2025-2026 Phase Two: The Needs Assessment for Districts_10012025_09:20

2025-2026 Phase Two: The Needs Assessment for Districts

Boone County
Jeff Hauswald
8330 Us 42
Florence, Kentucky, 41042
United States of America

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Understanding Continuous Improvement: The Needs Assessment for Districts

The Needs Assessment Diagnostic will facilitate the use of multiple sources of data to determine the current reality and establish a foundation for decision-making around district goals and strategies. Once completed, the diagnostic will lead to priorities to be addressed in the comprehensive district improvement plan to build staff capacity and increase student achievement. The needs assessment is to be conducted annually as an essential part of the continuous improvement process and precedes the development of strategic goals (i.e. desired state).

While the focus of continuous improvement is student performance, the aspects of teaching and learning that affect performance must guide the work. An effective improvement process should address the contributing factors creating the learning environment (inputs) and the performance data (outcomes).

The needs assessment provides the framework for all districts to clearly and honestly identify their most critical areas for improvement that they will address later in the planning process through the development of goals, objectives, strategies and activities. 703 KAR 2:225 requires, as part of continuous improvement planning for districts, each district to complete the needs assessment between October 1 and November 1 of each year and include: (1) a description of the data reviewed and the process used to develop the needs assessment; (2) a review of the previous plan and its implementation to inform development of the new plan; and, (3) perception data gathered from the administration of a valid and reliable measure of teaching and learning conditions.

Protocol

1. Clearly detail the process used to determine the priorities of this year's needs assessment. Include the following information in your response:

- • names of district leadership teams and stakeholder groups (i.e., faculty, staff, representatives of school councils, Family Resource Youth Service Centers, community partners such as civic and business organizations, etc.) involved
- • a timeline of the process
- • the specific data sources reviewed and analyzed
- • how and where the meetings were documented.

The needs assessment process began in July 2025 with principals and district administrators identifying academic priorities for 2025-26. Of significance to this needs assessment are priorities to clarify expectations for Tier 1 instruction in Math and Reading and to clarify expectations for MTTS systems and interventions. From August until October 2025, systems for these have been reviewed and feedback collected from principals, the District Teaching & Learning Committee, Learning Support Services administrators, and the Curriculum Academic Cabinet. The needs assessment will be reviewed by parents, teachers, and administrators who serve on the 27 School-Based Decision Making Councils on November 4 and 5, 2025, and feedback from these meetings will be utilized to enhance this needs assessment, as

needed, to better inform the development of the CDIP's goals, activities, and objectives.

Review of Previous Plan

2. Summarize the implementation of the goals, objectives, strategies and activities from the previous year's comprehensive district improvement plan (CDIP). What was successful? How will your results inform this year's plan?

As of October 2025, the following from the 2025-26 CDIP have been initiated with some level of success and momentum to carry us into continuous improvement for 2026-27:

- Implementation of K-5 High Quality Instructional Resources (HQIR) for Reading instruction, CKLA.
- Implementation of grades 9-11 HQIR for Reading Instruction, HMH.
- Continued implementation and improvement of MTSS systems.
- Adoption of NWEA MAP interim assessments / screener to better assist teachers in identifying students in need of Tier 2 and Tier 2 interventions.
- Adoption of a SAT screener for High School through NWEA.
- Identification of Math HQIR for K-11 utilizing the KY Model Curriculum Framework, for implementation in 2026-27.

Trends

3. After analyzing data trends from the previous two academic years, which academic, cultural and behavioral measures remain significant areas for improvement?

Example of Trends

• Behavior remains an area for improvement, as referrals have increased in the last two years from 204 in 2023-2024 to 288 in 2024-2025.

• Reading for students in our gap groups remains an area for improvement because the district saw an 11% increase in novice scores in reading among students with achievement gaps from 2024-2025.

- Elementary reading and math proficiency have plateaued over the last 4 years (Reading 58% - 61%; Math 57% - 58%
- Elementary reading and math novice reduction has plateaued over the last 4 years (Reading 18% - 16%; Math 19% - 16%)
- Results from the April 2025 BCS Culture and Climate Survey indicate that school staff are most concerned about the effective management of student behavior within the school building. Additionally, 31.3% of teachers reported dissatisfaction with how student behavior is addressed in the classroom.
- District behavior data from the 2024–2025 school year continues to indicate that the greatest disproportionality exists among students receiving free and reduced lunch, both in the number of behavior incidents and suspensions.

Current State of Academics and Climate and Culture

4. Describe in narrative form the current academic state of the district using precise numbers and percentages as revealed by multiple sources of your most recent outcome data. Cite the source of data used. Consider the following data sources:

• Kentucky Summative Assessments
• Benchmark assessments
• Formative assessments
• Graduation rate
• Progress in achieving English language proficiency
• Student access to high quality instructional resources, advanced placement courses, dual credit courses, career and technical education courses, before/after school and summer programs, preschool, full day kindergarten

Example of Current Academic Narratives:

• Thirty-four percent (34%) of students in the achievement gap scored proficient on Kentucky Summative Assessment (KSA) in reading. Local benchmark data indicates that 32% of all students receive Tier II intervention in reading.
• Fifty-four percent (54%) of our students scored proficient in math on the KSA compared to the state average of 57%. Local formative assessments show 53% of students are on grade level in math.

In Reading, Fall 2025 NWEA MAP assessment data reveal the percentage of students proficient: Kindergarten = 64%; Grade 1 = 49%; Grade 2 = 48%; Grade 3 = 53%; Grade 4 = 55%; Grade 5 = 48%; Grade 6 = 46%; Grade 7 = 49%; Grade 8 = 54%; Grade 9 = 54%; Grade 10 = 57%; Grade 11= 55%; Grade 12 = 54%.

In Math, Fall 2025 NWEA MAP assessment data reveal the percentage of students proficient: Kindergarten = 57%; Grade 1 = 47%; Grade 2 = 45%; Grade 3 = 54%; Grade 4 = 46%; Grade 5 = 45%; Grade 6 = 50%; Grade 7 = 51%; Grade 8 = 50%; Grade 9 = 57%; Grade 10 = 57%; Grade 11= 59%; Grade 12 = 56%.

- 58% of Elementary Students are proficient in Reading, and 57% are proficient in Math
- 56% of Middle School Students are proficient in Reading, and 53% are proficient in Math
- 51% of High School Students are proficient in Reading, and 48% are proficient in Math
- 86.7% of High School Students are post-secondary ready (increased from 84.4)

From local data:

- Enrollment for the 2025-26 school year is 21,443
- 4-Year High School graduation rate for 2024-25 is 96.2%
- Average attendance rate for 2024-25 is 94.81%
- English Learner population has grown from 136 in 2009 to 2,026 active (666 EL Exited/Monitored) in 202
- 1,571 students are enrolled in Advanced Placement courses for 2025-26
- 1,460 students are enrolled in dual credit courses for 2025-26

ESS

Boone County Schools' Extended School Services (ESS) program, funded at $606,265, serves approximately 2,200 K–12 students through before-school, after-school, daytime, and summer sessions. The program provides targeted academic interventions, enrichment, and credit recovery, closely aligned with each school's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and the district's multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). Using data-driven criteria such as MAP results, diagnostics, and classroom performance, schools identify students most in need of support, offering small-group and individualized instruction with research-based tools like UFLI, Orton-Gillingham, LETRS, DreamBox, IXL, and Edgenuity. Elementary schools also implement Kindergarten Camps (K-Camps) to promote school readiness through early literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional learning. Overall, ESS remains an essential, integrated resource for improving student proficiency, closing learning gaps, and supporting graduation success districtwide.

Preschool

The Boone County Preschool Program serves approximately 600 students across morning and afternoon half-day sessions, Monday through Thursday. Fridays are dedicated to home visits, planning, ARC meetings, and parent engagement. The program employs 19 certified and 37 classified staff members, serving preschool-aged children (ages 3–5, coded as grades 97–99).

Instruction is grounded in the PreK On My Way curriculum, with Heggerty used for phonics and Character Strong for social-emotional learning. The program prioritizes inclusion and equity, with enrollment comprising approximately 70% students with disabilities and 30% at-risk or low-income students. According to 2024–25 Brigance Kindergarten Readiness data, 34% of children exiting Boone County's state-funded preschool were deemed kindergarten-ready.

Family and community engagement are integral to the program's success. Parent surveys from 2024–25 show 93.9% of families rated their child's preschool experience as a 4 or 5 out of 5, and 97% rated their own experience similarly. Boone County also supports early learning through Boone's Beginners, which provides families with strategies for self-regulation, literacy, math, and emotional

development, and Me and My School, a summer readiness initiative for incoming kindergarteners in eight elementary schools.

Strong community partnerships further enhance services, including collaborations with Kentucky Early Intervention System, HIPPY, Head Start, the Family Nurturing Center, and others. Additionally, the district's partnership with the Boone County Library supports early literacy through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which provides monthly, age-appropriate books to all county children ages birth to five—serving over 6,000 children since inception.

Overall, the Boone County Preschool Program provides a comprehensive, inclusive, and family-centered early learning experience, preparing young learners for kindergarten success through high-quality instruction, data-driven readiness initiatives, and strong community collaboration.

5. Describe in narrative form the current climate and culture conditions of the district using precise numbers and percentages as revealed by multiple sources of your most recent data. Cite the source of data used. Consider the following data sources:

• Educator and school staff retention rates
• High-quality professional learning opportunities
• Chronic absenteeism
• School climate
• Behavior
• Staff and student access to mental healthcare
• Family and community involvement

Example of Current Climate and Culture Narratives:

• Teacher attendance rate was 84% for the 2024-2025 academic year. 2023-2024 Impact survey data shows that 71% of staff feel like they belong at their school.

• Survey results and perception data indicated 74% of the district's teachers received adequate professional development.

The 2025–2026 Culture and Climate Survey shows that Boone County Schools continues to be a place where staff feel valued, safe, and connected to their work. More than 80% of employees say they're satisfied with both their school and the district overall, reflecting a strong sense of pride and loyalty among staff. Safety remains a clear strength—97% of respondents report feeling safe in their buildings, showing continued confidence in the district's safety measures and culture of care.

At the same time, the results highlight a few areas that still need attention. Behavior management remains the most challenging issue, with only 68.7% of staff agreeing that student behavior is effectively managed. This suggests that schools could benefit from more consistent expectations and stronger support systems across buildings. Workload is another concern—about one in four staff members feel their workload is not manageable, emphasizing the need to continue supporting teacher well-being and work-life balance.

When compared to past surveys, the findings are very consistent. Results from the 2024–2025 Culture and Climate Survey and the 2023–2024 Impact Kentucky Working Conditions Survey show similar patterns, particularly in how staff view leadership. In 2023–2024, 73% of teachers said they had positive relationships with their school leaders, 83% felt respected, and 86% said their leaders were understanding of personal challenges. That same trust and respect continue to shine through in the 2025–2026 results.

However, feedback and coaching remain an area for growth. Only 45% of teachers in 2023–2024 said they received meaningful feedback, and just 41% felt they learned from the evaluation process. These numbers, along with the ongoing concerns about behavior management, show that while staff feel supported and safe, there's still work to do in helping educators feel more guided, equipped, and empowered in their roles.

Overall, the 2025–2026 survey paints a picture of a district that's doing many things right—strong leadership, a safe environment, and a dedicated staff—while continuing to focus on improving behavior support, workload balance, and professional feedback to make Boone County Schools an even better place to work and learn.

Strengths

6. Plainly state, using precise numbers and percentages revealed by current data, the strengths of the district.

Example:

• We have active partnerships with twelve community organizations and businesses.

• Eighty-three percent (83%) of certified staff have participated in high-quality professional learning through the Kentucky Reading Academies.

Celebrating Growth and Building for the Future

Over the past three years, Boone County Schools has continued to see steady improvement in both academic performance and instructional quality. Several of our 26 schools have demonstrated consistent growth. Yealey Elementary, Boone County High School, Cooper High School, Jones Middle School, and Thornwilde Elementary all showed sustained increases in their accountability scores. From 2024 to 2025, ten additional schools, namely Camp Ernst, Conner High, Conner Middle, Erpenbeck, Collins, Ryle High, Longbranch, North Pointe, Mann, and Stephens, also saw gains and eight schools improved their overall color rating.

At the district level, Postsecondary Readiness rose from 86% to 89%, with three high schools contributing to that growth. The graduation rate remained strong and stable at 96.8%, with two schools showing additional improvement. Across subject areas, Boone County also saw encouraging academic index growth: three schools in reading, four in math, thirteen in science, six in social studies, and eight in writing showed gains over the past three years. Additionally, fifteen schools improved their School Climate and Safety Indicator, and nine saw growth in their English Learner

Progress Indicator, reflecting a districtwide commitment to creating safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments.

