

Role of email author
DA=District Administrator,
SA=School Administrator,
T=Teacher,
S3=School Support Services,
SB=School Board,
S=Student,
P=Parent,
C=Community Member,
L=Legislator,
K= K Group,
CP=College Professor

C - Email 3/10/16 **How should we measure school success?** I believe we should measure school success by measuring student growth as well as a school's investment in all students and personalized staff development along with its robust return on that investment.

P - Email - 3/10/16 **What do you expect from our schools?** I am a parent in Mason County. Teacher evaluations should not be tied to student assessments. Period. These assessments, such as kprep, are pointless for students as well. When the results return in October of the following school year principals and committees pour over the data but not one person has ever pulled me and my child aside and said, "he struggles here let's help him." Not once. So that further solidifies to me that these test are driven by funds from the Feds. The data they mine is more precious to you than my child. I can prove that. Last year I refused the kprep for both of my children. It is my right as a parent to do so. They were made to sit for hours with a lunch lady in an empty class all testing days. No alternate work, nothing to read, no drawing, no nothing. Then they couldn't attend the end of the year field trip because they didn't give a good faith effort. That tells me their score matters more than their well being. I have A/B students. Good kids who try hard but they were treated like outcast during testing because I, as their parent, decided this was best for them. That is when you know there is too much emphasis on testing and not enough on education. Our school doesn't have a gym teacher or a librarian but we can find time and resources to spend two weeks before kprep having pep rallies and parties and writing 3.8 paragraphs about how we plan to do well on the test. Pitiful. Studies prove children who have more recess and less homework and testing thrive and excel further in reading and math.

T - Email - 3/11/16 **What do you expect from our schools?** First of all, thank you for allowing teachers the opportunity to give feedback on the accountability system. I have taught 5th grade in Kentucky for almost 16 years, and I have more concerns now than I ever had before the implementation of Common Core, and especially the new accountability/testing requirements. 5th grade students are currently tested in the subjects of Math, Social Studies, Reading, and Writing (On-Demand). We spend an entire week testing (for several hours a day) at the end of the school year. The pressure put on the students during this week of testing is unbelievable, and I believe, excessive for 10-11 year old children. I also do not believe that the current test accurately reflects their knowledge nor their achievement/growth. Being the Writing teacher, I directly deal primarily with the On-Demand preparation and practice. The students come to me at the beginning of the school year in August, struggling to write a complete paragraph. Some, sadly, even struggle with writing a complete sentence. By the end of their 5th grade year, the majority of my students make great improvements in their writing, and they are proudly able to organize their thoughts into paragraphs and produce entire essays, speeches, letters, etc. It is unfortunate that this growth and success are not accurately reflected by the On-Demand scores, and thus, cause the students to feel unsuccessful. I personally believe that student growth and achievement would be better and more accurately assessed by testing the student's writing skills at the beginning of the year, and then testing the student again at the end of the year to individually check for the personal growth of each student. I do not believe growth should be measured by comparing one entire group of students to the group that came before them. I also do not believe that neither growth nor success can be shown by comparing an entire school to another school via school rankings. This inevitably causes unethical practices and unnecessary competition between school districts. It also causes teachers to feel the pressure to "teach the test" even though we, as individual schools, deny pressuring teachers to do so. Having taught for 16 years, I have seen a lot of changes in the education system come and go. This is the first time I have felt as disheartened by our accountability system. Even though each grade level is supposed to have equal academic pressure for student success, the accountability of the test scores explicitly falls on the grade levels/teachers that are tested, instead of being consistently monitored and emphasized throughout each grade level. There has to be a better, more consistent way to assess growth and achievement. Another issue I have with the current test is that I receive no anecdotal feedback on my students' individual On-Demand scores. As a classroom teacher, I am expected (and required) to give my students feedback they can apply to future writings to make continued improvements, yet the state fails to provide this kind of feedback to me when scoring the test. Without an explanation of the mistakes my students are making, it is impossible to know what my students need to work on in the future. Grading and scoring any writing task is a very subjective, and the general scoring guide released from the state does not provide much insight.

T	<p>What do you expect from our schools? Kentucky educational accountability is a system of unrealistic goals set so high that many schools must cheat in order not to be punished by tyrannous district leaders while the curriculum is spoon-fed to students so that they can graduate in four years without ever being held accountable for their education and not learning one of the most important lessons in life—responsibility. The word “cheat” is not the issue here because this system has created a monster for teachers—damned if you do, damned if you don’t. The words that need to be addressed here are “unrealistic goals” set for students and teachers. When Kentucky created the levels for senior portfolios years ago, it was hell. Teachers had to make students proficient or better in writing without giving them any feedback on their writing, crazy, and the distinguished level’s criteria was set so high that published novelist could not achieve it. Now, the teacher-evaluation standards are ridiculous. The accomplished level should be renamed “god-level” since to maintain that teaching style, one would have to be a super-human being—one more example of Kentucky setting impossible goals. I have taught in this mess for twenty-one years, and it isn’t getting any better and students see themselves as tests’ scores and hate school because they are pushed to achieve in areas they are not equipped for cognitively and this causes our children with disabilities to see themselves as failures while, at the same time, the curriculum is watered down to meet the graduation rate and not hold students who are able accountable by making them take some responsibility for their education. A good cure for this mangle may be to not have one test or curriculum for all ability levels. Some students should be regular ed. and some should be vocational ed. and their education should be a geared toward this. Furthermore, teachers are not treated as professionals but must be monitored constantly like psycho child killers. How upsetting to have an advanced degree and not be trusted to do what is needed for students. Some central offices employ too many administrators to monitor teacher actions but not enough teachers to give students a well-rounded education. Who are these people who set for teachers and students these unachievable goals, unfair rules and waste millions in taxpayer dollars on unfair tests and overpaid administrators? Have they ever been in a classroom other than as a student? Do they realize that teachers can’t take a child with a 67 IQ and make him/her perform at the same level as a student with an average IQ? Do they realize that as drugs become more prevalent in our society, many more of our students are going to be born with irreparable learning disabilities. Teachers can’t fix this. These students will need more life-skill-type educational opportunities instead of calculus and chemistry. Teachers have been pushed to breaking points and many great educators are leaving this field because they have been asked to do the impossible or must compromise their morals and cheat to keep from being severely punished on the district and state levels. This must stop. To compete with other countries, we must create two educational systems especially for high-school students—one for regular ed. and one for vocational ed. with two different accountability systems and teach our students responsibility by holding them accountable.</p>
T - Email - 3/10/16	<p>What do you expect from our schools? I expect our schools to give students an education that is going to help them be successful in the next grade and in the future. The standards are written so each year builds on what was taught the previous year. I’m not sure that some teachers even know what some of the standards say at their grade level. For example, I would guess that a lot of primary teachers have no idea what the writing standard says at their grade.</p>
same	<p>What school characteristics are most important? High expectations for teachers and students. Not just for accountability areas, but for every aspect of the standards</p>
same	<p>How should we measure school success? I think there should be an assessment given in the fall and in the spring to measure student growth from the beginning of the school year to the end. I think that every subject should be part of the accountability system at every grade level (Reading, Math, Writing, Science, and Social Studies).</p>
same	<p>How do we ensure all schools are successful? Stop changing and adding things to accountability in the middle of the year. It seems like every other year or so we find out in the Spring that something is going to be different about the accountability system. It very much seems like the accountability system is designed so teachers, students, and schools are not successful. Every time schools start scoring well, which I would think would be the goal, the system changes and we start from square one. I completely understand that change is necessary and a good thing most of the time, but it always seems like the change with accountability makes us less successful instead of more successful. It’s very frustrating as a teacher and parent to know that your students and your own child are going to be labeled with a number or a title (novice, apprentice, proficient, distinguished) and that’s how their viewed. It’s never taken into account that those students might start the year as a novice and be an apprentice by the end of the school year. Again, I am not stupid, I know that there must be some sort of way to measure student growth and to hold teachers accountable, but I just don’t think our way is the best way. It definitely needs some improvement.</p>
same	<p>How should we celebrate school success? I think success should be celebrated from the beginning of the school year until the end. I think it should be about how much progress and growth students make from August until May. Assessment shouldn’t be this big thing that happens in May - it should be a natural part of what we’re already doing. K-Prep has brought so much testing with it – we do Aimsweb to see where kids are throughout the year, we do MAP testing three times a year because that is supposed to predict what students will score on K-Prep, we do our classroom formative and summative assessments, and then we have K-Prep testing at the very end of school.</p>

