



# Kentucky Digital Learning Guidelines

Digital



**Learning**

Kentucky Department of Education



Dr. Terry Holliday, Commissioner



For more detailed guidance,  
clarification and specific criteria of  
high quality digital learning resources visit:  
[International Association for K-12 Online Learning](#)  
[Quality Matters](#)  
[Digital Learning Now](#)  
[NCAA](#)

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# Introduction

The Kentucky Department of Education Digital Learning Team designed the Kentucky Digital Learning Guidelines as guidance for schools, districts, and digital providers when selecting or creating developmentally appropriate digital learning resources for instruction, as well as online and blended learning courses in Kentucky schools. These guidelines are timely due to schools providing 21st century learning opportunities for Kentucky students that are rigorous, differentiated, standard-based, and responsive to our increasing information rich, and rapidly expanding networked technological culture. Digital learning resources as well as online and digital learning courses used in Kentucky must align explicitly to the Kentucky approved academic standards appropriate for each course and be endorsed by a highly qualified content teacher. Best practices embedded within the delivery of digital learning resources as well as online and blended learning courses by a highly qualified content teacher should increase student engagement and achievement to close achievement gaps, and lead Kentucky's students to college and/or career readiness by graduation.



## ◀ Digital Learning Guiding Principles

To ensure that digital learning resources, online courses and blended learning courses meet or exceed the criteria for high quality traditional instruction, these five Guiding Principles have been established:

- A highly qualified teacher in the school (and/or district) reviews and endorses digital content.
- A highly qualified teacher or content mentor stewards student learning performance and demonstrated mastery.
- Learners have access to highly qualified teachers, content coaches, or professionally recognized masters in the course field, as mentors in their digital learning experience.
- Student learning experiences are personalized based on the following: student's diagnostic data, learning style, and learning needs which allow for student choice, voice, and pace.
- Effective teaching practices prescribed by [Professional Growth and Effectiveness System](#) apply equally to digital learning experiences.

By using these guidelines, districts and schools will confidently be able to offer high quality, standards-based digital course content coupled with effective digital pedagogy, including ongoing analysis of quality, effectiveness, and student-centered success. Providers of digital learning resources for instruction, as well as online and blended learning courses, will be able to conduct ongoing analysis of quality, effectiveness, and alignment to the Kentucky Digital Learning Guidelines to share with recipient districts and schools.



# Content

- **Course content is aligned in scope and sequence to the Kentucky approved academic standards for each digital learning resource, online and blended learning course. When appropriate, these resources and courses align with Kentucky course descriptions and bear course code assignments established by [704 KAR 3:540](#).**
  - Content may be obtained from a vendor, built by a highly qualified content teacher, or a combination of both.
  - Online or blended courses, not from an accredited or approved source, are reviewed by a local review committee (content specific highly qualified teacher, administrative designee, district technology coordinator designee and a curriculum/instructional coach if available) before enrolling students in the courses.
  - Basal textbooks (print or digital) follow state guidelines of review and notification as established in KRS 156.395-476 and 704 KAR 3:445. (Does not apply to supplemental.)
- **A content appropriate, highly qualified teacher reviews and endorses all digital learning resources, online and blended course content.**





## Digital Pedagogy

- If an online course has been assigned to a highly qualified teacher, then a building level course steward may oversee the implementation of the course if provided within the school building.
- Teacher course stewards are trained in the delivery of online/blended learning embedding the principles of Characteristics of [Highly Effective Teaching and Learning](#) (CHETL) and the [Professional Growth and Effectiveness System](#) (PGES).
- Online courses have components that provide access to the course content anytime, anyplace and at the student's own pace.
- Students taking an online course or blended learning course have access to a highly qualified teacher or content mentor for two-way communication, collaboration, questions and/or tutoring.





## Technology Readiness

- Schools implementing online/blended learning provide adequate facilities and tools to students and teacher in order to facilitate successful learning experiences (e.g., labs, stations, 1:1, BYOD, adequate wireless access, Learning Management System (LMS), etc).
- The development of digital citizenship skills for students and teachers prior to and during online or blended learning experience is an integral part of technology readiness.







# Leadership and Governance

- **The local board of education and/or the school-based decision making (SBDM) council establishes appropriate school and district policies governing online course enrollment, parameters, course credits, etc.**
- **Course providers are accredited institutions approved by Kentucky-recognized accreditation organizations.**
- **Vendors of comprehensive online programs, course providers and digital learning resource vendors provide evidence that their products are congruent to Kentucky’s course review criteria.**
- **School and district leadership coordinate academic programs, advising, and counseling to align with best practices.**
  - When a personalized learning path is appropriate for student(s), schools and districts cooperate with other schools and districts to offer digital course experiences for programs available at one school, but not at another
- **School and district leaders use data-driven processes to evaluate instructional delivery of programs using best practices**
  - This includes data derived from assessments, observation data, student and teacher evaluations, and clinical performance data
- **Principals and superintendents monitor faculty and staff performance to ensure quality digital learning instruction.**
  - Teachers are certified in appropriate areas of instruction in Kentucky
  - Principals and superintendents provide opportunities for professional development and training for online and blended learning instruction as technology and digital pedagogy evolve



# Assessment System

- Schools and districts regularly evaluate their assessment system to reflect college and career readiness goals for online and blended learning student proficiencies and gap reduction (e.g. assessment data points include comparison data of digital and non-digital student data, performance data, and gap data)
- Assessment systems for digital learning programs provide useful data and feedback loops that measure teacher effectiveness, student proficiencies, and program quality and include but are not limited to the following elements:
  - Observational evaluations (teacher, student, teacher supervisor, principal)
  - Test scores, performance-based assessments, project-based assessments, problem-based performance, etc.
  - Community-based needs assessments
  - Faculty meeting minutes, Professional Learning Community (PLC) minutes, student council data, public feedback
  - Feedback loop to address personalization of learning path, remediation, acceleration, school improvement planning, Response to Intervention (RtI), and planning
- Systematic review of performance data is used to develop school and district improvement plans.





## Continuous Improvement Planning

- **Schools and districts regularly assess alignment of goals for digital learning benchmarks.**
  - Improve retention and success in online and developmental education.
  - Set reasonable benchmarks for success that lead to college and/or career readiness requirements.
  - Review processes, systems, and instructional strategies to ensure efficient, effective operations and strategic thinking.
  - Make data-driven decisions across the district.
  - Provide students with feedback and support in a manner that is understandable and actionable by the student(s).
- **Schools and districts emphasize differentiated professional learning for continuous improvement of professional skills. This professional learning is specific to online and blended learning courses by discipline.**
- **Schools and districts maintain evidence of parent and community engagement (e.g., log of contacts, signed agreements, parent conference logs, policies, the handbook, parent involvement on the SBDM council, and website).**
- **Schools and districts maintain evidence of a process to monitor the progress of gap students as identified by the Kentucky Department of Education (students with disabilities, English language learners, minority students and students on free or reduced lunch) and have systems in place to address the needs of diverse learners.**





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