

Poverty and Non-Academic Barriers to Learning

For some children, learning can be more difficult because other factors in their lives create barriers that slow them down. This EdGuide introduces some key ways Kentucky schools work on helping students succeed in spite of those added challenges.

WHAT SUPPORT CAN STUDENTS RECEIVE FROM FAMILY RESOURCE & YOUTH SERVICES CENTERS?

Family resource and youth services centers (FRYSCs, informally pronounced as “Friskies”) help students and their families who face social, economic, or health barriers that may interfere with learning. The coordinators at the centers identify problems and link students and families to local resources that help students be more ready to learn. **Family Resource Centers** serve children from birth through grade 5 and coordinate preschool child care, after-school child day care, families in training, family literacy services, and health services and referrals. **Youth Services Centers** serve students in middle and high school and coordinate referrals to health and social services, career exploration and development, summer and part-time job development (high school only), substance abuse education and counseling, and family crisis and mental health counseling. The centers are guided by **local advisory councils**, which include parent representatives of the school population, community partners, and educators. At least two students serve on councils for youth services centers. The **Cabinet for Health and Family Services** oversees the Division of Family Resource and Youth Services Centers.

WHAT HELP CAN STUDENTS RECEIVE THROUGH THE KENTUCKY EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE FOR STATE AGENCY CHILDREN (KECSAC)?

Some Kentucky students receive their educations in settings like group homes, juvenile justice detention centers, mental health day treatments, residential treatment programs, community-based shelter programs or hospital settings after being assigned to state custody or supervision. Often, these students’ history includes difficulties like low school performance, substance abuse in the family, abuse and neglect, behavioral and emotional issues, and poverty. KECSAC coordinates (and funds) work to make sure these students receive a quality education comparable to other Kentucky students. For example, KECSAC programs provide a 210-day instructional year and ratios of one teacher for ten students or a teacher and an aide for fifteen students. They also develop transition plans for each student, oversee budgets, program improvement plans, and negotiate (or mediate) cooperative agreements with treatment providers and other agencies. There are 87 KECSAC-funded programs located in 51 school districts throughout the Commonwealth.

HOW CAN A STUDENT QUALIFY FOR FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?

In most schools, families apply for those meals by completing a short form with information on family size and income. In some schools, those forms are no longer needed: schools with community eligibility programs provide meals to all students at no charge, which is permitted when at least 40% of students qualify for free meals based on data gathered by other support programs for low-income families.

SEEING THE NUMBERS

More than 350,000 Kentucky students qualified for free or reduced price meals in 2012-13, and that figure does not include students in schools that have moved to a community eligibility program approach that feeds all students without charge.

Over the course of a year, many students move in and out of KECSAC services. In 2013, 13,060 students were served over the course of the year, with 2,697 students being served on the single day used for the most detailed KECSAC census.

LEARNING MORE

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 Who Need Added Support
- Students With Disabilities
- Students Ready for Added Challenge

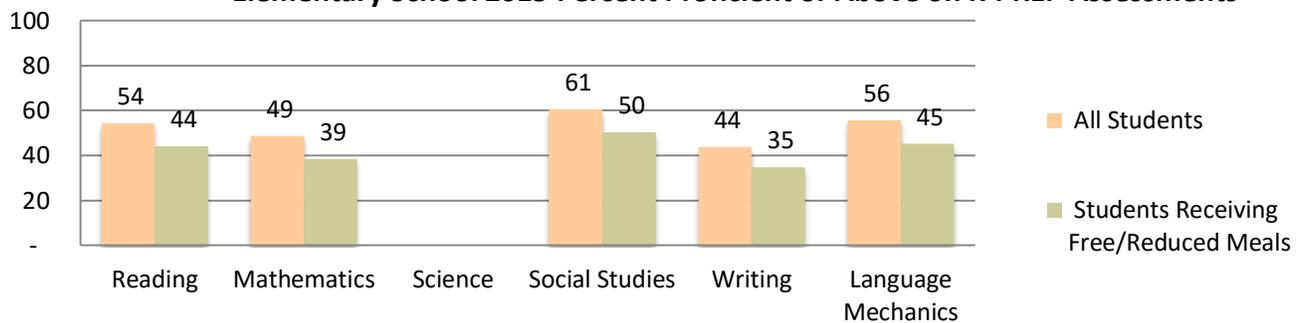
WHAT HAPPENS IF A STUDENT CANNOT PAY A SCHOOL FEE?