T - Email 3/16/16	What do you expect from our schools? Social Studies cannot, must not, be treated as an afterthought. Social Studies cannot be adequately covered in other content areas, not can other content areas afford to lose time on their own content to cover another. These teachers need their standards, and students need an adequate understanding of history so as not to repeat and to be civic-minded adults. Add a social studies test if necessary to cover US, World Civ., Ecodomics, etc, if needed instead of the EOC.
same	What school characteristics are most important? Program Review needs to go away. Immediately. All it has accomplished is to take away time & resources from other content areas. Most of these "lessons" are contrived activities that serve no purpose other than to document for PR.
same	How should we measure school success? COMPASS testing should still be an option. With many of our students going to out of state colleges, KYOTE is of no benefit to them. Also, only allowing 2 windows to achieve CCR status puts these students, and their respective schools, at a disadvantage. The KYOTE also puts more work on teachers in that ELA teachers will have to be trained to score other schools' essays. Where is that time going to come from?
same	How do we ensure all schools are successful? If ACT is the true marker for CCR, then let's focus testing on the ACT instead of having so many other types of tests. Instead of ODW, why not make the ACT essay a requirement?
same	Miscellaneous Comments, Questions If the lack of science content on the ACT is a concern, then add a science test.
SA - Email - 3/7/16	<p>What do you expect from our schools? I have so many thoughts about school accountability. I know it is a necessity. We MUST be held accountable for how we are preparing students for college and/or career. In my 21 years in Kentucky, it has been done in a variety of ways. Honestly, the one we have now seems about as "fair" as any we've had before. The fact that there are numerous factors that decide a school's score is fairer than what we've had in the past. We as educators like that things like growth are part of our accountability. When you get a 6th grader who reads on a 2nd grade level, it is going to be difficult to get that student to proficiency in one year. But, we SHOULD be able to "grow" that student and having that in the accountability makes sense. I can't say that I have a perfect system for how schools should be held accountable. What I can say is that I don't believe the "score" a school gets in any particular year is necessarily indicative of the work the teachers and staff are doing. I truly believe that the staff of a school can work their tails off, implementing numerous best practices, and the school could still score "needs improvement" or whatever "bad" classification is placed on them. I've often said that I truly believe that (for the most part) you could take the teachers of School A (that is not scoring among the top 30% in the state) and move those teachers to School B (that is scoring in the top 30% in the state) and both schools would score close to the same way the scored before the change. I guess what I am trying to say is that just because a school does not score Proficient, Distinguished, School of Distinction, etc..doesn't mean the staff in that school are bad educators. As a matter of fact, I believe many of the educators at School A are a WAY better fit for that school than many of School B's teachers would be. There are so many factors that can determine how a school scores. There is so much more to it than a test that is taken near the end of the school year. I do believe that there are exceptional school leaders and teachers that can and do make a HUGE difference in schools. If School A is performing poorly, there may be a new leader out there somewhere that could come turn the school around. I just firmly believe that is not always the case. It is not always the fault of the principal and/or teachers. As I stated before, there are so many factors that have an effect on how a school performs. Bourbon County Middle School has been Proficient for the last three years. (After the latest quality control we were actually classified Distinguished for 2015.) We are very proud of the great things going on here. We certainly can continue to grow, and we plan to do so. We've been working hard this year to ensure that we continue to improve. It has been an interesting year. We've had 5 teachers out for extended periods of time with pregnancies and the birth of their children. We've had another teacher out for numerous weeks after finding out she had cervical cancer. About 2 months into the year another teacher abruptly retired due to a disability. Of these 6 total teachers, 4 of them teach in areas that will be tested in 2016. Although our substitute teachers did a fine job in their absence, there is nothing like having the certified teacher in the room. My gut tells me it HAD to affect our overall level of learning. If we are unlucky enough to not score as well as we have for the last 3 years I can see these issues having something to do with it. Does it mean we all of the sudden forgot how to teach or implement best practices into our school? Obviously that would not be the case. We are doing everything we have in the past and more! But things like these can have an impact on a school's score. It doesn't mean a school did a poor job of teaching that year. Unfortunately when the scores come out, the public (and even some educators) look at the scores and decide how good the teachers and leaders of a school are based on that score. It's almost like if you are a "proficient" or higher school you take a deep breath. I just don't think that is fair. I wish there was another way to determine how a school is doing. I'm well aware that when the rubber hits the road it is about getting students to proficiency. That is our job and we take it very seriously. It is not always easy. One way that might make it more "fair" is to classify how schools are performing over a period of time, not every year. A 3 year cycle of accountability might make more sense. Over that 3 year span, a school could be held accountable for all of the students it has gotten to proficiency and all of the students that they have "grown" over that period of time. This may not be the perfect system, as none likely are. But it would be a better picture of how a school is doing over time rather than in one year. When a school implements new strategies, hires new people, gets a new principal, it takes time to get those things where they need to be. Maybe a 3 year cycle would be better? Regardless, I think it is very important to keep growth in the accountability system. As I stated earlier, when you get a student who is far from proficiency, if you help them improve toward meeting that goal, it means a lot!</p> <p>We are also looking forward to having social studies and science back in the accountability system. This needs to happen asap.</p>

