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Waiver suspends requirements for civics test, early graduation exams

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News Release

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Waiver suspends requirements for civics test, early graduation exams

(FRANKFORT, KY) – Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman, secretary of the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet issued a waiver today in response to the COVID-19 emergency that suspends the requirement that students who plan to graduate from high school in 2020 pass a civics test, as well as certain requirements for completing an early high school graduation program.

Coleman issued the waiver in collaboration with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) under authority granted by Executive Order 2020-243, which was issued by Gov. Andy Beshear on March 18 and grants cabinet secretaries and

agency heads the power to waive or suspend statutes related to the current state of emergency.

The waiver suspends KRS 158.141, which requires students to pass a 100-question civics to graduate from a Kentucky public high school, for the 2019-2020 school year. While most students scheduled to graduate at the end of the current school year have already completed this requirement, a small number of students had not done so prior to Beshear's recommendation to suspend in-person classes beginning March 16.

There is an online option that will satisfy the requirement, but KDE recognizes that not all students have a computer and internet access. The suspension of this statute removes a barrier to graduation for students who would otherwise graduate this spring.

The waiver also suspends KRS 158.142 (3)(a), which dictates the requirements for completing an early high school graduation program and receiving an Early Graduation Scholarship Certificate for use at a Kentucky public two-year community and technical college or a Kentucky four-year college or university. The suspension excludes current high school juniors who declared their intent to participate in the early high school graduation program prior to Jan. 1 from end-of-course (EOC) examinations.

Those exams are provided to school districts by KDE and are paper-based tests administered in schools. During the suspension of in-person classes and the need to practice social distancing, it is not practical to require early high school graduation program students to report to school for these exams.

The emergency school closures should not prevent juniors participating in the early high school graduation program from completing the program and qualifying for an Early Graduation Scholarship Certificate. Juniors who obtain a qualifying benchmark score on the ACT and who meet all other requirements set forth in KRS 158.142 will remain eligible for early graduation.

The requirement remains in effect for high school freshmen and sophomores, who will have the opportunity to take the EOC exams in future school years.

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