Empowering Teachers and Strengthening Systems

At the heart of this progress is the district's investment in professional learning and instructional coherence. Boone County continues to build teacher leadership through initiatives like LETRS training. Currently 252 BCS teachers are trained in LETRS, with 35 teachers participating in Cohort 4. The KY Numeracy Counts Academy has also expanded, with 31 teachers and 4 school leaders participating to strengthen math instruction across the district. These teachers are not only deepening their own practice, but are leaders who are sharing their learning and scaling vibrant experiences for all students.

Through district-led Unit Studies, more than 200 teachers from elementary through high school have engaged in collaborative professional learning that integrates curriculum, pedagogy, and leadership development. Additionally, all special education teachers (PreK–12) participate in Professional Learning Communities that focus on evidence-based practices, student data, and problem-solving to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. These collective efforts have helped create a stronger, more connected professional culture throughout Boone County Schools.

High-Quality Instructional Resources: Driving Consistency and Excellence

In recent years, Boone County has made a districtwide commitment to implementing High-Quality Instructional Resources (HQIRs) to ensure every student has access to rigorous, standards-aligned learning materials. In the 2024–2025 school year, Amplify was adopted for K–5 reading, and OpenSciEd was introduced for grades 6–12 science. This year (2025–2026), the district is rolling out HMH Into Literature for grades 9–11 English, and next year (2026–2027), a math HQIR will be implemented from Kindergarten through Algebra II.

Teachers report that HQIRs have made instruction more focused, coherent, and effective. With high-quality materials already in place, teachers can dedicate more time to engaging students, differentiating instruction, and using data to guide learning. These resources promote consistency across classrooms, stronger vertical alignment, ensure equitable access to grade-level content, and help close learning gaps.

In short, HQIRs have strengthened the district's instructional foundation—bringing greater coherence, equity, and depth to teaching and learning across all schools.

A Continued Commitment to Excellence

Together, these accomplishments reflect Boone County Schools' ongoing commitment to continuous improvement and student success. From rising accountability scores to stronger professional learning systems and the districtwide adoption of HQIRs, Boone County continues to build a culture of excellence—one that empowers teachers, supports students, and delivers on the promise of high-quality learning for every child.

Leverages/Assets

7. Explain how the district will utilize its strengths and leverages, including community resources and assets (i.e., colleges, community partnerships, businesses, industry, etc.) to improve areas for improvement listed above.

Examples:

• We will coordinate efforts with our community partners to meet the behavior needs of more students.

• We will utilize the knowledge gained from the Kentucky Reading Academies to develop a reading action plan to target students in our achievement gap groups.

Leveraging Our Success for Continued Growth

The progress Boone County Schools has achieved in recent years reflects years of thoughtful planning, collaboration, and a shared commitment to excellence. The district now stands at a pivotal moment—one where the systems, people, and practices are aligned to take student learning to the next level.

Developing Systems for Professional Learning Around HQIRS

With High-Quality Instructional Resources (HQIRs) now in place across key subjects, Boone County has the opportunity to strengthen instructional alignment from early childhood through graduation. Ensuring continuity across grade levels will help every student experience consistent, high-quality, vibrant instruction at each stage of their academic journey.

To continue driving growth in student achievement and state accountability performance, Boone County Schools will build upon the successful implementation of HQIRs and expand professional learning for teachers. Elementary schools will continue implementing HQIRs in reading and writing, while high schools advance their use of the newly adopted English Language Arts HQIR. The district is also in the review process for a mathematics HQIR spanning kindergarten through 11th grade, with full adoption planned for the 2026–2027 school year. Meanwhile, all middle and high schools are in their second year of implementation of the science HQIR.

As Boone County deepens this work, the district recognizes that HQIR implementation must be supported by curriculum-based professional learning. This includes job-embedded professional development focused on unit and lesson internalization, ensuring teachers have time to engage deeply with materials before delivering instruction. Professional learning will also support teachers in making smart decisions in enacting the HQIR, bringing the learning on the page to life. Partnerships with the Northern Kentucky Educational Cooperative (NKCES) and the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) will continue to play an essential role in supporting district and school-level professional learning.

The district's investment in teacher leadership through LETRS, Numeracy Counts, and Unit Studies has created a strong foundation of expertise within classrooms. These teacher-leaders are well-positioned to mentor colleagues, model effective practices, and sustain the work that has already led to measurable improvement. By empowering teachers to lead from within, Boone County continues to foster a culture of professional excellence that directly benefits students. The district will continue to expand professional learning and engineer opportunities for teachers to learn collaboratively and to lead in a variety of ways.