C - Email - 3/16/16	<p>What do you expect from our schools? My first concern is that the educational system in general and vocational classes specifically have turned into a numbers game. I believe too many financial and curriculum decisions are being made from a numbers matrix that combines enrollment, career paths, test scores, past graduation rates, etc. without regard to the best interest of the students. Part of the credentialing process for NIMS is for me to interview the administrators of the school and I constantly hear that they had to do this or that to make numbers. My interpretation of this based on my last visit is that they are making decisions to insure that the students can test well for the ACT. In other words, teaching to the test. There is an additional issue with this and it relates to instructional time in the Vo-Tech classes. The 55 minute blocks are simply not enough time for students in the trade classes. Period. Even a double block of 110 minutes is still barely enough time to be effective. On a previous NIMS visit I had an instructor tell me that he is about to retire early because the minimal amount of time in the class is simply not worth the effort and feels personal defeat in the goals of teaching the trade.</p>
same	<p>How should we measure school success? The no child left behind initiative - now the ESSA – in my opinion is what has destroyed the educational system and has caused the exact opposite. While politically it is nice to say that every child succeeds, and they do thanks to the ever revolving and lowering of standards at which success is measured, ultimately no child will excel. What good is a diploma when everyone is granted one? The no child left behind initiative - now the ESSA – in my opinion is what has destroyed the educational system and has caused the exact opposite. While politically it is nice to say that every child succeeds, and they do thanks to the ever revolving and lowering of standards at which success is measured, ultimately no child will excel. What good is a diploma when everyone is granted one? Once again, my NIMS evaluations allow me to interact with students and talk to them while they are in the classrooms and shop. In a recent visit, an example came up where the student couldn't do a simple subtraction of decimals without a calculator. But this same student took enough remedial classes to meet the number required on the ACT test. This is evidence that the system is teaching to the test and not to the advancement and betterment of the education of our youth.</p>
same	<p>How do we ensure all schools are successful? In decades past, vocational classes/schools were generally thought of as the catch all for students that did not excel in traditional classes. However, with the revitalization of industry along with the many technological advancements, it is now more than ever important to develop a career ready workforce in hard skills. These hard skills can lead to a multitude of job placement opportunities with pay scales equal to, and in many cases more than, a college graduate. You can spend hours upon hours going down worm holes on the internet over the subject, but periodicals ranging from the Wall Street Journal to Modern Machine Shop (a trade publication) monthly if not weekly publish articles warning that the skills gap is real and could even jeopardize the national security of the United States.</p>
same	<p>How should we celebrate school success? I also know that the local community (Greater Louisville Area) has lost out on several major companies opening or expanding due to the lack of skilled labor. The one most notable for me was the Harley-Davidson motorcycle expansion. While not the only reason for them choosing another location, lack of skilled labor was a considerable reason why they did not choose to relocate here in Kentucky.</p>
SA - Email - 3/16/16	<p>What do you expect from our schools? I am very concerned about the changes with changes in the Accountability System due to the Novice Reduction. I agree it's a "moral imperative" that we reduce the number of novice in our state but the system of measuring this is fundamentally unfair to schools that have worked hard to be successful in the past. I am principal of a K-8 school that has close to 600 students, with almost 80% of students qualifying for Free/Reduced Lunch Program. We have been a successful school in the past- Our Elementary has received the Distinguished label for the last two years (Proficient before that); our Middle school received a rating of Distinguished/ School Of Distinction/ High Progressing School this year. In the 2014 school year we had under 10% novice in almost all areas (roughly 150 students tested). With the changes in the Accountability System for Novice Reduction our scores would have gone down tremendously due to a slight increase in the number of novice in 2015- even though the percentage of novice was still much lower than any school in our region. The schools that had a large percentage of novice in 2014 that reduced their percentage of novice slightly were rewarded/received additional points even though their percentage of novice was 3-4 times higher than our school. A perfect example was an area where we had 13 out of 152 (8.6%) students score novice in 2014 ; in 2015 we had 13 out of 140 (9.3%)- the same number of novice but fewer students causing a higher percentage. Another school in our district had 14 out of 38 (37%) students score novice in 2014; in 2015 they had 14 out of 42 (33%)- the same number of novice students but more students in 2015 causing a lower percentage. Based on the new formula even though we had fewer novice both years and a lower percentage both years we would receive zero points (and based on the formula that would be over 16% of the total accountability- plus growth) but the other school will receive a "full " allotment of possible points- even though they have more students novice and their percentage of novice is 3+times what ours is. I don't think anyone could say the second school is a higher performing school than ours- every other facet of the accountability system shows that- but due to the changes in the accountability system the second school will look like they are outperforming us. To say that the new way of calculating scores is unfair is an understatement- schools that have worked hard for years to be successful will be punished whereas schools that show a little growth will be greatly rewarded. There has to be a better way that will address the percentage of novice a school has while not penalizing schools that have worked hard and shown a commitment to students for years.</p>
T - Email - 3/17/16	<p>What do you expect from our schools? First, we have got to include a plan for alternate assessment up front in planning a new accountability system. In addition to academics we should support and encourage the inclusion of daily living skills and alternate demonstrations of growth for kids that academics (complex academics) are not functional. We also need to start early by looking at what preschool students are expected to do. The EKARS eval is great, but the Brigance assessment does NOT align with pre-K standards or developmentally appropriate instructional needs. Districts are telling teachers to not teach standards and teach the TEST/Brigance so they don't lose funds. Program reviews are a LOT of work, but helpful in helping us plan whole school focus and including the arts in education.</p>

T - E-mail - 3/7/16	<p>Miscellaneous Comments, Questions Attendance should be part of the transcript. A degree earned (I say this with tongue in cheek) by a student with an IEP should be noted as such. Many students with an IEP earn the same degree as a non IEP student but rarely had to work as hard. Social promotion must end. I have 9th grade students who have a 2nd or 3rd grade reading level. (how does this happen?). I also have students who have yet to learn how to multiply and divide at the ninth grade level. I know a calculator is a good tool to have but some of the basics , such as multiplication tables should never be dismissed.</p>
T - e-mail - 3/7/16	<p>Miscellaneous Comments, Questions I REALLY want our students to get the most out of their education, but really and truly, I don't think they should be punished by attending school into the end of May/first of June. Especially, when they start the first week of August. Our school has always started early, and students, as well as teachers are so worn out by the end of May we can barely stand each other. I also, think this late ending date, hurts our test scores as well. My thinking is if a county is declared an emergency for weather, or whatever the reason, that should be taken into account when it comes to make-up days. No one should have to suffer through what Mother Nature gives.</p>
T - e-mail - 3/7/16	<p>Miscellaneous Comments, Questions I have been concerned for some time about the status of vision screenings / vision exams in our schools. While we routinely have vision screenings in grades 3,5 and 7, I feel that it is important to do a thorough, valid eye exam upon entry into Kindergarten. It is very easy for a child with visual issues to go unidentified up until Grade 3, especially if there was an invalid exam done at the time of pre-school entry. Once the eye report from the invalid exam is turned in , the parents have "met" the requirement put forth by KRS 156.160 (1) (g) and the child is not seen again by an optometrist / ophthalmologist until required after a vision screening in 3rd grade. By eliminating this barrier to learning(poor vision), I hope to increase our student's achievement in the classroom. Regulation: KRS 156.160 (1) (g) requires proof of a vision examination by an optometrist or ophthalmologist. This evidence shall be submitted to the school no later than January 1 of the first year that a three (3), four (4), five (5) or six (6) year old child is enrolled in public school, public preschool, or Head Start program. National Statistics: 1 in 4 students have some type of undiagnosed visual problem. Most are very mild, but all visual deficiencies can negatively impact learning. Since 80% of what we learn comes to us through our visual sense, it is easy to understand that if our vision is impaired, our learning will be inefficient. Rationale: If our students cannot see clearly, their process of learning is inefficient, regardless of the skills of the classroom teacher. This will negatively impact their acquisition of fundamental skills, the foundation for all future learning. Although most eye reports are submitted upon entry into preschool, many preschoolers tested were unable to be assessed by their eye care physician. Reasons cited include, but are not limited to "Not able to assess", "uncooperative", "Too young to test", "Too shy – wouldn't respond". While the preschool exams should not be eliminated, because they are effective for some of the students, they should not be entirely relied on for overall eye health as the child enters Kindergarten. As children grow, their visual needs change and should be monitored periodically. Eye exams should be mandatory upon entry to K. The students are better able to respond to visual prompts, making the exams more valid. Exams that are valid will result in better eye care for students. Those who are diagnosed with conditions such as amblyopia may be able to get the care they need so that this reversible condition can be treated and corrected. Vision can be saved in many instances. Amblyopia treatment is effective up until age 8-9, depending on the child. Once the therapeutic threshold is gone, the child is left with the resulting vision, only to be corrected by glasses, if possible. Referral for special education, if needed, is expedited. The students can get the academic help they need much faster. Those students who are functioning at an "apprentice" level with an undiagnosed / untreated eye condition has the potential to score " proficient" or "distinguished" with proper eye treatment. Eye exams should be mandatory upon entry to 6th grade. As I said before, as children grow, their visual needs change....they are reading in greater volumes, longer assignments, smaller print, more screen time, etc. At this time, a vision screening is requested on the 6th grade physical form, however, it may / may not consistently be addressed by the pediatrician doing the physical exam. Therefore, any needed referral for additional eye care may / may not happen. The mandatory requirement of a 6th grade entry eye exam, eliminates this issue. It is my hope that you will take the time to look into this issue further... Since all health information is required to be put into Infinite Campus, you may check numbers statewide to see information such as: # of preschool vision exams recorded / # marked invalid, # of K exams / # marked invalid.....compare with Pre-School numbers, # of 6th grade physical forms turned in / # of eye screenings logged / # of valid eye exams turned in as a result of the 6th grade physical. As children are checked and rechecked, in between the mandatory testing times, all eye exams should be submitted to the school nurse so that they can be: Logged into Infinite Campus, Child's vision can be monitored for changes that will adversely affect his/her classroom performance. Shared with the Teacher of the Blind / Visually Impaired of the school district -- if the nurse sees a need for further vision evaluation. Nurse / TBVI can make recommendations for student visual needs to the teacher(s) instructing the student in order to maximize the child's classroom experience.</p> <p>Thank you for considering all the information / ideas that I have put before you. I hope that we can see some positive changes so that are students may have the best educational experience possible.</p>

C - E-mail - 3/12/16	<p>Miscellaneous Comments, Questions You better believe I'll be there . . . as you make your way to the western end of the Commonwealth; in 2002, when I retired the first time, I made my little retirement speech (through tears) and and said, "You won't be able to find enough teachers, one day. And I am sorry that I can't take it either. What I'm really sorry about is that all of you" --speaking to my colleagues who had to stay behind-- "are not having as good a time as I once had, because . . . I had a ball. I told myself that when I could no longer have a good time and teach my kids, that I hoped I had enough years to retire." I worked 20 hours a week at an adolescent day treatment center for the next five years, and then finally retired (the 2nd time).</p> <p>And now, I am 67-years-old, and I am in the classroom AGAIN -- as a full-time "Critical Shortage" teacher, as my prediction came true -- they can't find enough teachers. I am horrified--saddened--devastated. Two days before school started, I was sitting on the beach, but then . . . I went from "Teacher of the Year" (in the last century) to, "We really need to hire you because we can't find anybody else." And, I'm better than nothing--sadder yet is that . . . well . . . I'll bring that speech with me. :(My ADT principal compared me to "an honored elder" in the "tribe". As long as I can keep learning the paperwork and find enough hours in the day to do it, I can still make a little difference, but I'm going to wear out shortly. I'm on my second batch of steroids for the year. I've had a great time again -- worn completely out -- the kids taught me about everything I needed to know about how to write on the board (!), and I've watched teachers wide-eyed in astonishment as I limped into the building, saying, "Gosh, we're sure glad you're here, but . . . why?" Since I got my Life teaching certificate in 1970 at UK and have spent nearly all that time in Kentucky schools with a few years in the Department of Defense Overseas System, I've got some pretty good ideas about "why", and I'm scared to death that I now have a lifelong career, because I don't see too many other people standing in line for my job. :(My kids are great (most of them), and I don't intend to desert them--the system--not so much. I didn't expect this kind of job security. My college advisor (way back in the 60s) said, "You're one of the last to get a Life Certificate -- I bet it will come in handy one day. The man was apparently a fortune-teller. I hope to spend some time crafting some ideas that don't sound so much like a rant -- as some serious suggestions. The bottom line is that somebody is going to have to start taking care of the teachers, or it's not going to make any difference, whatsoever, how many mandates and reforms that are created. Nobody will be home -- in the classroom. :(Kentucky's children will be fending for themselves with a bunch of pinch-hitters and old folks who really just need to be playing Bingo for Tootsie Rolls. I'm just really lucky to be in a school where the kids respect their elders -- I chose it carefully -- there were seven schools in a radius of 40 miles that were missing teachers the first day of school. I got lucky.</p>
S3 - e-mail - 3/14/16	<p>Miscellaneous Comments, Questions I have NO idea why anyone would think reducing the # of instructional days is good for our students. According to Education Week, March 14,2016, the state of Kentucky ranks 29th in the 50 states and District of Columbia. Less instructional time is NOT going to improve our ranking. One of the main reasons for reducing instructional time is to help boost the deteriorating income generated by our State Parks? Um, I'm a fairly intelligent adult and fail to see how this will generate income to for the State Park System. When I had children in public schools, we'd schedule our vacations according to their days off and those days off had no impact on whether we'd vacation at a State Park or go elsewhere. Anyone dedicated to vacationing at State Parks is going to find the time to do so, whether their kids get 12 more days of non-school time or not. I'm a classified employee so my salary is going to be affected. I consider that a secondary cause for concern. My primary concern, as a resident of this state and an employee of the state's public school system is that what we DON'T need is less time in a classroom. We provide a safe environment, food, supervision, opportunities to develop social skills....the list goes on and on (and this is on top of the obvious learning opportunity).</p> <p>How do we expect the students from Kentucky to compete with students from around the world for jobs in technology, industry, arts, etc if they have less instructional time? I'm horrified that this thought was event entertained much less given the weight to require a vote</p>

