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December 4, 2013

Dr. Terry Holliday, Commissioner
Kentucky Department of Education
1st Floor, Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero Street
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Terry:

Pursuant to the statutory mandate, the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) has completed your annual evaluation. This evaluation was verbally shared with you on October 8, 2013, at the regular KBE meeting in Frankfort. This letter will serve as the official written record of that discussion.

Your performance during 2012-13 continues to be outstanding. The board agrees that you are doing a stellar job keeping the momentum of education reform going and keeping people motivated. We admire your uncompromising insistence on being transformative in order to have a profound impact. Additionally, the board understands that you are pushing for substantive change and concur that it is needed.

Your accomplishments over this past year have been numerous, and we especially commend you for:

- Increasing the CCR rate to 54% and ensuring that more students are college- and career-ready, which is the goal of the entire system. Additionally, the increase in the number of proficient/distinguished schools and districts is cause for celebration.
- Being vocal about the need for increased funding since schools, districts and the department have gone about as far as possible in doing more with less.
- Meeting with the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents board and following through with all of the items that you agreed to pursue. We applaud this approach and see it as key to building those strong relationships that will be needed moving forward.
- Conducting the September 5th Superintendents' Summit, which was received very positively by superintendents. Due to its tremendous success, the board suggests that you do another one in the spring. Also, your follow-up meeting the next day with constituent groups really kept everyone in the loop and made them feel included.

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- Hiring Dr. Tommy Floyd as KDE's Chief of Staff as another positive way of improving communications with superintendents and constituent groups.
- Using electronic communications and social media effectively and better than any Kentucky commissioner of education. The information flows transparently and often to schools and districts to assist them in implementing Kentucky's education system.
- Meeting the goal to get test results to schools at the beginning of August. Additionally, completing visits to all school districts by the agreed upon deadline and meeting with editorial boards across the state are other accomplishments of note.
- Going the extra mile to build a strong relationship with Jefferson County and supporting the efforts of that district's superintendent by verbalizing confidence in the initiatives she is implementing to bring about positive change. Although your provocative depiction of the situation caused some discomfort, you accompanied this by reaching out to all stakeholders to offer assistance and support.
- Providing highly regarded leadership both nationally and internationally. We are very fortunate to have such a passionate educator leading our state education system. We commend your leadership roles in organizations, such as CCSSO, and the positive recognition you have brought to Kentucky's educational progress through features like the recent *Time* magazine article.
- Demonstrating persistence in meeting with state and federal legislators individually to help them understand critical education policy changes that would support Kentucky's education reforms.
- Using a data-driven model in your own evaluation that serves as a model for local district superintendents. It shows that you are implementing what is being asked of them.
- Ensuring broad stakeholder engagement in developing and implementing the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System for use in personnel decisions and state accountability, including pursuing a federal waiver of the timeline to allow time for teachers and principals to transition successfully to the new system and also to make sure the system is valid and reliable.
- Implementing a plan to integrate career and technical education into the department, a tremendous accomplishment that emphasizes career-ready needs to play an important role as part of Kentucky's education system.
- Launching the Best Practices website as a resource which schools and districts can access for both sound operational and innovative practices.

While there are many positives that we have just emphasized, some areas for growth also exist. We ask that you address the following in your professional growth plan for next year:

- The board asks that you continue to concentrate on relationship building and creating an atmosphere of mutual respect with superintendents and education constituents. The education community needs to be united and pull together to address critical legislative and educational issues. This may require strategic moderation of your direct communication style in favor of a consensus-building approach. Your actions in this area last year have been well-received and more attention to this will build trust and collaboration.
- The goals in the areas of proficiency and achievement gap were not met. We request that you develop and implement strategies that will get progress in these areas back on track.
- The board commends the setting of goals for Program Reviews but is concerned about trying to measure these without the funding needed to support it.
- You indicated that the New Teacher Center has suggested that the TELL Survey goal on page 3 of your self-evaluation be reworded. Please provide the board with new wording for this goal.
- While the progress of Priority Schools cited on page 5 of your self-evaluation is laudable, the board asks to see increased progress in those schools over the next year and strategies for achieving this progress.
- The board needs clear understanding of the timelines for the implementation of the science standards and science assessment, development of the social studies standards and assessment and implementation of future Program Reviews.
- While we commend your administration of and performance on the commissioner's 360 survey, we ask that in the coming year you focus on improving the indicator worded "The Commissioner respects and listens to all levels of employees", since it is the one area that was rated by KDE staff as below 85%.

In looking at next year, we ask that you come back to us at the December 4, 2013 board meeting with well-defined performance goals and measures for 2013-14.

The board genuinely thanks you for another outstanding year and appreciates the opportunity to work with such a talented professional. We urge you to stay the course and continue moving our education system forward.

Sincerely,

Kentucky Board of Education members

Roger L. Marcum, Chair

Brigitte Blom Ramsey, Vice Chair

Trevor Bonnstetter

Jonathan Parrent

Grayson Boyd

Nawanna Privett

Leo Calderon

William Twyman

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