intervention or "RTI" is a state initiative required for the primary years. Response to Intervention calls for schools to organize instruction by setting up tiers of learning supports that start with a core program that will be effective for most students and then add supplemental support and then intensive intervention when evidence shows which students need different or additional support. For example, a student who consistently struggles with the core program (tier 1) may receive some added opportunities (tier 2) and then if that support is not enough, move to more intensive support (tier 3). In parent-teacher discussions, it may help to ask what "tier" of services a child is receiving and then for details about how that tier works. ("Kentucky System of Intervention" and "KSI" are related terms, describing an approach to RTI implementation shared by the Kentucky Department of Education.)

Extended school services (usually called ESS) can provide additional instructional time ***for students*** who might otherwise not reach Kentucky's learning goals for all students. ESS can be provided before or after school, on weekends, or over the summer: each district designs its own program. The state provides some funding support for ESS. When those targeted dollars are not enough, districts may need to spend SEEK dollars to meet students' needs. With Kentucky Board of Education approval, districts may also use some ESS dollars for some added instruction during the school day. Ideally, ESS and RTI will work seamlessly as part of a student-centered strategy to help each child learn and grow.

WHAT KINDS OF SUPPORT ARE AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS WHO NEED ADDED SUPPORT IN GRADES 4-12?

ESS added instructional time continues as a statewide requirement for students who need it.

Continuous progress and RTI are no longer required across the state after the end of primary. Some schools and districts may choose to continue using those terms and approaches in serving students.

SEEING RESULTS

Statewide, the current school report cards do not report results separately for students who receive extended school services or accelerated learning supports. At the local level, you may want to ask teachers and administrators what evidence they are gathering and what trends they see in your local schools for these students.

LEARNING MORE

Learn more about the Kentucky System of Interventions by visiting education.ky.gov and searching for "KSI".

Added information on how Kentucky schools serve students can be found in other Kentucky EdGuides offered at www.prichardcommittee.org, including those on:

- Early Childhood and Preschool
- Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, and High Schools
- Students Ready for Added Challenge
- Poverty and Nonacademic Barriers to Learning
- Digital Learning and School Technology

Instead, ***accelerated learning*** is the statewide approach for students whose test scores show that students are not on track. Accelerated learning is defined as "providing direct instruction to eliminate student performance deficiencies or enable students to move more quickly through course requirements and pursue higher level skill development." Each year from grade 3 to grade 8, parents receive reports on their individual students' performance, including information on any identified deficiencies—and accelerated learning is offered to respond to those weaknesses.

Accelerated learning is also offered if students fall short of ***readiness benchmarks*** on the ACT. For those students, the accelerated learning strategies are incorporated into the student's learning plan. State law says that students who participate in accelerated learning will be able to take the ACT a second time at state expense, but the state budget has never included enough funding to make that possible. (In 2014-15 and earlier years, accelerated learning was also provided to students who missed benchmarks on the Explore and Plan readiness assessments, but those tests will not be given. New readiness assessments for grade 8 and grade 10 are expected to be added in the future and used to determine whether students need accelerated learning supports.)

WHEN SHOULD A STRUGGLING STUDENT BE EVALUATED FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORTS AND SERVICES?

When a student has significant difficulty, the school should first try providing instructional services in the regular classroom and gathering data to see if the student makes needed progress. If the student still has difficulty, then an evaluation may be appropriate. A teacher, a parent, or someone else who is concerned can refer the child for attention. The EdGuide on Students with Disabilities provides more information.

WHAT EVIDENCE SHOWS THE IMPACT OF SUPPORTS FOR STRUGGLING STUDENTS? HOW IS SUPPORT FOR STRUGGLING STUDENTS FUNDED?

At the basic level, the combined state and local dollars that make up SEEK, Kentucky's main school funding formula, are meant to support all students making sustained progress toward being college and career ready. In addition, Kentucky provides targeted state dollars for ESS, which funding dropped steeply during the recent recession, from $31.9 million in FY 2008 to just $12.3 million in FY 2014. The newest state budget legislation provides $19.1 million in FY 2015 and $25.5 million in FY 2016 for ESS support.

This and other Kentucky EdGuides are available at www.prichardcommittee.org as tools for engaging students, parents, teachers, and other Kentucky public education stakeholders. © 2015 by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence