Steven L. Beshear
Governor

Terry Holliday, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CABINET
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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July 10, 2013

Dear Local Board Chair and Superintendent:

As you know, our goal in Kentucky is for every student to graduate from high school college/career-ready. In order for students to reach their highest potential, educators need to reach theirs. That is why we are developing new teacher and principal Professional Growth and Effectiveness Systems based on common and clearly defined standards. The systems will be piloted statewide with a specified number of certified staff in each district in the 2013-14 school year and implemented with all certified staff in 2014-15.

It has become clear that a companion set of effectiveness standards focused on the emerging challenge of leading next-generation teaching and learning efforts are essential for superintendents as well. It is my hope that we will be able to align the teacher, principal and superintendent evaluation procedures to drive a model of professional growth and learning for all educators.

This spring, I met with the Superintendents Advisory Council concerning superintendent evaluations and standards. In order to improve transparency relative to superintendent evaluation, the council made three recommendations to which I have agreed that are explained below.

First, by December 2013, each local board and superintendent are to work together to incorporate three specific components into their current superintendent evaluation process. The components align with the Kentucky Board of Education's goals for student achievement and operational efficiency and directly relate to the board's and superintendent's responsibility for the academic performance of the district as well as its financial well-being. These include the local board reviewing and discussing the following with the superintendent in an open board meeting and documenting the discussion in the board meeting minutes:

- District delivery targets – Review and discuss the progress toward district delivery targets for student proficiency, college/career-readiness, graduation rate, closing the achievement gap and whether the processes have been put in place to ensure the teacher and principal effectiveness systems start with all certified staff in the 2014-15 school year.

- Resources/support systems – Review and discuss the effectiveness and efficiency of district operations including whether the superintendent has: established a balanced operating budget for school programs and activities; leveraged district resources to attain their highest and best use to improve student learning; complied with legal, ethical and policy standards; and effectively communicated the district's budget and resource allocation to the local board.
- Facilities/support systems – Review and discuss whether the district has shown improvement on the TELL Kentucky Survey questions relating to facilities and resources.

Second, assurances and evidences that these critical conversations between the superintendent and local board of education have occurred will be provided to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) by district staff through an easy-to-use Superintendent Evaluation Diagnostic that will be available in ASSIST, an online tool that districts and schools are currently using for continuous improvement plans and processes. Specific instructions on how to use the Superintendent Evaluation Diagnostic in ASSIST will be provided later this month to district staff. The diagnostic (a series of multiple choice questions) must be completed and evidences (board minutes where financial management, facilities and student performance have been discussed) uploaded by district staff into ASSIST no later than December 20, 2013.

To summarize, the three areas listed above are to be publicly discussed by the board with the superintendent in a local board meeting and documented in that meeting's minutes by December 2013. Once this occurs, the appropriate district staff will complete the Superintendent Evaluation Diagnostic process in ASSIST by December 20, 2013 that will provide KDE with assurances and evidences that the discussions took place. For this year, that completes the added requirements related to superintendent evaluation.

Beginning in the spring/summer of 2014 and continuing until a new superintendent effectiveness system is fully implemented for all districts, the process described above will then become part of the local board's regular summative evaluation of the superintendent with the same three areas incorporated as a part of the summative evaluation that is publicly discussed in a local board meeting and documented in the meeting minutes. Then, district staff will complete the Superintendent Evaluation Diagnostic in ASSIST to provide KDE with the assurances and evidences that the discussions took place as part of the evaluation.

KDE is not requiring superintendent evaluations to be submitted to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), but reminds you that they are subject to the Kentucky Open Records Act.

As for future years, the Superintendents Advisory Council (SAC) directed the Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) to engage with the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents (KASS) and the Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA) in the development of a unified set of new superintendent standards and evaluation procedures. The three organizations are to work together to finalize a superintendent effectiveness system in time

for implementation in the 2015-16 school year. KASA started this work back in 2011-12 when it became clear that there was a critical need to more clearly define expectations for the performance of new superintendents. KASA piloted the standards with the 2012-13 new superintendent training cohort. A statewide pilot is scheduled for the 2014-15 school year.

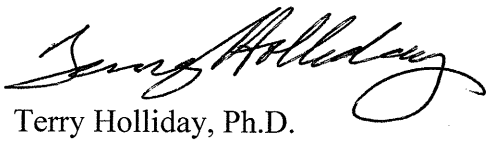
Finally, the SAC recommended that by December 2014, local boards adopt the new superintendent effectiveness system or a locally-developed system meeting the same criteria. Any locally-developed system will require Kentucky Department of Education approval. Again, the new superintendent effectiveness system would be piloted statewide in the 2014-15 school year with statewide implementation in 2015-16.

I discussed these issues in my Superintendents' Webcast on April 29 of this year, and based on feedback that superintendents provided, they appear to be on board with the plan outlined above. A significant majority of superintendents who voted in an online poll indicated support of the SAC recommendations, awareness of KASA's work to develop new superintendent standards and an effectiveness system, and the timeline for implementation.

I hope you will consider this letter carefully and start working on implementing the three new components into your superintendent evaluation process immediately and complete the work by the December deadline of this year. Look for details on the use of the diagnostic process in ASSIST later this month.

If you have any questions on the requirements or process, please direct them to Dr. Tommy Floyd, KDE Chief of Staff, at (502) 564-4201 or via e-mail at tommy.floyd@education.ky.gov.

Sincerely,



Terry Holliday, Ph.D.

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