

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS: STATE EXPERIENCES WITH COMMON CORE-ALIGNED ASSESSMENTS

Prepared for California County Superintendents Educational Services Association

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In the following document, Hanover Research presents transcripts from in-depth interviews with contacts in Kentucky Department of Education regarding the state's administration of Common Core-aligned assessments



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

In this document, Hanover Research presents transcripts from in-depth interviews with contacts in Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) regarding the state’s administration of Common Core-aligned assessments. Specifically, Hanover interviewed directors from the following divisions:

- Division of Communications
- Division of Assessment Design and Implementation
- Division of Program Standards

The Appendix includes the protocol Hanover prepared prior to the interviews. In each interview, the content discussed deviated from the protocol, as the nature of a contact’s position within KDE made some topics more or less relevant. Further, consistent with the nature of primary research, a contact’s responses, at times, led the conversation in interesting, if slightly different, directions. The following figure summarizes the topics addressed in each interview.

Interview Content, by KDE Contact

NAME	TITLE	INTERVIEW CONTENT*
Rebecca Blessing	Director, Division of Communications	Stakeholder communications
Kevin Hill	Director, Division of Assessment Design and Implementation	All topics
Karen Kidwell	Director, Division of Program Standards	General, professional development, stakeholder communications

*Corresponds to categories in the interview protocol (Appendix)

Lastly, as Hanover assured each KDE contact an opportunity to view any representation or discussion of their comments prior to publication, we ask that CCSESA please refrain from sharing the following content beyond the immediate project team.

KEY FINDINGS

- **KDE made a deliberate effort to educate and communicate with all stakeholders**, including administrators, teachers, parents, and the business community. Such efforts paid particular attention to anticipated decreases in proficiency rates, in an attempt to set appropriate expectations and avoid unpleasant surprises. **The business community also provided messaging that echoed the themes in KDE and other state government communications**, explaining the importance of changes in standards and assessments for ensuring the college and career readiness of Kentucky’s students.

- **Kentucky provided administrators and teachers with time to understand the new standards, adjust instruction, acquire aligned materials, and troubleshoot problems prior to launching new assessments.** KDE’s educational and professional development efforts centered on “Leadership Networks” which brought district, building, and teacher leaders together to discuss and understand the new standards and promote continuity throughout the state.
- **Kentucky continues to primarily use paper, as opposed to computer-based, methods for administering most tests.** Thus, the state has made few investments in technology as a result of administering Common Core-aligned assessments.

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DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Name: Rebecca Blessing

Title: Director, Division of Communications, KDE

Interview Date: March 5, 2015

Hanover: What goals did you have in mind when you were communicating with stakeholders about Common Core-aligned assessments?

RB: We wanted them to understand that the assessments were going to be different than they had been in the past. They were going to demand much more of the student in terms of their depth of knowledge of the standards and their demonstration of that depth of knowledge. We really try to communicate the reason for the change in the standards and then, obviously, the need for change in the assessment so they align with the standards. We were prompted into all of this by state legislation that demanded that K12 students be better prepared for college, so that was kind of the impetus behind all this.

Hanover: Would you say you feel like those goals were achieved?

RB: I think so. Certainly, Kentucky has enjoyed less controversy than many other states. I think one of the reasons was because we had that legislative backing. I think the other reason is that we worked with a lot of state partners and education stakeholders to make sure there was an understanding of the new standards, why we were getting new standards, the fact that the tests were going to be different and more rigorous than in the past, and that as a result, we would likely see lower test scores. We worked with partners to get that message out throughout the state, and I think, for that reason, we didn't see the panic when lower test scores came in.

Hanover: Now, you began those communications and outreach efforts pretty early on, is that correct?

