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All Parts and Parcels: Unpacking and Analyzing Kentucky Education Reform

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Running Head: ALL PARTS AND PARCELS

EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

All Parts and Parcels:
Unpacking and Analyzing Kentucky Education Reform

Honors Thesis
Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
of the
Requirements of HON 420

By
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All Parts and Parcels: Unpacking and Analyzing Kentucky Education Reform

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Abstract Description: Since the mid-twentieth century, public education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky has often faced opposition from its General Assembly. Historically underfunded, Kentucky's public education system has consistently placed near the bottom in all measures of student assessment and school finance in the nation, according to data published annually by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Over the last thirty years, however, the General Assembly has taken some steps toward improvement. The purpose of this paper is to present a historical record of these reform efforts and to analyze whether these alterations have been effective. To assess the state's role in reforming individual schools, specific consideration was given to evaluating two of Kentucky's former persistently low-achieving high schools. The evaluation of reform efforts, both at the individual school level and at the systemic level, was formulated by collecting and examining assessment, financial, and learning environment data from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). Investigating school reform efforts entailed surveying faculty and staff on issues of school culture and state support, and interviewing key faculty and administration to gain insight into the methods used by the state's education recovery specialists.

Keywords: *Kentucky, education, reform, improvement, audit*

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Introduction

Kofi Annan, a man renowned internationally for his diplomacy and peace-keeping, once said, “Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.” For too long, this sentiment concerning education has not held true in the minds of some Kentuckians and in the interests of some of its legislators. Time and time again, any steps taken toward a more prosperous future for Kentucky’s students have been met with even larger steps back toward an inequitable status quo. Just take one glance into the history of Kentucky’s public education system and it is clear that the state’s General Assembly has long struggled with providing equitable funding for all of Kentucky’s school districts.

Evidence of inequitable school funding dates back to 1930 when Kentucky’s General Assembly attempted to help poor school districts by creating a special equalization fund to help fill the gaps that local taxes could not (Dove, 1991, p. 86). This attempt to provide \$1,250,000 to property poor school districts who have relatively little taxable property to support their local schools, was challenged by the state auditor and found unconstitutional by the Kentucky Supreme Court (Day, 2011, p. 30). In response to the court’s ruling, the General Assembly exercised their ability to amend the

state constitution to give themselves more control over the allocation of state funds for schools (Dove, 1991, p. 86).

More than two decades later in 1954, the Kentucky General Assembly exercised their power to distribute state funds for schools as they see fit and subsequently enacted the Minimum Foundation Program (MFP). This legislation sought to close gaps in funding between urban and rural school districts by providing each district with a minimum level of funding to operate (Day, 2011, p. 30). To encourage participation, each district was permitted to enhance their funds by levying a minimum local property tax of \$1.10, and up to \$1.50, per \$100 of assessed property value (Day, 2011, p. 31). The MFP was, however, woefully ineffective because property across the state was not being assessed at its fair-market value (Dove, 1991, p. 86). In fact, the median assessment rate statewide was only 27 percent of its actual value (Day, 2011, p. 31).

In 1965, “a group of taxpayers, parents and schoolchildren challenged the constitutionality of these unfair assessment practices” (Dove, 1991, p. 86). The Kentucky Court of Appeals in the case of *Russman v. Lockett* ruled that all property in the state must be assessed at its fair-market value (Day, 2011, p. 31). Convinced that this would antagonize constituents and endanger their re-elections, the Kentucky General Assembly sought to change the state’s tax structure (Day, 2011, p. 31). Passed into law soon thereafter, House Bill 1, historically known as the “rollback” law, prevented any school district from submitting a budget that would require any more funds than the preceding year (Day, 2011, p. 32). Following this legislation, any relief effort on behalf of the General Assembly to help school districts during the funding freeze created by the

“rollback” law were either largely ineffective or favored wealthier districts (Dove, 1991, p. 87).

In 1979, Kentucky Governor Julian Carroll was successful in helping pass House Bill 4, which authorized the creation of the Power Equalization Program (PEP) that was intended to increase funding for rural school districts (Day, 2011, p. 33). However, while Governor Carroll was out of the state, his Lieutenant Governor Thelma Stovall called a special session of the state’s General Assembly. Together, they passed House Bill 44, which reduced property tax rates in all school districts so that current revenue could not exceed the previous year’s revenue by more than 4 percent (Day, 2011, p. 33). Yet again, inequities were frozen in place and the cycle of one step forward, a larger step back, persisted at the expense of Kentucky’s students.

Most, if not all “legislative efforts could hardly make it out of the starting gate before being thwarted by anti-tax sentiment, property tax evasion and political corruption in poor districts” (Dove, 1991, p. 87). Eventually, this long history of broken promises would lead many of the state’s most vulnerable school districts to a breaking point once the damage that was created by inequitable funding became all too evident. Among the accumulating evidence were education statistics in the 1980s that showed that Kentucky was at or near the very bottom in not just per student expenditures, but in measures of student proficiency as well (Dove, 1991, p. 83). In particular, Kentucky was ranked 43rd in per student expenditure, 47th in per capita spending by state and local governments, 49th in college attainment, and last nationally in adults with a high school diploma (Day, 2013, p. 262). In addition to these alarming national rankings,

Kentucky school districts were also rife with problems concerning administrative mismanagement, nepotism, and tax fraud (Dove, 1991, p. 84).

By 1985-86, the wealthiest school districts in Kentucky spent \$4,361 per student, while the poorest districts in the state spent just \$1,767 per student (Dove, 1991, p. 84). Large disparities in funding severely affected the quality of both academic programs and facilities for the poorest of Kentucky's school districts (Dove, 1991, p. 84). Even with all Kentucky school districts in mind, no matter how relatively affluent, students statewide were grappling with the effects of financial insecurity. In 1987-88, nearly 40 percent of all of Kentucky's children lived in poverty (Dove, 1991, p. 83). Student performance, even in the state's largest and wealthiest school district in Jefferson County, showed signs of abysmal student achievement. Only 58 percent of ninth grade students in the district graduated high school compared to around 66 percent statewide (Wright, 2013, p. 569).

Setting the Stage

In the years leading up to these harsh realities, change was starting to unfold in Kentucky's capital. In 1983, Alice McDonald was elected as the State Superintendent for Public Instruction (Day, 2011, p. 35). Forced into resignation for supporting McDonald's challenger in the election, the state's former assistant Superintendent, Arnold Guess, took it upon himself to rally support for a revolutionary idea he long pondered (Day, 2011, p. 36). Eventually, with support from superintendents "whose schools districts were among the bottom third of the state as measured in assessed value per [student]," Guess called a meeting to analyze the merits of a lawsuit against the state (Day, 2011, p.

37). The reasoning for the suit was a challenge against the state's General Assembly for failing to provide for an "efficient system of common schools," as mandated by the Kentucky Constitution (KY Const. Sec. 183).