If a student qualifies for free or reduced price meals, the district must waive nearly all fees that they charge to students, including charges for textbooks, workbooks, field trips, and most other items. The only exceptions are for activities completely outside the school day that do not count for graduation or course credit and for materials that students do not need to earn credit and meet student performance objectives.

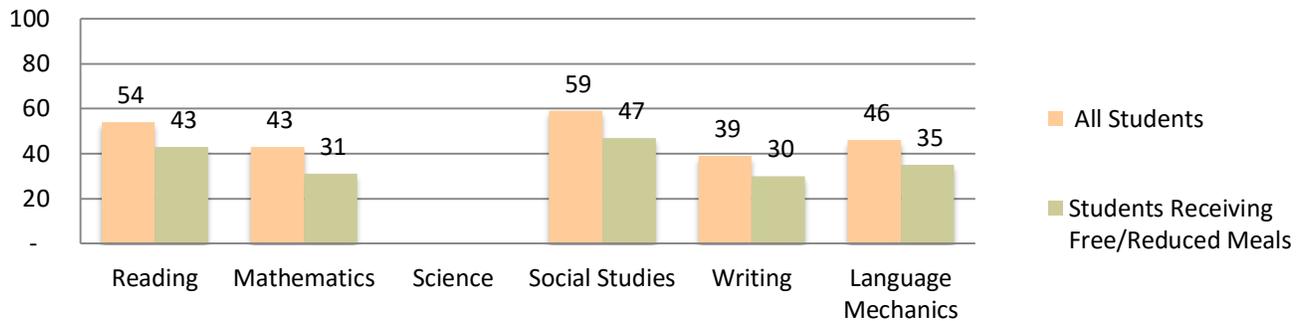
WHAT FUNDING SUPPORTS WORK WITH STUDENTS WHO FACE BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Federal Title I funding is allocated to schools and districts based on their low-income enrollment, with each school responsible for planning use of those dollars to meet the resulting student needs. Kentucky's SEEK formula adds 15% to the base guarantee for each student who qualifies for the federal free lunch program (though not those who qualify for reduced price meals); districts are not required to use those exact dollars for the added student needs, but schools are required to address achievement gaps for low income students. FRYSC and KECSAC have their own line items in the state budget.

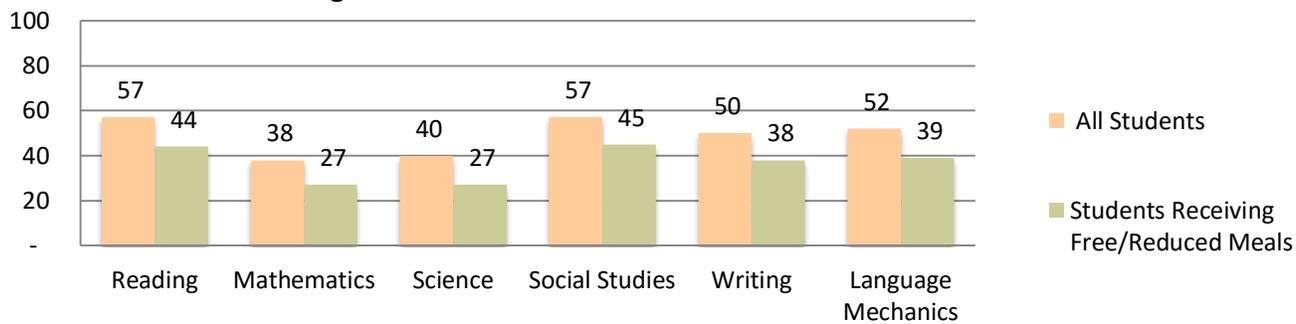
Elementary School 2015 Percent Proficient or Above on K-PREP Assessments



Middle School 2015 Percent Proficient or Above on K-PREP Assessments



High School 2015 Percent Proficient or Above on K-PREP Assessments



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