RB: That's right. The legislation was passed in 2009, and we immediately started trying to communicate what that meant and what changes there would be. We changed not only our standards and our assessments, but our accountability system as well. Pretty much everything was different. You couldn't really compare now with what was before in terms of accountability because there was some change. You couldn't really say "Oh, well this year's score is up or down from last year's score," because it was using different standards, and it was also on a different scale. We started immediately to try to lay the groundwork for the many changes that parents and others would see. And then continued on and hit it especially hard, I think, before the first round of test scores were released. We really made an effort with our partners and with the communications that we did use to get that word out well in advance of the test scores being released.

Hanover: What methods or tools did you use to do that communication? Did it differ by stakeholder group?

RB: We used a number of different tools before, during, and after the scores [were] released. I think prior to the release and even prior to the testing, we worked with our partners, and there was a grassroots organization through the Pritchard Committee which is one of our main educational support groups and they had an initiative that they got some grant funding for called Ready Kentucky, and it was really a grassroots effort to inform the public through face to face meetings what the new standards, assessments, and accountability system were and what they meant. There was that. The president of the state chamber and the commissioner of education visited a number of communities and civic organizations to spread that same message and really reinforce the “why” behind all of the changes. I think that was very successful. We communicated with teachers ahead of time, which I think was really important because teachers are some of the – they’re really the main contact parents have with the education system, so I think it was important for teachers to understand the whys and wherefores as well. We communicated that through – we have an online vehicle called Kentucky Teachers, and then also, during this process, we did some fact sheets and some “Why you should support the Common Core?” and that included some messaging as well.

Hanover: That sounds like an extensive effort. Did you find that any of those methods – fact sheets or educating teachers or talking to civic groups – were more successful than others?

RB: I think it takes multiple efforts on different levels. I think even with the same audience, it takes multiple efforts. People oftentimes don’t hear what you say the first time, or it doesn’t resonate with them, so you have to keep putting the message out. I don’t know that I would say one works better than the other. The other thing we did is we really tried to work with the media to make the media understand the changes and the expectations and what schools and districts would see, what the public would see, and kind of work through the media to prepare parents and others as well. I think it was really important to understand the changes and the “why” behind it, so I keep going back to that. But I think that was really an important message to say we’re not just doing this randomly or to make it tougher on kids but really to carry the message that we may be taking a momentary setback on test scores for a longer term gain and that is in readiness of our kids, when they graduate high school, turn out able to meet college level work, they’re prepared.

Hanover: How did you make the media understand that?

RB: We really reached out to provide them the factual information first of all, on what the changes had been, why they had been made, and to make sure they understood this was a legislative mandate and that we had widespread support from our many partners, including the business community. And we did some – I’m trying to think because I wasn’t actually the director of communications with the first release but I have been with the last two releases – and we held a webinar for them to be able to ask questions. The commissioner of

education has been very open to trying to explain. I think at one point he even did kind of a primer for parents and the media on the changes and why and that sort of thing, and what we would likely see. It was a video we posted online. Then, the last couple of years, we have held briefings for the media and released embargoed data to the media beforehand and then also had a Q&A with the commissioner that was under embargo as well, the day [before] scores were publicly released. The media could kind of get their story and hear from the commissioner his word on what we were seeing. They weren't taking the story; they were really ahead of the story. Then, that way they were able to go to local districts and have better educated conversations with that as well. We also released the data to the districts under embargo. The other thing that we do that I know some states don't do – our scores come out a little later than some other states, and the reason for that is because we try to release as clean a data as possible. We give the districts the chance to go back and review the data to make sure there are not any anomalies and, in order to correct any anomalies that may be present, that look wrong to them or that we have some issues with or something like that, we try to get the data as clean as possible before we do release it. There is a cleanup period after, as well. Usually, we don't see any major changes during that time. Occasionally, we will see a school change reward categories slightly, but, generally when we release the data, it's pretty clean, and there aren't many changes after, and that also helps with the clarity of message.

Hanover: I've heard you mention the media, the business community, and civic organizations as groups you've partnered with. Is there anyone else you feel has been particularly useful or whose support has been integral to your success?

RB: Pretty much all of the education organizations. We call them here our K-Groups: Kentucky Association of School Boards; Kentucky Association of School Administrators; Kentucky Education Association, which is our main teacher union; working with the state chamber and the business community. The governor has been supportive of the reform effort. I think we have pretty broad agreement in terms of when we went into this and went into the new standards. It hasn't meant that we haven't had detractors along the way and, in fact, still do face some of those. But I think, generally speaking, the support has remained intact because people see this as an investment in bettering our education system in the long run.

Hanover: How do you deal with those detractors when they come up?

RB: For the people that we feel like we can sway their opinion, we try to provide factual information. Not all of the opponents are sharing factual information. A lot of it is peer-based and that sort of thing. We just try to share as much factual information as we can and also try to provide first-person accounts, especially from teachers in the classroom, of what they've seen with the standards and the breakthroughs with learning that they're seeing with their classrooms, how kids are really rising to the challenge in many cases. A lot of times, you'll hear about so-and-so's kid went home in tears because they couldn't do the work. But we've heard from teachers that even kids that were underperformers before are really rising to the occasion in terms of being able to perform on this standard because it

resonates with them and the kind of shift in teaching the standards have required in terms of making students more responsible for their own learning. We try to share as many of those stories as possible publicly as well.

Hanover: It sounds like you all have a really multi-pronged effort going on. That actually wraps up the questions I have for you, but is there anything else that you want to add or any advice you would give to a state that's about to go through the same thing you did a couple years ago?

RB: I think the main thing is just to plan ahead and elicit as widespread support as you can get. Make sure teachers are prepared to talk with parents about the standards, the changes in the standards and the changes in testing, and what that requires of kids and why this is important for long-term success. Those are the main things I would say. The other thing is, Kentucky, unlike many other states – and because of our state mandated legislation – contracted for our own test. We were part of the assessment consortia at one point, but didn't feel like that was the answer for us in the long run. We did develop our own test. They are administered primarily with paper and pencil. We did end-of-course testing at the high schools, which are administered online, and so we haven't had the technology challenges some of the other states have had with trying to get ready for the consortia-administered test. I think that, too, is something that's been different that may have saved some of our pushback. Our tests are not significantly more time consuming than the previous test, which I understand is one of the arguments within the consortia, so we haven't faced some of those same criticisms that some of the other states have.

DIVISION OF ASSESSMENT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Name: Kevin Hill

Title: Director, Division of Assessment Design and Implementation, KDE

Interview Date: March 10, 2015 (Email Correspondence)

GENERAL

Hanover: How would you describe the relationship between Kentucky's standards-based grading and proficiency levels on state assessments?

KH: It's my understanding that there [have] been pilot projects designed to look at options for reporting student performance using standards-based grading that align to the standard, but that has not been implemented statewide.

Hanover: Are these comparable measurements of student proficiency and achievement? Why or why not?

KH: They should be. The state assessment is measuring the standards, and, if standards-based grading reports on it, then they would be comparable.

Hanover: What are the key structural components needed for successful administration of Common Core-aligned assessments?

KH: In Kentucky, the administration is similar as in previous state assessments with updated test design and items aligned to common core. We still administer paper and pencil as in the past (EOC online only at high school).

Hanover: To what extent did proficiency rates change under the state's Common Core-aligned assessments?

KH: The percent proficient dropped consistently across all grades. Reading dropped from 75-80% to 50-55% proficient, and math dropped from 65-75% proficient to 45-55% proficient (depending on the grade).

Hanover: How has the state's approach to Common Core-aligned assessments changed since the first administration?

KH: The focus has been on rolling out the standards and implementing change in instruction since the adoption of the standards in 2010.

Hanover: What lessons have you learned as a result of your state’s administration of these Common Core-aligned assessments that you think would be helpful for other states to know?

KH: We have worked hard to provide instructional support to implement the standards, but this is an on-going issue. The goal is to develop a complete balanced assessment system, in addition to the summative assessment.