The first meeting, which gave rise to the creation of the Council for Better Education, took place in the state capital of Frankfort on May 4, 1984 (Dove, 1991, p. 88). Upon the conclusion of the meeting, attendees agreed that the General Assembly was failing to meet the needs of poor school districts (Dove, 1991, p. 88). From there, a committee was created to help recruit new member districts and all current members were asked to secure funding for the suit by contributing fifty cents per student in their respective districts (Dove, 1991, p. 88-89).

In order to move forward with the suit and bring legitimacy to the case, the Council "set their sights on former Kentucky governor and former federal judge Bert Combs" to represent them (Day, 2011, p. 38). Combs implored the Council that the only way he would take on the case was if they were able to garner substantial support from a large number of school districts (Day, 2011, p. 45). Within a mere few months, enough backing was garnered for Combs to agree to take on the Council's case on October 3, 1984 (Day, 2011, p. 46).

The initial trial of the suit took place in the Franklin County Circuit Court with Judge Ray Corns presiding over the case (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 5). The court determined that "Kentucky's school finance system... fell short of the 'efficient system' requirement" (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 5). In his ruling, Jude Corns noted:

“Kentucky’s current school system is one of the most severely deficient in the Nation... In a sentence, Kentucky’s children and youths, especially those in the Plaintiff districts, are suffering from an extreme case of educational malnutrition.”

Rose v. Council for Better Education

Upon appeal of the verdict, the Kentucky Supreme Court found that the entire sweep of Kentucky’s public education system was unconstitutional and directed that the General Assembly create an entirely new department structure that would provide access to high-quality education for all of the state’s students (Dove, 1991, p .84). The court unequivocally agreed that the current methods of funding schools violated both “equal protection and the efficient system requirement” (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 5). However, Kentucky’s Supreme Court went further in declaring:

“Lest there be any doubt, the result of our decision is that Kentucky’s entire system of common schools is unconstitutional. There is no allegation that only part of the common school system is invalid, and we find no such circumstance. This decision applies to entire sweep of the system – all its parts and parcels.”

Kentucky Education Reform Act

With a court directive to bring reform to Kentucky’s public education system, the General Assembly paved the way for the passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act

(KERA), which was the “result of legal, social, and political forces coming together at the right time in history” (Dove, 1991, p. 86). Signed into law by Governor Wallace Wilkerson on April 11, 1990, KERA was the first legislation of its kind to begin the process of adequately addressing the inequitable gaps in funding between the state’s wealthiest and poorest school districts (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 9). In sum, KERA was responsible for entirely re-creating the duties of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). This sweeping reform manifested itself most specifically as dramatic alterations in program, governance, and finance policies.

Program Policies

The new department of education “took on official responsibility for new assessments to measure progress toward the expectations and set numerical goals for each school to reach” (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 10). One of the more innovative ideas included in the KERA was the attachment of rewards and sanctions to school performance (Dove, 1991, p. 85). Specifically, financial rewards were given to schools that met or surpassed benchmarks and state assistance and other takeover options were mandated for schools who fell short (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 10).

Overall, KERA was responsible for providing a wide array of new programs that equipped both students and schools throughout the state to meet the new standards outlined in the reform act. These programs included state-funded pre-school for low-income families or for families whose children had disabilities, extended after-school services (ESS), and family and youth resource centers that were introduced to help

address challenges at home that can have an adverse effect on student learning (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 10-11).

To maintain these new standards and programs, the Office of Education Accountability (OEA) was created “as an agency to the General Assembly” (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 11). In general, the OEA served as a watchdog to ensure that the General Assembly carefully monitored the “entire system to be sure it met constitutional requirements” (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 11).

Governance Policies

KERA also made it a priority to revamp governance policies to ensure corruption and nepotism were put in check at both KDE and local school boards. As part of this mission, KERA mandated that “a newly appointed State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education (now called the Kentucky Board of Education) chose a new commissioner to replace the elected superintendent of schools (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 11). This commissioner was tasked with the responsibility to form a new department of education from scratch under the mandate that no current department of education employees could be allowed to stay on the job if not selected from open competition with other applicants (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 9). Local school boards were also now privy to the decision-making powers of Site-Based Decision-Making (SBDM) Councils at all individual schools in their districts, which were composed of administration, elected faculty, and elected parents (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 10). Moreover, KERA established that Superintendents had independence from local school

boards to make hiring decisions and forbade them from granting employment to any relatives of the board members (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 10).

Finance Policies

The hallmark objective of KERA was to establish a new school funding system that was equitable for all of the state's school districts. In accordance with this goal, KERA established a new state equalization formula called Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 9). This new formula worked in three different ways. First, it required that all local school districts levy a minimum property tax rate of 30 cents per \$100 of assessed property value (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 9). From there, the state would match what was needed to reach a base amount for all students, including extra funding for exceptional students and free/reduced lunch students (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 9). SEEK also introduced tiered funding that gave school districts the option of levying higher property tax rates than what were required to receive additional state funds (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 9). This manifested itself into a two-tiered system, with tier 2 only being accessible if a district had done what was necessary to receive the maximum share of tier 1 equalization funds (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 9).

The effect of SEEK was felt quickly once it was established. Table 1 highlights the financial impact of KERA by showcasing differences in statewide mean revenue per student in the year before its passage, and two years after its passage. In this three-year span, statewide revenue per student increase by nearly 40 percent. Looking at the ends of the funding spectrum, revenue per student increased by over 50 percent for the

school districts in the 5th percentile, meaning that the school district with funding greater than only five percent of the rest of the state saw an increase in their funding of over 50 percent. Meanwhile, the school districts with funding greater than 95 percent of all districts in the state (95th percentile) received close to a 20 percent increase. This illustrates a more equitable distribution of funds, as depicted by the last row of Table 1, which indicates that the gap in revenue per student fell by around 25 percent between the 5th and 95th percentiles.

Table 1. The Financial Impact of KERA, 1990 & 1993

Finance Variable	1989-90 Academic Year	1992-93 Academic Year	Percentage Change
Statewide Mean Revenue per Student	\$2,334	\$3,262	39.76%
5th Percentile	\$1,839	\$2,785	51.44%
95th Percentile	\$3,262	\$3,830	17.41%
Range from 5th to 95th Percentile	\$1,424	\$1,045	-26.62%

Source: Adams, 1997

Backward Steps

Unfortunately, some of the programs founded under KERA fell victim to budget shortfalls down the line (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 16). In particular, “nearly half of the [fiscal year] 1992 budget for ESS was reclaimed by the state... and later budgets added back only small amounts (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 16). Similarly, during the 2003 recession, “ESS dollars [remained] below the levels of the previous decade and far below the original vision” established by KERA (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 16). Even improvements in Kentucky’s funding were not that substantial when viewed in national

context (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 13). “Census bureau reports show that in [fiscal year] 1992... Kentucky school districts’ per [student] general revenue from state and local sources still only reached 79% of the national average” (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 13). While the jump up was significant in the two years following the enactment of KERA, funding was still lagging well behind the national average.