C - e-mail - 3/15/16	<p>Miscellaneous Comments, Questions Thank you for taking the time to travel around the state and listen to the people who are on the frontlines in Kentucky education. I hesitated to make any comments last night because my role hinges on me having a positive relationship with the administration of both schools, and I fear that my observations about things that need to change could be received poorly by the administrators who have a stake in those things. I have served intermittently as a substitute teacher while serving in my primary role at Shelbyville's hospital as violence prevention coordinator, where I implement a program into the local high schools that addresses bullying, dating violence, and sexual assault. In addition, my wife is a kindergarten teacher in another district. My comments don't really have anything to do with school climate/safety, substitute teachers, or early childhood education (though I do think the impact school climate and early childhood education have on academic achievement is underappreciated), but in those two roles I have had the unique experience of being able to see hundreds of classrooms and to work collaboratively with dozens of teachers. When I talk to teachers about things that make it difficult for them to be effective, or about things that would make them more effective, almost all of them talk about classroom size. You mentioned that you want Kentucky education to be informed by the people most closely involved with students, and I think if that's true, classroom size and/or teacher-to-student ratio needs to be on the forefront of the minds of everyone in Frankfort. It's possible to cut classroom sizes in half without cutting the overall budget. The problem is that the kinds of cuts that you would have to make would most directly impact the people closest to those who make budgeting decisions, so it's hard to imagine a scenario where it would actually happen. It would require changes in the ranking system and pay scale in Kentucky education so that only principals and superintendents had a higher salary than teachers. You wouldn't have to increase teacher pay to do this, but you would have to [sometimes significantly] decrease pay for many positions, including principals and superintendents. These kinds of changes would incentivize the best teachers to remain teachers rather than being "promoted" to positions outside the classroom, and they would ensure that people outside the classroom are there because they actually want to be there rather than because they have a higher salary there. It would also require personnel cuts in administrative positions, administrative assistant positions, and other positions outside the classroom like instructional coaches. In addition to this, the schools would need to focus less on infrastructure and technology. Like you, I'm not a lifelong Kentuckian, and the first impression I had when I moved a few years ago was that Kentucky has the nicest educational buildings I've ever seen. That, in and of itself, is obviously a good thing, but it actually becomes an indictment when you consider the negligible correlation between building aesthetics and academic achievement. There's also a lot of overspending in unnecessary professional development that would need to be cut. I could go on and on about potential cuts, but the point is that, if school systems truly value student success, they need to pour their money into the places that would most positively impact students. My second comment is about how we define school success, which was the overarching question for last night's town hall. My fear is that defining success is a dangerous endeavor. Unless you define success in the most all-encompassing way, you will be presenting school systems with tremendous temptations to only pursue what has been defined as successful. One temptation is to focus less on potentially important things that are left out by how success gets defined; we see this where fields like the arts have been neglected. A second temptation is to make it easier for students to achieve success as it has been defined, which ultimately makes them less successful in everything they will face outside the education system. If we call a student successful by giving them a piece of paper after 12th grade and they go into college or a career and fail, then it is ultimately a failure on the school's part to define success in a way that was not true of reality. Failure can be a great preparer and motivator of success, so we can't allow students to continue to move up the rungs of the educational ladder without actually taking a step. This happens all the time, and this is what happens when we define success and pressure schools to have such and such percentage of the students meeting that definition of success. Teachers are pressured to pass students that don't have a passing-level understanding of content. Instructional time is stolen by practice tests and assemblies about how to get better test scores. This all comes from how we define success. The schools that are the most successful are the ones whose students succeed when they leave, and if our definition of success doesn't reflect that reality, then we're doing it wrong and hurting students in the process. I'd love to know your thoughts on these issues, and I hope the rest of your tour goes well. I am looking forward to seeing our schools improve because of your efforts.</p>
T - e-mail - 3/23/16	<p>How do we ensure all schools are successful? All schools do something everyday and get no credit for: Limit barriers to learning. Could schools use data to prove they have reduced barriers to learning as a part of their accountability score? Research shows that participating in physical activity and that physical education IMPROVES student attendance, test scores, participation and enthusiasm for other academic subjects, motivation to learn, and reduces discipline referrals. Evidence also shows that effective school health education reduces student participation in behaviors such as smoking, heavy drinking, school misbehavior and violence.</p>
	<p>Miscellaneous Comments, Questions My name is Daniel Hill- a national board certified elementary PE teacher here in Lexington. I've had the pleasure of being a physical educator over 15 years now! I am here as a state board member of Kahperd_ KY association of health, PE, recreation and dance. I would like to personally and on behalf of our almost 1000 members - THANK YOU for providing these town hall KY Listens opportunities for teachers. Most of the students here in Fayette County, my own two sons included, have excellent schools that provide high quality health and PE programs! Not every student in Kentucky is as lucky. KY is currently 1 of 7 states without an elementary PE requirement; and 1 of 10 states without a middle school requirement. Our current HS requirement is only 1/2 credit for all Four years of high school which puts us dead last out of all 50 states in terms of PE requirements. Most parents I speak with about this are shocked! With the recent passage of ESSA - every student succeeds act CONGRESS included Health and PE as a part of a student's WELL ROUNDED education. Now federal money can be used to improve health and PE! This is a huge opportunity for the state of Kentucky! I am challenging all Kentucky education leaders to follow the lead of our national leaders by elevating health and PE requirements in KY. On behalf of KAHPERD we WOULD like to THANK YOU again for this opportunity to speak here this evening.</p>