TECHNOLOGY

Hanover: What investments in testing-related technology did the state make prior to the first test administration?

KH: On-going network upgrades, but nothing additional for testing since the majority of testing is still paper/pencil.

Hanover: Did the state assist districts and schools in acquiring testing technology? How—financially? Recommending vendors? Etc.?

KH: N/A

Hanover: What have been the biggest technology-related challenges you have faced with Common Core-aligned assessments?

KH: N/A

Hanover: Have there been any unforeseen outcomes (positive or negative) from using the technology required to administer the tests?

KH: N/A

Hanover: Were there any outcomes specific to particular student subpopulations (e.g., ELLs, special education students, younger students, etc.)?

KH: N/A

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hanover: How did you prepare administrators and teachers for the implementation of the Common-Core aligned assessments?

KH: In Kentucky, we worked hard to provide instructional support to rollout the standards. The administration is similar as in previous state assessments with updated test design and items aligned to common core.

Hanover: Did you provide professional development to teachers and administrators to explain Common Core-aligned assessments?

KH: Yes

Hanover: If so, what topics did you cover? Anticipated changes in instruction?

KH: Rollout of the standards with regional trainings

Hanover: How to interpret test results?

KH: Updated standard reporting documentation

Hanover: Anticipated changes in proficiency rates?

KH: Very Important! Communication plan with messages from department leaders and advisory groups about the drop in proficiency rates.

Hanover: Computer-adaptive testing?

KH: N/A

Hanover: Technology troubleshooting?

KH: N/A

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS

Hanover: What goals did you have in mind when communicating with stakeholders (e.g., educators, students, parents, community members) about Common-Core aligned assessments?

KH: The communication plan about the standards and the drop in proficiency was important to get in front of the change in scores.

Hanover: Do you feel these were achieved?

KH: Yes

Hanover: When did you begin communications about these assessments?

KH: At least a year before standard setting and reporting.

Hanover: Why?

KH: It's important to prepare people up front for the change that will be coming.

Hanover: What methods or tools did you use to communicate with stakeholders?

KH: It's important to involve key stakeholders in education and the business community.

Hanover: Did the methods differ by stakeholder group?

KH: Similar messages for groups, but getting the message out is the key. With world class standards, performance will drop from previous results, etc.

Hanover: Were any of these methods more successful than others?

KH: Similar messages.

Hanover: How did the state address anticipated declines in proficiency rates, in particular?

KH: Open and transparent.

Hanover: How did local media discuss changes in proficiency rates?

KH: The media did pickup on the messaging, which help them prepare for the drop as well.

DIVISION OF PROGRAM STANDARDS

Name: Karen Kidwell

Title: Director, Division of Program Standards, KDE

Interview Date: March 11, 2015

Hanover: How would you describe the relationship between Kentucky’s standards-based grading and proficiency assessments? Do you think those are comparable measures of student proficiency?

KK: I’m not sure what you mean by standards-based grading. I understand the concept of standards-based grading, but we don’t require that statewide.

Hanover: But some districts do use it, is that correct?

KK: Yes.

Hanover: Do you have any idea if the districts that do use standards-based grading have seen an equivalency between their grading model and proficiency on state assessments?

KK: I don’t have anything concrete that I could put my hands on besides conversations, but absolutely. The schools and teachers that do it well, as it is really intended to be done, they do see that correlation, absolutely. Because they work to ensure the intensity, the standard is the actual focus of teaching and learning.

MS: What would you say are some of the key structural components a district needs for a successful administration of Common Core-aligned assessments?

KK: I think first and foremost, in our state, it’s been the ability to translate the standards into day-to-day teaching and learning. First, be able to read the standard and agree on the true intent of the standard and translate that into learning targets for the student that inform the basis of curriculum development and pacing throughout the year.

Then, I think, also, a deeper understanding. We’ve seen more success with schools and districts that have a more practical and applied notion of assessment literacy and how do you build a balanced system from classroom and maybe common school assessments and what have you that really are aligned to the expectations at the state level.