Overall, effects from disputed state budgets during the 2003 recession, combined with partisan strife within the General Assembly at this time, “undercut major education supports” (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 18). Not only was ESS more or less defunded, “regional service centers to help schools and districts implement reform requirements were abolished... as were rewards for schools that met their accountability goals” (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 18). The mounting concerns eventually were enough to empower the Council for Better Education, then comprised of all 176 school districts in the state by 2003, to “[file] a new lawsuit... asserting that funding was inadequate to meet the state’s high achievement goals (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 20). While their case failed, the “litigation may have strengthened legislative education efforts” (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 22). In particular, budgets for fiscal years 2007 and 2008 showed real growth in funding in areas other than just staff benefits. Identified priorities, preschool and technology, “received important bumps upward” (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 23). Even with these concessions to fund certain priorities, funding overall continued to become more inadequate and inequitable throughout the 2000s.

Meeting the Mark

One of the founding principles laid out by KERA was a 2012 (extended to 2014) deadline for all Kentucky schools to reach proficient performance, as represented by an academic index score of 100. In 2007, KDE projected that by that new deadline in 2014, only 37 percent of schools would be on track to reach the target (score of 100) and another 50 percent would be on track to reach at least a score of 80 (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 28). This would leave 13 percent of schools below a score of 80 and as a result, would be “formally classified as ‘in need of assistance’ that includes ... aggressive state actions for weak performance” (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 29).

In particular, Kentucky’s high schools were most in danger of not meeting this mandated proficiency benchmark by 2014. Table 2 demonstrates that based on growth measured in 2006, similar growth would project that all high schools would not reach proficiency until 2019. When school populations are separated into subgroups, the issue becomes even more glaring. The only subgroup on track to meet proficiency were the high school students not on free/reduced lunch, while the other three subgroups were far from it.

Table 2. Kentucky High School Academic Index Projections

Student Group	2006 Academic Index	Projected 2014 Index	Projected Year to Reach Proficiency
All	73.5	89.4	2019
White	75.6	92.2	2018
African-American	55.7	69.2	2032
Free/Reduced Lunch	61.2	77.7	2025
Not Free/Reduced Lunch	80.9	100.6	2014

Source: Weston & Sexton, 2009

Individual School Reform

KERA has experienced a multitude of changes throughout its history since its enactment in 1990. One of the larger modifications added to bolster school accountability was the creation of scholastic audits (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 14). A scholastic audit “sends an outside team to evaluate curriculum, instruction, and other practices in weak schools and recommend changes (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 14). These audits also provide guidance to schools and help them develop needed improvement plans, while also assisting the schools by finding additional funding through grants (Weston & Sexton, 2009, p. 14).

As time moved onward, specific legislation regarding state mandated school audits was passed in 2004 and has been revised on a continual basis. Most recently, following the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, Kentucky’s General Assembly revamped their school audit legislation by introducing new criteria and support designations for low-achieving schools. The two-tiered approach, instituted in 2018-19, seeks to identify low-performing schools as either in need of Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) or in need of Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI). A school with a CSI designation is mandated to go through a state audit, given that the school is “in the lowest-performing five percent of all schools in its level based on the school's performance in the state accountability system” (KRS 160.346 Sec. 3 a). A high school with a four-year cohort graduation rate less than eighty percent is also privy to a CSI designation, as well as any school identified by [KDE] for targeted support and improvement who fails to exit TSI status (KRS 160.346 Sec. 3 b-c). TSI schools are

identified on the basis that they have a “subgroup, as defined by ESSA, whose performance in the state accountability system by level is at or below the summative performance of all students, based on school performance, in any of the lowest-performing five percent of all schools” (KRS 160.346 Sec. 2 a).

In effect, Kentucky’s General Assembly has begun to transition the focus of their education reform efforts to the remediation of individual schools, rather than directing their reform intentions systemically. The creation and the continual revising of these support-designations give the state the ability to influence change in schools that habitually fall short of the mark in regard to student proficiency. Where the designations are tiered based on the severity of the school’s performance issues, the state is able to prioritize the schools most in need of assistance, while keeping a watchful eye on the schools who have a segment of their school population failing to meet standards.

Methods

Given the notable concerns surrounding met benchmarks for Kentucky’s high school students and the state’s specific intentions of remediating individual schools, the crux of the research in this project focuses on the state’s reform efforts at the secondary level of education. To assess the effectiveness of Kentucky’s scholastic auditing process, two once-prioritized high schools were examined to understand the effectiveness of the state’s auditing methods and subsequent recommendations. The two high schools, The Academies of Bryan Station in Lexington, Kentucky and East Carter High School in Grayson, Kentucky, agreed to participate in surveys and interviews gauged to understand aspects of their school culture and to gather opinions regarding the state’s

intervention. Both schools were given persistently low-achieving (PLA) status in the 2011-12 academic year and were mandated to go through a turnaround process conducted by KDE. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was granted to distribute surveys and conduct interviews at both school sites.

Surveys

Faculty and staff at each school were sent a three-part survey via email from one of their guidance counselors. The purpose of the survey was to gauge aspects of their school culture and the state's role in remediating their school and supporting public education. Follow-up emails were sent two weeks after the first correspondence to remind faculty and staff to complete the survey if they had not already. In both emails, it was communicated that the completion of the survey was entirely voluntary, and respondents were given the opportunity to skip questions or select a 'prefer not to answer' option. The first section of the survey sought to differentiate respondents by school, by teaching specialty, and by whether or not they were teaching at the school during the state's auditing process. The second section of the survey prompted respondents to react to a set of statements by strongly disagreeing, disagreeing, responding neutrally, agreeing, strongly agreeing, or preferring not to answer. Many of the statements used in this section appeared in prior research regarding "equity culture audits" (Cleveland et al., 2009, p. 52). The third section contained open-ended prompts that surveyed faculty and staff regarding issues of barriers to student proficiency and the state's role in public education. For a complete list of survey questions and other supplementary materials, see Appendix A.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted at both school sites with one faculty member and one administrator. The intention was to interview those who were employed by the school at the time of the state's initial audit in 2011, following the state's PLA designation. However, there were no administrators at Bryan Station who were employed at the time of the initial audit. An exception had to be made in this case and an interview with a current administrator at the school was conducted. All interviewees, whether they were faculty or administration, were asked the same set of eight questions regarding specific procedural items and recommendations made by the state auditors. Questions also sought to understand the collaborative effort between administration and faculty to work together to improve the school and determine whether interviewees viewed the state intervention as helpful. For a complete set of interview questions and other supplementary materials, see Appendix B.

Data Collection

All data, other than the data acquired from surveys and interviews, were collected from School Report Cards and financial data sets made publicly available by KDE. In particular, school report card information regarding assessment, finance, and aspects of learning environment were pulled for each high school given a CSI or TSI designation for the academic year 2018-19. This process involved the transfer of data from the datasets to an Excel file. From there, the Excel data was visualized in R (R Programming, Version 3.6.0, 2019). Note that a few high schools with support-designations were excluded from the Excel file due to missing data entries, whether that

was a result from being a new high school or from having blank entries in KDE's datasets. The data collected for this project were for the last two academic years made available by KDE (2015-16 and 2016-17).