T - e-mail - 3/23/16	<p>Miscellaneous Comments, Questions Once again, I'd like to say thank you for coming to Campbellsville last night to meet with the education stakeholders in our area. I've been teaching for over 16 years, and I have never had the opportunity to meet our Commissioner of Education in person, much less have the Commissioner come to my area and invite me to attend. I think it speaks very highly of you and what you want to accomplish for the students in Kentucky. I'm writing to you this morning because of an encounter I had with two high school students last night, after the Town Hall meeting at Campbellsville University. Both of these young ladies go to school with my oldest son. One is in 10th grade, the other 11th. High school students are in the midst of scheduling classes for next year, so, as you can imagine, the lack of an arts career pathway is popping up for these kids and creating conflicts and negative feelings. Both of these young ladies had previously chosen arts pathways - one in music, the other in visual art. And both of them were told this week that they must choose another career pathway to complete before they graduate. In fact, the person to whom these girls spoke took it a step further and told them they should reconsider their college majors because both of those majors (music and art) were almost pointless. I don't know to whom these girls spoke, whether it was a teacher, an administrator, a guidance counselor, or a CCR person, but both of these extremely talented girls were offended and discouraged. I explained to them that they should involve their parents in a dialogue with school administration, because completing a career pathway is NOT a graduation requirement. (I know this because my husband and I recently had that conversation with the high school guidance counselor, concerning our middle school child who will be entering high school and would choose the arts if that career pathway was still an option.) I believe that many high school teachers are simply misinformed about the career pathways, that they have come to the belief that all students must complete one, regardless of whether or not there is a pathway that matches the student's interests or talents. I also believe that many, many high schools are leading students and their parents to believe that completing a career pathway is a requirement, so that the school can "cash in" on that half point bonus. This is NOT happening in the school system where I teach, but I have heard from SO MANY arts educators that their students are being TOLD that the MUST complete a pathway in order to graduate, even if it means they have to drop out of band, choir, art, or drama courses. Students and parents follow this path blindly, totally believing that the schools are being honest with them about the "requirement". So, I'm writing to ask you to please make some kind of statement to high school administrators and superintendents clarifying the career pathway situation. Last night, you said to all of us in the room that "it is wrong to pull kids out of limited-tested areas" to place them in career pathway courses for the sake of that half point. There are many, many superintendents, principals, guidance counselors, and CCR counselors who need to hear that and put it into practice. And there is a multitude of parents and students who need to be aware that the career pathway is not a graduation requirement, and that their schools may be being less than honest with them about that.</p>
P - e-mail - 3/24/16	<p>All of these items I just stated are barriers to learning and can be limited by elevating health and PE in KY! In closing I wanted to quote my middle school health teacher: "At some point in your life, you will have days that all you care about is your health!" My son Ethan is 15 years old has Autism. He has an IEP and will receive an alternative diploma. I would like for him to be able to have the college experience and pick up some employment skills if he chooses after high school. What can we do for him? He is like most teenagers and doesn't know what he wants to do other than be a dinosaur digger. I am going to try to come to the Bowling Green meeting.</p>
T - e-mail - 3/24/16	<p>What do you expect from our schools? I expect schools to provide teachers with the tools (more computers or tablets) in order for teachers to use technology in Elementary school classrooms. I also expect them to support teachers in not only supplies but in student behavior. (I am very blessed to teacher where this happens, and I believe its essential to be a successful teacher.)</p>
same	<p>What school characteristics are most important? I believe an involved staff in extra after-school activities is very important, but I also believe in respecting teachers time. To many after school events run into teachers family time, but I believe in teacher presence at after-school events.</p>
same	<p>How should we measure school success? By growth. Not by "expected" growth but by student growth, whether they grow 2 points or 15, some students are not capable of the full growth. While others are. When we judge teachers on students "expected growth" we miss their actual growth.</p>
same	<p>How do we ensure all schools are successful? By keep good data on student learning. Also by not overwhelming teachers with paperwork, allowing them time to plan and work in their rooms. When we focus all our time on paperwork being put into CIITS or other programs it takes away from teachers preparing lessons, assessments, and making their room great. While I know some paperwork and recording of data is imperative, we have taking it a little far. I also believe in observation, administrators being in and out of classrooms to ensure student engagement and learning is happening. I believe administrators should allow space (again I am very blessed to have amazing supportive administrators!) but be involved.</p>
same	<p>How should we celebrate school success? By providing teachers/schools with classroom supplies, if your school is successful then your school should get extra money to give to teachers for needed items or cool new technology items to be used in the classroom. I think more that food and parties teachers would love to have more items to use in their classroom for engagement and learning! Instead of spending hundreds on catering divide it up to each "grade level" to spend as they need! Celebrate success by providing more classroom items needed to promote engagement and learning.</p>

C - e-mail - 3/23/16	Miscellaneous Comments, Questions Through my entire life I have been drawn to the arts. Through the years I have grown in my talent with the full support of my family. I plan to involve the arts in my life career. However, now that I plan my highschool schedule, I cannot take a class due to the recent cut as a pathway. The pathway slot ensured an art class into my schedule when all others were full with required classes. I now cannot pursue my passion on a daily basis and receive needed instruction to help my talent grow.
S - e-mail - 3/27/16	Miscellaneous Comments, Questions As an eighth grade student who will be transitioning over to the high school completely next year, I have seen first-hand the effects of budget cuts on the arts on students, and it isn't good. With the recent cut of studying arts as a major, many, many students are not happy with the mandatory career path. Many of my friends wish to be in art classes, but instead are forced to take classes that may not help in their career at all. Also, what will happen to the high school students currently majoring in art? Will they be forced to not qualify for an art career or college because the school takes away their major? I've seen many of the students hurt by this decision, as you are taking away many students' outlets for emotion and creativity, not to mention taking classes that many find to be the only they can enjoy with this stunt of yours. Are you really so ready to turn a blind eye to so many students' mentalities and futures? Are you really going to cut out such students for multiple agriculture paths? Just because the arts aren't physical labor or mass production doesn't mean they shouldn't be considered jobs. You have the classes, so why not make use of them for a change? I do hope you reconsider your options before hurting half the students at Taylor County schools.
T - e-mail - 3/28/16	Miscellaneous Comments, Questions I have been an educator in Kentucky for 20 years now. For 16 of those, I have been a counselor. Part of my duties has often been administering standardized tests, disaggregating data, and analyzing and interpreting data, especially in explaining test results to parents. That being the case, it is beyond any logic that I recognize why we keep trying to re-invent the wheel. There are tests (achievement mainly) that have been around for years and years, have their validity proven, and are cost effective. Why do we keep trying to invent something that already exists???? If we want to go deeper, then accompany those with performance events. If you want students to demonstrate mastery of a subject that is easily demonstrable, then HAVE THEM DEMONSTRATE! Want kids to prove they understand how to add/subtract/multiply/divide? Have them balance a ledger or checking account. Please, please, PLEASE quit spending untold millions on tests that mean LESS THAN NOTHING outside the boundaries of Kentucky. If we want our kids to be global citizens, test them on broader, recognized scales such as the SAT, ACT, IOWA, CTBS... Any number of tests that have years of validity. It's almost impossible to explain all the changes to parents, much less justify them. I'm just about out of white-wash...
C - e-mail - 3/28/16	What do you expect from our schools? The current accountability system is too complicated and has so many different designations that it appears almost everyone can claim they are doing a great job or should be celebrated for something or other through the system. If the system were simpler, the truth about student learning would be more readily apparent.
same	What school characteristics are most important? I think it's very important that an accountability system should not allow schools/districts to be labeled as proficient or distinguished unless they are making significant, measurable improvement in the achievement levels of each demographic grouping of students who have been traditionally under served.
same	How should we measure school success? The new system should get rid of the "gap kid" language. It is both demeaning and meaningless and it allows the masking of low scores by some groups of kids. It also sends a message to the uninitiated that this is a smallish group of students when in fact the kids in the designated "gap group" comprise over 50% of all our students. They are not the exception; they are the reality of our schools!
same	How do we ensure all schools are successful? If possible, please try not to further narrow the curriculum as a by-product of the accountability system.
same	How should we celebrate school success? Please fight as hard as you can against any changes in either legislation or board policy that would compare districts and/or schools with those of similar demographics as a part of an accountability system. The KY Supreme Court ruled in 1989 that "common schools shall provide EQUAL educational opportunities to all KY children regardless of their place of residence or economic circumstance." This would appear to require standards that are uniform -- and which 25 years of experience have taught us should be high!
SA - e-mail - 3/28/16	Miscellaneous Comments, Questions I appreciate the fact that the Town Hall meetings have been established and that we have a leader in KY that is listening. If I had actually prepared something to speak about tonight, I would have gone further to say that our teachers in our District work hard and ALL of them want what is best for students to be successful. They are drastically underpaid for the time that they put in and the pressures that they feel to perform. They deserve far more than to be measured by their student's success (or lack of success) on standardized assessment like the ACT. We DO need to give our teachers and our schools more latitude to teach our students the skills they need to become adults (Finance, interest, loans, credit scores, etc.).