We’ve been focusing on building assessment literacy in our state since 2007 very intentionally, to build capacity in every district, to have key people who can lead those conversations and to have resources and materials to do that. But, obviously, some have taken it and run with it and others have not prioritized it, so we do see a difference there; because it’s just that focus on “If I understand the intent of the standard, do I also understand how to elicit defensible evidence of student attainment of that standard? If I

understand that well, then obviously, I'm going to be able to create a stronger, more aligned system from the classroom to state-level accountability."

Hanover: It sounds like having continuity from the classroom level at the beginning of the year all the way through to the standard-aligned assessment at the end of the year is really important. Is that what I'm hearing?

KK: Yes, that's fine.

Hanover: How has Kentucky's approach to these Common Core-aligned assessments changed since you first rolled them out?

KK: We consider that we're basically in "sustain and maintain" mode. We have been implementing standards aligned to the ELA and math standards in our state since the 2011-2012 academic year. It's just become a part of what we do. We have a very strong network of school and district assessment coordinators across the state, and our Office of Assessment and Accountability within our agency does a great deal to prepare those building and district leaders in how to administer the assessments and just down to how to package and mail them back. Every little thing is covered on the administration side.

Then, on the teaching and learning side, which is my focus as the Director of Program Standards, we've invested a great deal of effort and resources into working continuously with district leadership teams. Those are teams that districts selected that are comprised of building level leaders, district leaders, and teacher leaders in the content areas. As a matter of fact, starting in 2010, for English language arts and math, we worked three full years, monthly, with representatives from every district. Again, we asked every district, it was a senate model, to let us work with 3-4 teacher leaders in ELA, 3-4 teacher leaders in math, and 3-4 school leaders, 3-4 district leaders almost monthly (a whole day a month) in large learning teams to really dig into the standards and talk about what were the implications for being able to really achieve the intent of the standards and what were highly effective teaching, learning, and assessment practices that needed to be scaled across districts if we really wanted to achieve the intent of the standards.

We worked to support it from that teaching and learning perspective and building curricula and being a critical consumer of selecting resources and designing assessments beginning at the classroom level that would give you defensible evidence of student attainment of the standards. We worked from the classroom up in those large learning teams, we call them Leadership Networks, while, at the same time, we had our key staff with expertise in ELA and math working with our Office of Assessment and Accountability and our assessment vendor to ensure that the items that were selected for a statewide assessment in accountability also were in the spirit of the true intent of the standards. We sought to create that consistency and alignment all the way through.

It wasn't just a one-shot thing. If you think about three years [of] meeting, we actually met eight full days a year for three years with all of those groups of people, and we're

continuing. We're in our fifth year now, with the school and district leaders, but, instead of meeting as much with math and ELA teachers, we started to pull in science and social studies teachers. We're a year and a half into working in that same fashion with science and social studies teachers to prepare them for – we're actually designing a new assessment and accountability system for science, and we will be for social studies – also getting ready to implement new standards for science and new social studies standards. We've tried to focus again on building capacity at the district level and being an agency that doesn't just monitor for compliance's sake, but really tries to provide excellent leadership service and support to districts in growing those capacities.

Hanover: This is kind of a large question, but what lessons would you say you've learned as a result of Kentucky's administration of standards-based assessments that you think would be helpful for other states to know?

KK: I think the first lesson is just a reminder that a single statewide assessment is limited in its value of what it can give back to informing teaching and learning, so we didn't start there. What we said is the most important thing to focus on are the interactions of the teacher and the student around the content day-to-day. We said from the very beginning that standards alone weren't going to assure that we had college and career [ready] students. We have to wrap highly-effective teaching, learning, and assessment practices around those standards every day in every classroom, if we were going to achieve the bigger picture, which for us is college and career readiness for all of our students. That's what we wanted to start with, is what happens in the classroom between the teacher and student around content on a day-to-day basis.