Case Studies

As part of their PLA designation, both Bryan Station and East Carter were mandated to go through a state audit, work hand-in-hand with state education personnel, and devise a plan to improve their school. This process was remarkably similar for the schools and both began with preparing documents for the state that required them to track a wide range of student performance measures. The state, with proper documentation in hand, transitioned into classroom walk-throughs and interviews with administration, faculty, and parents. From there, the state gave their recommendations based on those observations and placed three education recovery specialists in each school to act as "extra administrators" in Bryan Station's case, or as curriculum specialists as they did in East Carter's situation. Both schools as of today have exited PLA status and are no longer in need of comprehensive state intervention. However, the path toward improvement could not have been more vastly different for these two schools.

The Academies of Bryan Station

Long regarded by local media as the most troubled public high school in Lexington, Kentucky, Bryan Station's entrance into the state mandated turnaround process was seen as no surprise to those who knew the situation well. In the year prior to the school's designation, the Fayette County School District made it a priority to hire

a principal who had worked closely with the state at many other low-achieving schools. The hiring of the new principal was thought to allow a smoother transition into what would be a difficult auditing process for faculty and staff at Bryan Station.

At the conclusion of the state's audit, it was recommended that Bryan Station switch away from a block schedule. With this sort of schedule, students had four 90-minute classes each day and classes alternated every other day. The recommendation was intended to ensure that students falling behind in certain subject areas had the opportunity to be in developmental classes every day of the school-week. No other major recommendations were made, and the school was not mandated to let go of any administrators or faculty members. Such a small change led one faculty member at the time to note just how "superficial" of a change that was to only switch to a different schedule.

Once recommendations were implemented, the state provided support to Bryan Station by tasking three education recovery specialists to work directly with administration. According to a faculty member at this time, these specialists all knew the principal from having worked with him in the past and a lot of what was happening behind the scenes administratively lacked transparency. In particular, the faculty member described an administration that "couldn't explain the decisions that they were making... Most [decisions] [were] handed down from the state... and [the principal] was like their little puppet."

More generally, this faculty member shared that the education recovery specialists assigned to Bryan Station during this period were largely unhelpful. In particular, the faculty member noted that:

“They were awful. They stayed in their office and never visited classrooms...None of what they did was engaging and none of what they told us to do was purposeful. They had no vision for us. It was like here, slap on this band-aid fix that’s not fixing anything. All it did was stress out students and stress out teachers... It was horrible.”

Evidence to support this opinion can be seen in the survey responses gathered from Bryan Station. Of the 34 respondents, 15 self-identified as faculty members at the school during the state’s audit. Figures 1 and 2 display two statements that these 15 faculty members were prompted to react to. According to the results, nearly 75 percent of the respondents believe that the state government’s criteria for designating school’s for improvement is unfair. Similarly, 86 percent of those same respondents do not believe that the state government provides helpful guidance when schools are targeted for improvement.

Figure 1. Survey Analysis: The state government’s criteria for designating schools for improvement is fair.

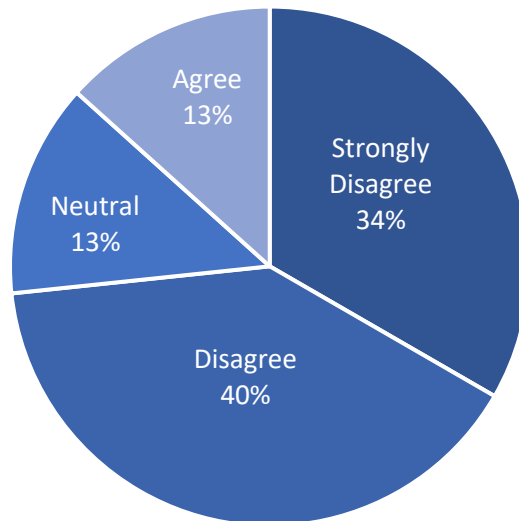
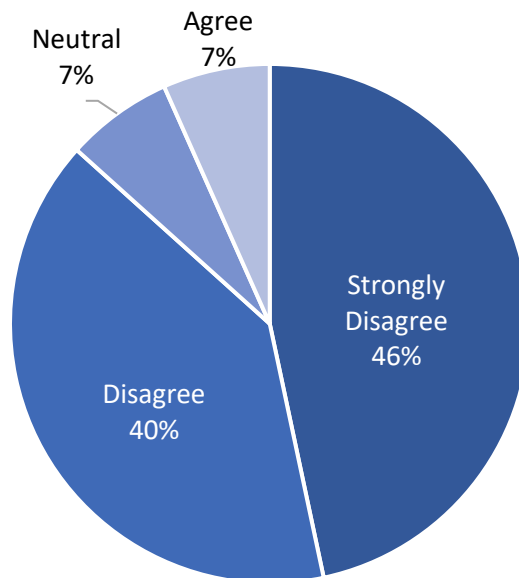


Figure 2. Survey Analysis: The state government provides helpful guidance when schools are targeted for improvement.



Survey responses from Bryan Station indicated displeasure with the state's intervention. The faculty member interviewed for this project noted "there was nothing done while the state was here to help Bryan Station. [Faculty] just kept watching it go downhill a little more and a little more."

East Carter High School

East Carter's experiences with the state followed many of the same steps as Bryan Station's, but they went down an entirely different road toward improvement. The biggest recommendation the state made was firing the principal at the time once the audit was completed. Along with that change was the mandate to extend the school day, as the state did not believe students had enough educational hours based on school's old schedule. A faculty member and administrator at this time viewed the principal's firing as "harsh" as they both believed him to be an "effective leader." The consensus from those interviews was that the school really did not know how to fix the problems and had they known what the state wanted them to do prior to PLA status, they believed the current principal could have implemented all of those changes.

During this time, there was quite a bit of faculty turnover as well. So much so that only 4 total survey responses were gathered from East Carter. As such, survey analysis was not possible. Looking at the big picture, however, both the faculty member and the administrator interviewed felt as though "all the changes that the [state education recovery team] implemented were all good changes and things that needed to take place." Both interviewees noted that at this time that the school received a "significant" amount of money from the state for being a PLA school. A lot of that extra

funding was used to bring much needed technology into the building to aid both student learning, but also to improve Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) practices. According to the faculty member, the new technology allowed teachers to “effectively [analyze] data” and “help [them] better understand the needs of the students.” This allowed faculty to plan lessons, implement them into their classrooms, and study whether lessons were effective across the board for all their students.