T - e-mail - 3/30/16	<p>Miscellaneous Comments, Questions Unfortunately I was unable to attend the town hall last night. However, I do have some talking points. As far as the accountability model is concerned, I think the program review is a cumbersome and monotonous waste of time. We are already doing things to promote the arts in our classrooms on a daily basis. Here at South Hancock, we have a wonderful music teacher that does a Christmas and Spring drama production every year. She has a choir group and teaches piano and violin lessons as well. We have a great art and P.E. teacher as well. We do things like GoNoodle in our classrooms, learn through song, and incorporate arts daily. Why should we have to document or prove that we are doing these things? For fear of being audited? Our time could be better spent planning, collaborating with teachers, or going to PD's that we value and want to participate in. Adding the World Language Program Review is just another thing to add to our already huge to do list. I also don't understand why there is a Writing Program Review when 5th grade is tested over writing. We need more money for professional developments and teachers should get a say in what they want PD in. Also, when the state hasn't released new on-demand writing prompts or exemplary's in years, how do we have anything to go on? The rubrics for state testing are way too general. And sometimes the questions on the KPREP are not even standard based, which is ridiculous! The shift needs to go away from too much testing, to more focus on individual students and how we can help them. Our students are given the MAP test three times a year in Math, Reading, and Language Arts. Plus they have a KPREP scrimmage, actual KPREP, and weekly tests! It's too much for these fifth graders' brains. By the time testing rolls around, they are getting close to being maxed out. Especially when the last thing they are tested over is writing. I like the way the Social Studies standards are now, so why should they change? The sad thing is, different grade levels aren't teaching all subjects, because we are so heavily tested. In fifth grade, we barely teach any science at all because we are tested over reading, math, writing, history, government, and economics. If there is anything to change about Social Studies, it should not span America from the beginning to present day. It should be more focused on a shorter amount of time.</p>
SB - e-mail - 3/30/16	<p>What do you expect from our schools? Post secondary and "life" ready students, Create future ready leaders to help define our local community, Partner with families and organizations to create good citizens, health, and wellness.</p>
same	<p>What school characteristics are most important? (We just met with community members to revamp our mission/values/goals...these are the words they used) Innovative, United, Leadership, Inspiring, Proud, Empowered</p>
same	<p>How should we measure success? in the classroom and courses : using at least 3 different methods of assessment, schools/students: Academically, real life problem solving skills, attendance (can't work or go onto secondary school if you don't show up!)</p>
same	<p>How do we ensure all schools are successful? These next 2 I read to you , but here they are in writing... How do ensure all schools are successful? Don't make us "cookie cut-outs".The plan can't be the same for every school we are not all the same and our kids are not all alike. Customize the success plans and define what "success" means at each distinct.</p>
same	<p>How should we celebrate success? By paying it forward! One of our schools considers their work successful because other schools (and in other states) ask for their advise. They are asked to teach their skills and plans every year at Model Schools Conference. We have plenty of schools in Ky that can learn from each other.</p>
C - e-mail - 3/30/16	<p>Miscellaneous Comments, Questions I will be in attendance tomorrow night in Hazard and I'm hoping to speak. In the meantime, I may reference this document I created for the Colorado Education Initiative targeted at education leaders (administrators) that puts the focus on what they are held accountable for: test scores, attendance and graduation rates and how if we do not address the health needs of our students, we won't be able to address those 3 listed. It really talks to education about how important it is to address the biggest barriers of learning- and how addressing them will help raise test scores, attendance and graduation rates. And, overall, how embedding school health and the WSCC model (Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child) into accountability measures will benefit all. (Attached reports to e-mail not included here.)</p>
C - e-mail - 3/30/16	<p>Miscellaneous Comments, Questions I so enjoyed the education town hall meeting at Campbellsville University. I am also very concerned about the future of education in Kentucky. I speak as an educator and a parent of four children currently enrolled in public schools in Kentucky. We need to see more accountability in schools for : the arts- including drama, visual arts, music and dance, Physical education, we should not be ranked 50th for PE requirements in high school and what a disgrace that we do not even require a wellness policy in middle school. We have middle school students who only move when the walk through the hall to their next period for the entire school day for the entire year. We need kindergartens doing hands-on projects instead of bringing home 12 worksheets a day and taking tests on computer.</p>
P - e-mail - 3/30/16	<p>What do you expect from our schools? One of your questions was, "What do we expect of our schools?" As a parent, I expect our schools to teach my children what they need to know in order to become productive and contributing members of our society. I expect them to be taught all subjects in all grades (currently their elementary school does not teach social studies in 4th grade or science in 5th grade because those subjects are not tested at those grade levels). I'd also like to see us move back towards a kindergarten program that was centered around "learning through play." Five-year olds should be learning how to share and take turns, how to win and how to lose, how to be curious and love learning; not how to sit still in a chair for hours on end and do paperwork. They should be working on gross motor skills as much as, if not more than, fine motor skills. And they need some down time in the afternoon. If not a designated 'nap time', they at least need more than 5 minutes of 'put your head on your desk while the teacher checks e-mail'. I'd like to see elementary schools that let kids be kids!</p>