Like I said, starting with the teachers to say, "What does the standard really mean?" One of the lessons that we learned is that, if you give a room full of teachers or administrators – any educator groups – if you give, say, a room of 20 people, and you give them a standard that you think –here's the standard, they can read standards, they're educators – when they read that, and you ask them "What does this mean for students? What is the intent of that standard, and how will you know when students have attained it?" You're probably going to get 15-20 different perspectives on what that looks like. We spent a year before we ever started our accountability system letting these teams of teacher leaders, school leaders, district leaders dig into the standards, kind of walk them through a protocol to get at the intent of the standard and to reach some agreement on the intent of the standards. We actually deconstructed the standards into the requisite learning targets that had to be in place for students to be able to attain the standard.

Going through that process just to kind of get some level-setting was huge, because, if you don't bother to do that, if you just give the standards to people and assume they're interpreting them the same way, then, automatically, you're creating a disparity in the opportunity to learn among the students. Because, if one teacher interprets a standard that says, "The students really have to show me that they can do A, B, and C for this standard," and another teacher says, "When I read that standard, I only think they have to do A and B," then, automatically, the experience the student gets is going to be very different. We made

sure that we would spend quite a bit of time just facilitating those questions and having teachers be able to communicate back and forth across our entire state. 173 school districts is what we have in our state, and our learning teams were voluntary, but we had all but about 10 districts participate fully over the course of the time we've been doing them, in the five years now.

That's been a lesson we've learned: you have to give that time, and you can't take for granted that, just because standards are written down, people actually interpret them the same way. You need the consistent interpretation also to be understood by whatever group or vendor or what have you [that] you're using to create a summative test, because you want that to be consistent, and that's what builds confidence – that teachers understand what the standard is asking; therefore, they can define teaching and learning experiences that get at that intent, and they can trust that, when the summative comes along, that same understanding of what it takes to attain the standard is there. That was a big lesson.

I think the other thing is you have to give people time to learn. We spent a full year with our teams, working, before they were ever held accountable. They had a year before they were even expected to implement the standards. Some were starting to implement, some were building their curricula that year. We didn't dictate how that needed to happen, because we figured the district knew their needs best, but we gave them support and resources to do that. Then we said, but the next year, we have to go to full implementation. This is your year – anything that may be causing you some confusion in the way you're thinking about it or what have you, let's address it now; let's bring it to our larger learning teams so we can make sure that we're building lots of understanding among the group and that we can reach consensus on how to address it. That seemed to be very helpful to give people basically that year to learn and study and plan before they were actually held accountable for that.

Hanover: To what extent did proficiency rates change under standards-aligned assessment? Did you see a drop?

KK: We did see [that]. But, our work in Kentucky, the impetus for it, was really our business community, our governor, and our education commissioner coming together to say “we need to do some things differently.” Even before the Common Core standards, we had a big legislation path that we referred to as Unbridled Learning in Kentucky, or Senate Bill 1 of 2009, that demanded that we needed a stronger focus on college and career readiness. We needed new college and career ready standards that were world-class, and we needed a new assessment system that was aligned to it. We needed to focus more on balanced assessments from the classroom to the state. The legislation outlined a lot of the underpinning for how we were able to support [it].

Because of that, we were able with the business community, with the education community, with our governor – we were able to build more support for why we were making these changes to begin with. That was helpful, because it wasn't so much maybe one faction or group pushing back so much. There were questions and concerns all along, but, by and large, we included all of our key stakeholder groups across those realms, from

politics to education to the business community—even designing how would we provide this support, which came in these leadership networks and everything. In our leadership networks, where we've provided all this professional learning to support the implementation of the standards and new assessments, they're not only facilitated and led by Kentucky Department of Education specialists, but all of our higher ed institutions also have faculty that helps facilitate all of those meetings. That's kind of been a model to say, we're trying to make this a seamless transition into college. Our college faculty understand what K12 is trying to do to prepare students and they're able to give insights to bridge that gap.