With new technology and state implemented practices in place in the school, the Carter County School District was inspired by the results and took it upon themselves to update technology all across the district to ensure that students were getting everything they needed to succeed. East Carter’s time in PLA status was a much need wake-up call for both the school and the district. With proper practices in place, as mandated by the state, and with new technology all throughout the school, East Carter quickly transitioned from a low-achieving school to a School of Distinction and a Hub School. They are now a model school for the state and schools across the Commonwealth can go to them for best practices and observe what faculty are doing in their classrooms. In just a short amount of time, East Carter was able to turn itself around due in part to strong buy-in from administration, faculty, and students.

Tracking Progress

In the years following state intervention, both Bryan Station and East Carter have made remarkable gains in terms of school culture and student proficiency. Table 3 demonstrates that in 2013-14, East Carter’s expenditure per student was 16.52 percent more than Bryan Station’s. Overall, expenditures per student increased by \$1,426 (16.78

percent) for East Carter during the four-year span. In comparison, expenditures per student improved by \$4,929 (40.99 percent) for Bryan Station. During this time-frame, Bryan Station received a School Improvement Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, according to the faculty member interviewed at the school, and could be the basis for this funding discrepancy.

Table 3. School Comparison: Spending per Student

	Academic Year	Spending per Student	Percentage Change
East Carter High School	2013-14	\$8,500	
	2014-15	\$9,375	10.29%
	2015-16	\$8,884	-5.24%
	2016-17	\$9,926	11.73%
The Academies of Bryan Station	2013-14	\$7,096	
	2014-15	\$8,417	18.62%
	2015-16	\$11,661	38.54%
	2016-17	\$12,025	3.12%

Source: Data retrieved from the KDE's School Report Cards

The average ACT score at both Bryan Station and East Carter have remained stagnant in the four-year span from 2013-14 to 2016-17. Overall, East Carter's average ACT score improved from a 19.1 in 2013-14 to a 19.5 in 2016-17. Bryan Station's improved from an 18.1 to just an 18.2 in this same span. Compared to the state average of a 19.8, both schools fall below this average in 2016-17 and in all three preceding academic years as well.

Table 4 illustrates a comparison in graduation rate between the two schools. In 2016-17, East Carter graduated their entire senior class. The table indicates similar success in the three years prior as well. Bryan Station, on the other hand, has shown

struggles in this area. With a graduation rate hovering just above 80 percent in all four academic years, Bryan Station is dangerously flirting with a CSI designation if the rate were to ever fall below that mark.

Table 4. School Comparison: Graduation Rate

	Academic Year	Graduation Rate	Percentage Change
East Carter High School	2013-14	98.5%	
	2014-15	99.0%	0.51%
	2015-16	98.3%	-0.71%
	2016-17	100.0%	1.73%
The Academies of Bryan Station	2013-14	82.9%	
	2014-15	83.7%	0.97%
	2015-16	86.1%	2.87%
	2016-17	84.8%	-1.51%

Source: Data retrieved from the KDE's School Report Cards

Overall, progress may be overstated for both schools when compared to actual measures of student proficiency. The most troubling of these measures are the school's average ACT score. Neither Bryan Station or East Carter are meeting the state average. With the ACT being the state's measuring tool for student proficiency, it is troublesome to see that little gains have been made in this regard.

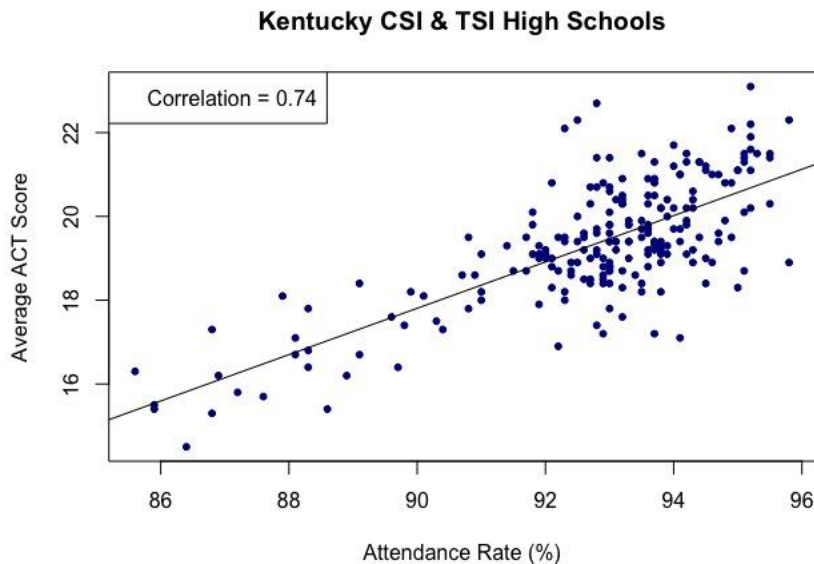
Current State of Education

Among the many research objectives of this project is the synthesis of current school data to form a conclusion on the current state of education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. In doing so, it is important to understand the defining characteristics of low-achieving schools and to identify districts who are representative of the bulk of these issues, if they are to exist.

Characteristics of Support-Designated High Schools

After collecting data from KDE's School Report Cards for all of Kentucky's CSI and TSI high schools, it became evident that two independent variables had fairly strong correlations with a school's average ACT score. In Figure 3, note a correlation of 0.74 for the relationship between attendance rate and average ACT score. All correlations are measured from -1 to 1, and the closer to either -1 or 1, the stronger the correlation is. In this case, the correlation is moderately strong between attendance rate and average ACT score. This does not, however, conclude that a low attendance rate causes a low average ACT score. Rather, the correlation concludes that there is an association between the two variables.

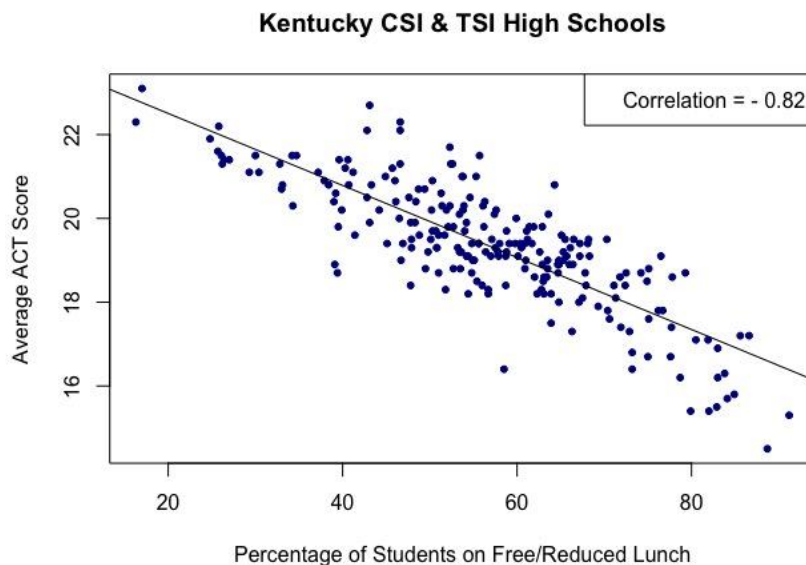
Figure 3. KY Support-Designated High Schools: Relationship between Attendance Rate and Average ACT Score



Source: Data retrieved from KDE's School Report Cards

In Figure 4, note that the correlation between the percentage of students on free/reduced lunch and average ACT score is -0.82 . This correlation is slightly stronger than the one depicted in Figure 3 and brings about the conclusion that there is a negative association between the two variables. It appears that a higher percentage of students who qualify for free/reduced lunch is associated with a lower average ACT score.

