



VIBRANT LEARNING EXPERIENCES: A KENTUCKY INNOVATION

House Bill 257 launches a set of innovations to create learning that is relevant and exciting for Kentucky students today and build upward mobility and thriving communities for Kentucky's shared future.

Vibrant learning experiences, discussed here, are one of those innovations. Two others –local indicators of quality and writing across the curriculum—are discussed in similar reports and supported by additional tools at prichardcommittee.org/vibrant.

WHAT ARE VIBRANT LEARNING EXPERIENCES?

The [Kentucky United We Learn Council](#) has defined vibrant learning experiences as “learning that matters to students,” and added this further explanation:



In partnership with families and communities, students are agents of their own learning, engaged in relevant, authentic and joyful learning opportunities. Vibrant learning honors students' cultural wealth, gifts and interests. Vibrant learning culminates in the application of knowledge and skills demonstrated through personalized products.

HOW CAN VIBRANT LEARNING EXPERIENCES WORK FOR STUDENTS HERE, NOW?

The definition above expects the learning to be authentic for each student and culminate in personalized products, suggesting that the experiences can include a wide variety of real-world efforts. Schools that have been working on this idea recently have shared examples like these:

- Developing a podcast about the book *Holes*, requiring communication, creativity, innovation, self-reflection, and new skills in media production
- Creating a series of quilts with patience, problem-solving, and connection to family and community heritage
- Rebuilding a computer with the resilience to try, fail, and keep trying until the computer worked again and with the independent energy to propose the entire project to a teacher.
- Publishing a book about the local impact of a major tornado, researching community experiences, drafting and editing, and even marketing, building confidence and purpose.
- Analyzing environmental data and designing solutions, with important growth in scientific practices and civic leadership and with direct engagement with community experts.

You can read more about these and other examples at <https://fleming.vibrantaccountability.com> and at <https://www.education.ky.gov/UnitedWeLearn/Pages/Vibrant-Learning-Experiences.aspx>.



HOW CAN VIBRANT LEARNING BUILD A STRONGER COMMONWEALTH?

The examples above rely on students acting as innovators, applying sustained problem-solving skills and combining classroom knowledge with real world delivery. They find and work with colleagues. They gather new information and figure out how to use it. They communicate effectively as they work and they communicate effectively about their end results.

Those capacities matter across our communities. They matter for all kinds of employment and entrepreneurship, and they matter for family life, higher education, voluntary organizations, and public service. Expanding those capacities can build upward mobility and thriving communities.

HOW CAN COMMUNITY MEMBERS ENGAGE TO MAKE IT HAPPEN?

Educators will play a huge role in making this shift happen, and the rest of us need to also do our part. Roles can include:

- Serving on teams that develop your local approach to vibrant learning. Ask a school board member or your superintendent how you can play a role.
- Saying yes when you hear about opportunities to contribute directly to vibrant learning experiences: share your skills, your knowledge, your own curiosity generously to equip younger learners. For this role, you will probably want to contact leaders at individual schools.
- Showing up when students are ready to share their work, so that you know the quality of their work and can spread the excitement to others.

ARE VIBRANT LEARNING EXPERIENCES LEGALLY REQUIRED?

Not for all districts. If a district chooses to create locally developed indicators of quality (another element of HB 257), then student participation in vibrant learning experiences must be included in those indicators. If a district does not choose to create locally developed indicators, vibrant learning is not a legal requirement.

LAW IN A BOX: DEFINITION

House Bill 257 created a new section of KRS 158, which includes this definition in subsection 1:

(b) "Vibrant learning" means an educational experience that is:

- 1. Characterized by student agency and the application of knowledge and skills aligned with the academic standards established in Section 2 of this Act;*
- 2. Developed in partnership with students' families, local communities, and the local workforce; and*
- 3. Demonstrated through personalized projects, outputs, experiences, or other produced results reflecting each individual student's academic and career interests.*

LAW IN A BOX: RULES

House Bill 257 created a new section of KRS 158, which includes these rules:

(2) Each local school district may develop and implement a system of locally developed indicators of quality in accordance with administrative regulations promulgated by the Kentucky Board of Education. The locally developed indicators of quality shall include:

- (a) Student participation in vibrant learning experiences; and*
- (b) Locally developed indicators of performance.*