Balanced Assessment and Data Based Decision Making

As instructional systems become more coherent, the district will also use data more strategically—to celebrate what's working and to identify areas where additional support is needed. This ensures that interventions remain timely and responsive, helping every student stay on track for success. With the district's new partnership with NWEA MAP, Boone County now has a universal screener for grades K–12 that serves as the backbone of a balanced assessment system. Ongoing collaboration with NWEA for professional learning and implementation guidance will strengthen data-informed instruction across all schools. This data will not only help us to respond to student learning in the moment, but also to evaluate the effectiveness of our other systems, including professional learning and HQIR implementation.

Fostering Safe and Positive Learning Environments

At the same time, Boone County's progress in school climate, safety, and English Learner growth reinforces that academic success is strongest when students feel supported, valued, and included. Continuing to nurture that sense of belonging will be vital to sustaining the district's positive trajectory. This includes implementing MTSS with fidelity and focusing on a reduction of suspensions.

In short, Boone County Schools' success is not the end of a journey—it's the foundation for what comes next. We are committed to providing every student with the vibrant learning experiences that are possible when teachers are engaged in a rich learning community, empowered with quality resources, and supported by effective, efficient systems. With continued focus, collaboration, and commitment, the district is well-positioned to keep growing, keep improving, and ensure that every student benefits from an exceptional education.

COMMENTS

Evaluate the Teaching and Learning Environment

• Consider the processes, practices and conditions evident in the teaching and learning environment as identified in the six Key Core Work Processes outlined below:

KCWP 1: Design and Deploy Standards
KCWP 2: Design and Deliver Instruction
KCWP 3: Design and Deliver Assessment Literacy

KCWP 4: Review, Analyze and Apply Data Results
KCWP 5: Design, Align and Deliver Support Processes
KCWP 6: Establish Learning Environment and Culture

8a. KCWP 1: Design and Deploy Standards

Schools continually assess, review, and revise school curricula to support the assurance that all students have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for future success.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

- ● **No**
- ○ Yes

COMMENTS

N/A

8b. KCWP 2: Design and Deliver Instruction

Instructional programs include consistent implementation of evidence-based instructional practices essential for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional competencies that are aligned to Kentucky Academic Standards and current research.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

- ○ No
- ● **Yes**

COMMENTS

Teachers will utilize evidence-based instructional practices (e.g., modeling, discussion, questioning, feedback) and newly adopted HQIR for Reading and Math instruction to ensure cognitive student engagement? Schools will ensure that at least 80% of students have their instructional needs met through Tier I universal instruction with an intentional use of scaffolding and differentiation. Through strict adherence to the elements of effective instruction articulated by the district, and accountability through administrator classroom walk-through observations, the schools and district will ensure teachers design lessons that are relevant and responsive to students' cultural, social, and developmental needs.

8c. KCWP 3: Design and Deliver Assessment Literacy

Schools have a comprehensive, balanced assessment system that provides a variety of evidence to support educational decision making and includes four primary assessment purposes: formative, diagnostic, interim/benchmark, and summative.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

- ● **No**

○ Yes

COMMENTS

N/A

8d. KCWP 4: Review, Analyze and Apply Data Results

Schools communicate and implement a sustainable system for reviewing, analyzing, and applying data results to ensure a uniform way to elicit, interpret, and act on meaningful evidence of student learning.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

○ No

● **Yes**

COMMENTS

PLC and MTSS systems in place will be strengthened with clearer expectations district accountability to ensure that teachers elicit, interpret, and act on student learning results to inform instructional Tier 1 and Tiers 2/3 intervention decision-making. District and school leadership will ensure data is used to meet the needs of all students (e.g., movement through the tiers of intervention, grouping/regrouping, teacher and student placement, scheduling). Schools will ensure that students are actively involved in knowing their own data, setting explicit goals and making decisions about their own learning.

8e. KCWP 5: Design, Align and Deliver Support Processes

Schools establish a framework that organizes systems, data, and practices to promote positive, equitable and inclusive learning experiences for all students.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

● **No**

○ Yes

COMMENTS

N/A

8f. KCWP 6: Establish Learning Environment and Culture

Schools intentionally design the learning environment to be inclusive and accessible for all students within a culture where learning and continued growth is the primary focus and foundation for all actions.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

- ● **No**
- ○ Yes

COMMENTS

N/A

Attachment Summary

Attachment Name	Description	Associated Item(s)