Figure 4. KY Support-Designated High Schools: Relationship between Percentage of Students on Free/Reduced Lunch and Average ACT Score



Source: Data retrieved from KDE's School Report Cards

School Finance Comparison: Carter v. Fayette

Among the objectives of this project is to track the progress of school finance reform since the enactment of KERA in 1990. The school districts that encompass Bryan Station and East Carter represent an interesting comparison between an urban, property rich school district and a rural, property poor school district. By analyzing their

revenue streams, one can attempt to understand if inequitable gaps still exist in funding between the state's wealthiest and poorest districts.

In Table 5, notice that Fayette County has a little over three times as much property value assessment per student. These property assessments are what provide local revenues to schools within the district. The local School Board has the authority to tax a certain portion of \$100 worth of property value. Over the four year-span depicted in Table 5, Carter County has experienced a larger growth in property assessment per student than Fayette County. However, this gap is currently insurmountable and is the main reason why inequitable gaps in funding exist between school districts. Carter County simply does not have the same amount of property as an urban county like Fayette. It is the state's responsibility to provide equalization funding to narrow the gaps that occur naturally at the local level.

Table 5. School District Finance Comparison: Assessment per Student

District	Academic Year	Assessment per Student	Percentage Change
Carter County	2013-14	\$227,160	
	2014-15	\$228,192	0.45%
	2015-16	\$239,377	4.90%
	2016-17	\$253,636	5.96%
Fayette County	2013-14	\$778,897	
	2014-15	\$787,084	1.05%
	2015-16	\$795,138	1.02%
	2016-17	\$807,027	1.50%

Source: Data retrieved from KDE's financial dataset

Table 6 reveals the real estate tax rates for both counties for the previous four years that were made available by KDE. Part of this funding problem could stem from rural counties, like Carter, not taxing at rates as high as those seen in urban counties like Fayette. However, with everything considered, there would be no feasible way for Carter County to reel in the same amount of local revenue per student as Fayette County, even with a comparable real estate tax rate. Table 6 illustrates that Carter County and other rural counties alike, need to make sure they are matching the tax rate increases seen in urban counties. Otherwise, the gaps in funding will only continue to get larger.

Table 6. School District Finance Comparison: Real Estate Tax

	Academic Year	Real Estate Tax	Percentage Change
East Carter High School	2013-14	46.5	
	2014-15	46.5	0.00%
	2015-16	46.5	0.00%
	2016-17	46.5	0.00%
The Academies of Bryan Station	2013-14	69.6	
	2014-15	71.9	3.30%
	2015-16	74.0	2.92%
	2016-17	75.0	1.35%

Source: Data retrieved from KDE's financial dataset

Once property assessments are made and tax rates are levied, Table 7 reveals exactly where each county stands in terms of local revenue per student. Fayette County has nearly seven times as much local funding than Carter County for all four academic years captured in the table. While Carter County has demonstrated more substantial

growth in local revenue per student than Fayette County, it is unlikely that these local values will ever equalize given the property disparity between the two counties.

Table 7. School District Finance Comparison: Local Revenue per Student

District	Academic Year	Local Revenue per Student	Percentage Change
Carter County	2013-14	\$1,417	
	2014-15	\$1,500	5.86%
	2015-16	\$1,525	1.67%
	2016-17	\$1,593	4.46%
Fayette County	2013-14	\$7,007	
	2014-15	\$7,179	2.45%
	2015-16	\$7,319	1.95%
	2016-17	\$7,509	2.60%

Source: Data retrieved from KDE's financial dataset

It is the state's responsibility to equalize the playing field and provide rural counties with less local resources with a larger share of state funding. Table 8 shows that Carter County does indeed receive more state revenue per student than Fayette County. The big concern in regard to state funding is that changes in annual budgets passed by the General Assembly can greatly affect the state's ability to equalize.

Table 8. School District Finance Comparison: State Revenue per Student

District	Academic Year	State Revenue per Student	Percentage Change
Carter County	2013-14	\$7,841	
	2014-15	\$8,264	5.39%
	2015-16	\$8,339	0.91%
	2016-17	\$8,494	1.86%
Fayette County	2013-14	\$4,747	
	2014-15	\$5,074	6.89%
	2015-16	\$5,232	3.11%
	2016-17	\$5,255	0.44%

Source: Data retrieved from KDE's financial dataset

Table 9 captures the sentiment that the state is incapable of providing enough equalization funding to close the funding gap between rural counties (e.g. Carter) and urban counties (e.g. Fayette). Total revenue per student in Carter County has consistently lagged \$2,000 behind Fayette County's. Most notable is Fayette County's near 30 percent increase following 2013-14. According to KDE, this was due to a bond issuance on the part of Fayette County's School Board. Even with that information considered, there is still an annual gap in funding that is substantial enough that in 2016-17, total revenue per student in Carter County is only 84 percent of total revenue per student in Fayette County.

Table 9. School District Finance Comparison: Total Revenue per Student

District	Academic Year	Total Revenue per Student	Percentage Change
Carter County	2013-14	\$11,127	
	2014-15	\$12,047	8.27%
	2015-16	\$11,396	-5.40%
	2016-17	\$11,633	2.08%
Fayette County	2013-14	\$12,791	
	2014-15	\$16,541	29.32%
	2015-16	\$13,659	-17.42%
	2016-17	\$13,926	1.95%

Source: Data retrieved from KDE's financial dataset

JCPS: A District on the Brink

For many Kentuckians who have been paying attention to the state's new gubernatorial administration, it is no secret that Governor Matt Bevin and his many other members of the General Assembly have made it a priority to re-arrange and influence major change in regard to Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS). As the largest school district in the state with 178 total schools, JCPS offers quite the dilemma to KDE and the state administration. Of the six high schools with CSI designation in the state, five of them are in Jefferson County. Even with state support and federal grants, some of these high schools are seeing no forward progress. For instance, Shawnee High School's (now Academy @ Shawnee) standardized test scores are still in the 1st percentile of all high schools in the state, in spite of state and federal efforts to provide the resources necessary for a turnaround (Klein, 2013, p. 12).

Tables 10-12 provide comparisons between all of Kentucky's 112 support-designated (106 TSI and 6 CSI) high schools and the 20 support-designated (15 TSI, 5 CSI)

high schools in Jefferson County. These tables summarize the distribution of three different variables for these schools across the past two academic years where data is available (2015-16 & 2016-17). Notice that in Table 10, the median average ACT score for these support-designated high schools in Jefferson County is a 17, which is well below the state average that hovers annually around 20.