I think that's been a big piece for us, too, to be able to say we know this is going to take time, and, whenever you switch assessments and standards and start to do many things differently, you're likely to see a dip in student performance. We did see a dip in proficiency, but, at the same time, we're rebounding greatly, and we have almost doubled our college readiness rates in our state in the last three years. We've made some tremendous gains, so while it was a little slow start, we also had our business community, our Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, create a public service announcement that had business and industry leaders talking about how important it was to stay the course and to expect that, initially, it would look like students' proficiency rates would probably drop, but that's okay; we're expecting it, it's not a surprise, and don't let it be a surprise to you. I think that was a big help, too. That started before we even administered the first round of assessments.

Hanover: Were there any other methods or tools you used to communicate with stakeholders?

KK: We communicated continuously. Our commissioner does two newsletters a week to all superintendents, so we kept everybody informed of all of our progress. Literally week-to-week. We do webcasts from here for superintendents and professional supervisors, for teachers. We have a publication called Kentucky Teacher that we would focus on teachers doing really great things in their classrooms around these standards. Our educational television station, Kentucky Education Television, continued to feature elements of what we were putting into place on a show called Education Matters. Again, we've been able to pull lots of venues together; our stakeholder groups have been really good: our Kentucky PTA, our Kentucky Education Association, [and] we have a group, an education advocacy group, called the Pritchard Committee. All of those groups came together to work on common messaging and support for the different roles and needs for putting this whole system together.

Hanover: You addressed a lot of my questions about how you interacted with district-level teachers and administrators, but, in those conversations with them, did you address things like anticipated changes in instruction and how to interpret new test results?

KK: Yes. That's part of assessment literacy and highly-effective teaching and learning.

Hanover: Did you happen to also address anything regarding computer-adaptive testing or any technology troubleshooting that was going to come up with these new assessments and standards?

KK: Our assessments right now are not computer-adaptive, so no.

DRAFT

APPENDIX: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

GENERAL

- How would you describe the relationship between Kentucky’s standards-based grading and proficiency levels on state assessments?
 - Are these comparable measurements of student proficiency and achievement? Why or why not?
- What are the key structural components needed for successful administration of Common Core-aligned assessments?
- To what extent did proficiency rates change under the state’s Common Core-aligned assessments?
- How has the state’s approach to Common Core-aligned assessments changed since the first administration?
- **What lessons have you learned as a result of your state’s administration of these Common Core-aligned assessments that you think would be helpful for other states to know?**

TECHNOLOGY

- What investments in testing-related technology did the state make prior to the first test administration?
 - What, if any, updates have been made by the state since then?
- Did the state assist districts and schools in acquiring testing technology? How—financially? Recommending vendors? Etc.?
- What have been the biggest technology-related challenges you have faced with Common Core-aligned assessments?
 - How have those been addressed?
- Have there been any unforeseen outcomes (positive or negative) from using the technology required to administer the tests?
 - Were there any outcomes specific to particular student subpopulations (e.g., ELLs, special education students, etc.)?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- How did you prepare administrators and teachers for the implementation of the Common-Core aligned assessments?
- Did you provide professional development to teachers and administrators to explain Common Core-aligned assessments? If so, what topics did you cover?
 - Anticipated changes in instruction?
 - How to interpret test results?
 - Anticipated changes in proficiency rates?
 - Computer-adaptive testing?
 - Technology troubleshooting?

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS

- What goals did you have in mind when communicating with stakeholders (e.g., educators, students, parents, community members) about Common-Core aligned assessments?
 - Do you feel these were achieved?
- When did you begin communications about these assessments? Why?
- What methods or tools did you use to communicate with stakeholders?
 - Did the methods differ by stakeholder group?
 - Were any of these methods more successful than others?
- How did the state address anticipated declines in proficiency rates, in particular?
- How did local media discuss changes in proficiency rates?

PROJECT EVALUATION FORM

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