Table 10. JCPS Support-Designated High Schools: Comparison of Average ACT Score

	Minimum	1st Quartile	Median	3rd Quartile	Maximum
KY CSI & TSI High Schools	16.9	18.9	19.4	20.4	23.1
JCPS CSI & TSI High Schools	14.5	16.2	17.0	18.2	21.5

Source: Data retrieved from KDE's School Report Cards

Table 11 confirms a similar situation in regard to attendance rate. Overall, school attendance is lagging in Jefferson County, which has been shown to be highly correlated with average ACT score. In particular, the median attendance rate for JCPS' support-designated high schools is nearly four percentage lower than the median attendance rate for all of Kentucky's other support-designated high schools.

Table 11. JCPS Support-Designated High Schools: Comparison of Attendance Rate (%)

	Minimum	1st Quartile	Median	3rd Quartile	Maximum
KY CSI & TSI High Schools	86.8	92.7	93.3	94.1	95.8
JCPS CSI & TSI High Schools	85.6	87.7	89.4	91.0	94.1

Source: Data retrieved from KDE's School Report Cards

In Table 12, it is apparent that in comparison to all other support-designated high schools in the state, JCPS support-designated high schools have far higher instances of student poverty, as shown by inflated rates in the percentage of students who qualify for free/reduced lunch. The median proportion of students on free/reduced lunch for JCPS' support-designated high schools is nearly 35 percent higher than the median proportion of students who qualify for lunch assistance in all of Kentucky's other support-designated high schools.

Table 12. JCPS Support-Designated High Schools: Comparison of the Percentage of Students on Free/Reduced Lunch

	Minimum	1st Quartile	Median	3rd Quartile	Maximum
KY CSI & TSI High Schools	16.3	47.8	55.0	63.5	86.6
JCPS CSI & TSI High Schools	32.8	62.6	74.1	81.6	91.2

Source: Data retrieved from KDE's School Report Cards

Overall, these tables contain information which supports the belief that a collection of schools in Jefferson County have fallen well behind all other school districts in the state, even those school districts that have multiple support-designated schools. However, state intervention has failed time and time again and may continue doing so unless there is a recognition that the issues that persist not only in Jefferson County, but throughout the state, are issues that are not easily remedied by policy.

Study Limitations

There were several obstacles encountered during the course of the project that limited the research, and in some cases, the overall results that were obtained. The

largest of these barriers was the inability to effectively scrape School Report Card data from the KDE's website. Data entries had to be entered in manually into a spreadsheet. This was a time-consuming process that took multiple days to complete and limited the scope of the research to only the high schools with CSI and TSI designations. The original intent was to scrape data for all Kentucky high schools and form a comparative analysis between support-designated and non-designated high schools.

Another limitation was a lack of a survey responses from East Carter. Even after two attempts of sending the survey out to all faculty and staff, only 4 responses were gathered. This made any analysis of those responses impossible and all findings had to be based solely on the interviews conducted. Because of this, analysis of East Carter was limited. Emails exchanged with Principal Kelley Moore at East Carter indicated that faculty turnover following the audit was likely the best explanation for the low response rate.

A third, quite notable limitation involved the consistency of data received from differing sources. After review of data from both KDE, Fayette County Public Schools (FCPS), and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), it appeared that revenue numbers were not matching up for the Fayette County School District. Emails were sent to various people at both FCPS and KDE to help understand the discrepancies. The responses received did little to settle the dilemma and the decision was made to rely solely on revenue numbers given by KDE. In doing so, it made it possible to make a clear comparison between Fayette County and Carter County because the numbers came from the same source.

Concluding Remarks

Kentucky's public education system has come a long way since the enactment of KERA in 1990. Funding is far more adequate and equitable between school districts, no matter the local resources at hand. However, funding continues to lag and there is evidence to suggest that prominent gaps still exist between urban, property rich school districts and rural, property poor school districts.

The state's methods of remediating individual schools who have support-designations are not suited to provide improvement to some of Kentucky's more diverse high schools. In particular, based on surveys and interviews with faculty, staff, and administration at Bryan Station and East Carter, the state's methods are uniform, and recommendations do not vary all that much from school to school. Also, many of the requirements, whether it be the firing of a principal or a change in the school's schedule, are seen as arbitrary changes that do nothing to solve the real issues at hand. In Bryan Station's case, real change only came after the introduction of an academy model when curriculum became more relevant to the students. The academy model allowed students to enter a general career track and tailor their education to their specific interests. Faculty and administration at Bryan Station believe firmly that the state did not have a clear vision for the school. The academy model, an idea that was not recommended by the state, was what provided the vision Bryan Station needed.

Another issue promulgated under the state's current system of evaluating schools is the criteria set forth in determining whether a school receives a TSI designation. For a high school to receive this designation, they must have a subgroup of

their student population that is performing at or below the bottom the summative performance of the bottom 5 percent of high schools. These subgroups can consist of students with disabilities and students who are learning English for the first time. For many high schools in rural areas across the state, it is possible that they may not have a large enough student population to even have a subgroup of English Language Learners (ELL). If that is the case, they are not privy to closing that achievement gap if it were to exist. For a school like Bryan Station, however, whose student population is 10 percent ELL, they are far more susceptible to a TSI designation just because they have a more diverse student population. Because of this reality, faculty and administration agree that the TSI designation introduced in 2018-19 is a punishment for the schools that do in fact have diverse populations. Instead of focusing on closing performance gaps that would exist naturally for anyone who is trying to learn a new language, the state should prioritize measuring growth for these subgroups.

The overarching reality for Kentucky's public education system is that in order for all students to succeed, the General Assembly must continue to be held accountable for honoring their constitutional mandate to provide an efficient system of common schools. This means that all students in Kentucky should be receiving the same high-quality education no matter if they live in Lexington or Grayson. If the General Assembly does not continue to make it a priority to fund the system adequately and make the system equitable for rural school districts, they may find themselves on the receiving end of yet another lawsuit on behalf of the Council for Better Education.

KERA was the cornerstone reform legislation Kentucky needed to get back on a path toward continual improvement and was a major building block of trust between Kentucky residents and its legislators. Moving forward, the General Assembly cannot fall into complacency and must continue to prioritize opportunities for all students to succeed in the classroom. This mandate encompasses the responsibility to fund the system adequately and equitably, provide support rather than punishment for schools in need of remediation, allow more autonomy for schools to implement their own ideas, and reassure students that even in the face of challenges at home, anything is possible with an aligned mindset that no barrier is too large to overcome.

Appendix A

Faculty/Staff Survey Cover Letter

Dear Participant,

I invite you to participate in a survey that seeks to gauge your school's continued improvement since exiting the state's auditing process. Questions will ask you to rate your assessment on a wide range of topics regarding school culture and the state government's role in turning your school around.

Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You may decline altogether or leave blank any questions you don't wish to answer. There are no known risks to participation beyond those encountered in everyday life. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous. Data from this research will be kept under lock and key. No one other than myself and my faculty advisor, Dr. Amanda Ellis, will know your individual answers to this survey.

In order to protect your identity, please do not write your name or any other identifying information. If you agree to participate in this project, please answer the questions on the survey as best you can. It should take approximately fifteen minutes to complete.

If you have any questions about this project, feel free to contact me at matthew_lee@mymail.eku.edu. Information on the rights of human subjects in research is available through the Institutional Review Board at Eastern Kentucky University website: <https://sponsoredprograms.eku.edu/institutional-review-board>.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Lee

Faculty/Staff Survey**Section I: Please answer the following questions by selecting one of the choices.**

1. What is your school identification code?

001

002

2. Are you a faculty member (teacher) or a staff member (front office worker, administrator, counselor, etc.)?

Faculty

Staff

Other

Prefer not to Answer

3. If you are a faculty member, what is your teaching specialty? If you are a staff member, please skip the question.

Hard Sciences (Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physical Sciences, etc.)

Fine Arts (Orchestra, Band, Choir, Theatre, Photography, etc.)

Social Sciences (Social Studies, Psychology, Sociology, etc.)

Languages (Foreign Language, English, etc.)

Life Skills (Business, Family Consumer Science, etc.)

Other

Prefer not to Answer

4. Were you a member of the faculty or staff during the state's intervention?

Yes

No

Prefer not to Answer

Section II: Please read the following statements. For each statement, indicate the number that most closely corresponds to the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

(1) Strongly Disagree

(2) Disagree

(3) Unsure

(4) Agree

(5) Strongly Agree

5. Students and staff demonstrate high levels of respect for one another.

1 2 3 4 5

6. The school mission comes from the collective will of the school community and provides a strong academic focus.

1 2 3 4 5

7. The vast majority of staff members feel valued and listened to.

1 2 3 4 5

8. All students have access to rigorous academic content and equitable instruction.

1 2 3 4 5

9. Leadership is in tune with students and community.

1 2 3 4 5

10. A school-wide discipline plan is applied consistently and fairly.

1 2 3 4 5

11. Classrooms are positive places where teachers maintain a positive atmosphere and follow-through with consequences in a calm and non-personal manner.

1 2 3 4 5

12. Faculty and staff are compensated fairly for the work they do.

1 2 3 4 5

13. Student-teacher interactions are characterized by mutual respect.

1 2 3 4 5

14. There is open and honest communication among faculty, staff, and leadership.

1 2 3 4 5

15. Faculty and administration work collaboratively.

1 2 3 4 5

16. Faculty use culturally responsive teaching strategies in the classroom.

1 2 3 4 5

17. Teachers have high expectations for all students.

1 2 3 4 5

18. Faculty and staff find it difficult to make ends meet with their salary.

1 2 3 4 5

19. Students speak about the school in proud, positive terms.

1 2 3 4 5

20. The school is perceived as welcoming to all parents and community stakeholders.

1 2 3 4 5

21. The school sends out regular communication to the community including invitations to attend key events.

1 2 3 4 5

22. The school's mission is widely shared.

1 2 3 4 5

23. Faculty and staff have adequate support from the state government.

1 2 3 4 5

24. Faculty and staff feel safe in the school.

1 2 3 4 5

25. The school has a systemic plan in place to close achievement gaps.

1 2 3 4 5

26. Common planning time is an integral part of the master schedule.

1 2 3 4 5

27. The state government provides helpful guidance when schools are targeted for improvement.

1 2 3 4 5

28. The faculty and staff participate collaboratively in decisions regarding school improvement.

1 2 3 4 5

29. Students feel safe in the school.

1 2 3 4 5

30. There is an open line of communication between faculty, staff and leadership.

1 2 3 4 5

31. The school actively recruits a diverse faculty and staff.

1 2 3 4 5

32. Faculty and staff participate in decisions regarding staff development.

1 2 3 4 5

33. The state government's criteria for designating schools for improvement is fair.

1 2 3 4 5

34. Leadership, faculty, staff and administration participate in decisions regarding scheduling.

1 2 3 4 5

Section III: Please respond to the following prompts.

35. What do you believe to be the number one factor preventing schools across the state from closing achievement gaps? Why?
36. What do you believe to have been the number one attribute that allowed for your school's successful exit from the state's improvement program? Why?
37. Do you think your school is on a path to continue on its path of improvement? Explain your reasoning.
38. Do you have any additional comments regarding your school's overall culture, support from school leadership, or guidance from the state government?
39. Do you have any additional comments regarding the state government's role overseeing and funding public education?

Appendix B

Pre-Interview Script

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my project, "All Parts and Parcels: Unpacking and Analyzing Kentucky Education Reform." The purpose of this study is to shed light on the state's auditing process and to highlight schools that have successfully exited the improvement program in recent years. This interview will seek to understand your school's progression through the process and how your school plans to continue on a path toward further improvement.

Before we begin the interview, please review the informed consent form and choose whether you wish to have your identity remain anonymous. Once you have made your decision, consent will be documented by your signature. I will then verify that I believe your consent is informed and document that with my own signature.

Once the consent form has been signed, I will begin the recording and the questions whenever you are comfortable and ready to do so.

Interview Consent Form

Name of School: _____

Name of Project: All Parts and Parcels: Unpacking and Analyzing Kentucky Education ReformEastern Kentucky University, *Dept. of Mathematics & Statistics*

- A. I agree to be interviewed for the purposes of the study named above.
- B. The nature of the interview has been explained to me, and I have been read the oral script provided by the interviewer.
- C. I agree that the interview may be electronically recorded.
- D. Any questions regarding the nature of the interview and project have been answered to my satisfaction.
- E. I am aware that I have the right to end the interview at any point.
- F. Choose one of the following:
 - 1) I agree that my name may be used for the purposes of the project and for publication.
 - 2) I do not wish my name to be used or my identity otherwise disclosed in the project and publication.

Name of Interviewee: _____

Signature of Interviewee: _____

Date: _____

- G. I have explained the study and the implications of being interviewed to the interviewee and I believe that consent is informed and that the interviewee understands the implications of participating.

Name of Interviewer: _____

Signature of Interviewer: _____

Date: _____

Interview Questions

1. Explain as specifically as you can the auditing process that occurred at your school. How long was the process and what were the recommendations made by the state?
2. Did you find the recommendations made by the state to be helpful? Did the state provide the school any additional resources during this time to aid the turnaround process?
3. After the audit was completed, did administration collaborate with faculty and staff to form the improvement process plan?
4. In the time leading up to the state's intervention, what did you believe to be the greatest factor that led to your school's low achievement?
5. Do you think the school is better off since the state intervened? Do you believe the changes made are lasting and improvement will continue into the future?
6. Is there anything that you believe is preventing your school from progressing further? Are faculty and staff included in the discussions and decisions made by the administration?
7. Do you believe the state's school improvement methods are effective? If not, what changes can be made that would be more beneficial?
8. Now that your school is no longer targeted by the state for comprehensive improvement, what does the school need to continue to do to ensure that it does not re-enter the state mandated improvement program?

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