Same	How should we measure school success? You asked how we (as educators) best let THE STUDENTS know how they are doing. I think the best type of test to use is a norm-referenced test as opposed to a criterion-referenced test that is currently in place. A test that shows a student and a parent and a teacher where a child is compared to his or her peers with a percentile score is more telling than a test that says a student is "distinguished" or "proficient" or "novice". Really, what does that tell us?
Same	Miscellaneous Comments. We need to lessen the emphasis on testing. It sucks the fun out of school way too early (even in elementary school) and perpetuates the drop-out rate. My children's elementary school had the whole campus take a scrimmage test; how does a kindergartener take a practice standardized test? Why? I'd rather my child spend that time at school being read to or playing with peers and learning social skills. I recently worked as an aide at an alternative high school; those students spent almost as much time testing and/or preparing for testing as they did being instructed in a classroom with a teacher. They prepared for and took the ACT, the Compass test, EOC exams, KPREP, the ASVAB, and the MAP test in addition to regular classroom tests and finals! I know testing is not going away, and I believe testing in and of itself isn't bad, but the number of tests students are required to take and the emphasis placed on these tests is too much.
SA - e-mail - 4/4/16	Miscellaneous Comments. I'm just following up with information for you to pass along to the commissioner regarding TPGES. When I am finally finished with mini and full observations, I will have conducted 64 of them from August - April. Each evaluation takes hours to complete, with full observations taking considerably more time than minis. Mini Observations this Year: pre-observation, observation, write the evaluation, post-observation conference = approximately 4 hours per evaluation. I completed 32. This equals to about 128 hours spent of my time. Full Observations this Year: pre-observation, observation, write the evaluation, post-observation conference = approximately 6 hours per evaluation. I will have completed 35. This equals to about 210 hours spent of my time. Summatives this Year: gather data, write the summative, summative conference = approximately 2.5 hours. I will complete 24 of these. This equals to about 60 hours spent of my time. This is a total time spent of 398 hours on evaluations. This does not include the time for meeting with every individual certified staff member to assist in development of their professional growth plans, reflections, and student growth goals. An estimation of the time spent for these would be 2 hours per person for 34 people. This would be a total time spent of 68 hours. A grand total estimation of time I have spent on TPGES this school year alone by the end of the school year (not including PPGES) is 466 hours. That is nearly 67 school days if that was all I did the entire day on those days. I obviously spent a lot of time at home working on these in order to meet the needs of my students, staff, and families - but it significantly impacted the amount of time I was available for them overall.
SA - e-mail - 4/4/16	Miscellaneous Comments. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak about issues impacting our public schools. I particularly was impressed by the opportunity you allowed students to speak and the serious responses you provided. After I sat back down, I realized I hadn't touched on a couple of specific issues which I believe could be capitalized on to improve the education atmosphere, community involvement, and offset budget restrictions. First: The most promising program I have seen in eight years of looking at the issues around education for tying it back into the community is "The Work Ready Community" initiative. It is the only program I have seen which specifically ties education and jobs and community improvement together. Their vision seems to be the strongest (of the ones I've examined) and they have a strategic plan that is in the communities. Second: Kentucky's confusing and conflicting taxing laws are bringing hundreds of thousands of dollars into counties for special interests which could be tied to education, but aren't. I am only familiar with Lee County, but the issues seem to be consistent across the region of Eastern Kentucky in the smaller, poorer counties. Library Boards raise millions of dollars to build new, buildings instead of partnering with schools to increase program offerings and hours of operation. Farm Extension Offices do the same thing. Instead of increasing opportunities and helping fund agricultural, leadership, community development, and arts programs, which are all part of their charter, they build buildings. I believe the health departments are equally enamored with the "edifice complex", because in Lee County, they have increased their size by 200% in the last couple of years. And, except for a small cash reward, the Soil Conservation District authority does nothing for education. Strong leadership pointing out the loss of revenue for education and creating community involvement at the your level would go a long way toward correcting these deficiencies at the volunteer, local level.
T - e-mail - 4/4/16	How should we measure school success? I have had the opportunity of working on benchmarking committees in developing the alternate assessment system. I do strongly feel that all children can learn and every child can succeed but I maintain it must be on their individualized levels. Students are not alike; they achieve through different avenues.
Same	Miscellaneous Comments. I am a high school special education teacher with 20+ years working beside students with moderate and severe disabilities. I would like to see accountability for this group of students to become more student centered with the focus for their individual goals of achievement. As you well know, the current system measures students with moderate and severe disabilities with the same core content standards as their same age, regular education peers. In my opinion, this is not meaningful to low-incidence students. Last night's Town Hall was such a well-attended and enjoyable event! I am certainly glad that it was held in our area and pleasantly satisfied that I attended. It seems that we are moving toward a better focus on students, as the Commissioner stated last evening. This is a step in a more positive direction. I am excited to see what the future holds for our children in this great Commonwealth. Thank you for valuing the voices of your Kentucky educators. I sincerely appreciate your taking the time to read my comments.
SA - e-mail - 4/4/16	Miscellaneous Comments. I'm just following up with information for you to pass along to the commissioner regarding TPGES. When I am finally finished with mini and full observations, I will have conducted 64 of them from August - April. Each evaluation takes hours to complete, with full observations taking considerably more time than minis. Mini Observations this Year: pre-observation, observation, write the evaluation, post-observation conference = approximately 4 hours per evaluation. I completed 32. This equals to about 128 hours spent of my time. Full Observations this Year: pre-observation, observation, write the evaluation, post-observation conference = approximately 6 hours per evaluation. I will have completed 35. This equals to about 210 hours spent of my time. Summatives this Year: gather data, write the summative, summative conference = approximately 2.5 hours. I will complete 24 of these. This equals to about 60 hours spent of my time. This is a total time spent of 398 hours on evaluations. This does not include the time for meeting with every individual certified staff member to assist in development of their professional growth plans, reflections, and student growth goals. An estimation of the time spent for these would be 2 hours per person for 34 people. This would be a total time spent of 68 hours. A grand total estimation of time I have spent on TPGES this school year alone by the end of the school year (not including PPGES) is 466 hours. That is nearly 67 school days if that was all I did the entire day on those days. I obviously spent a lot of time at home working on these in order to meet the needs of my students, staff, and families - but it significantly impacted the amount of time I was available for them overall.
SA - e-mail - 4/6/16	Miscellaneous Comments. My fear is that we are playing a cat and mouse game. EXAMPLE; High schools are playing the CCR game with testing. If a high schools replies that they do not do this they are not being truthful. I want my students at the high school level to be educated, truly educated in life long skills. Be productive citizens and be ready to work, go to school or join the military. Use these years as exploratory in their field of interests. Right now we test. Test. Test. Retest to meet that benchmark. Hours and days are wasted. Yes there needs to be accountability, but not in this way. We are educating students to know how to take a test. Students slip through the cracks at the early stages of education because we are testing test test. Not life skills, life lessons, ethics, hard work, drug free citizens. TEST. All we do. Real life. Real world. Real teaching. What happened to it? Accountability, yes we must have standards, test the students, next year the same test different age scoring guide, and repeat. What do they know? We always fly the plane while we are building it. We set ourselves and students up for failure. An example, in March our high school received AMO just this week changed it again because of ESSA. It has not been a month.

Student - e-mail - 4/7/16	<p>Miscellaneous Comments. Due to the decision to cancel the art career pathways you have stopped me from pursuing my passion. You enforce us to take needed classes while allowing us time to take classes that we enjoy. However with that new decision you've taken that away as well. By cutting the art career pathways you have cut my dream. You have made it to where I and many like me are not eligible to take the classes that will help us pursue what we enjoy most in life. Without the art career pathways I no longer can enjoy and pursue the arts. Now that you have cut these options there is no room in the daily schedule for so many students to take art classes. With the needed classes that you require you have cut any option for me to take an art class. With your recent decision you have made it impossible for me to take the classes I've dreamed of for years. I now can not get needed instruction to help my talent and passion. You decided to cancel the arts career pathway classes which would give me needed instruction. But only the arts were harmed. Every other pathway have all the classes they need. So now kids have all the help they will need, that is except for the kids like me.</p>
T - e-mail - 4/8/16	<p>What do I expect from our schools in terms of arts education? I expect schools to not merely help students to become college and career ready, but also LIFE ready; and that includes providing meaningful learning in the arts. Learning ABOUT the arts is not the same thing as learning to DO an art. So I want schools to build literacy in the arts: teach children how to sing, read music, play an instrument, draw, sculpt, act, build sets, and dance. At the elementary school this should be an introductory exploration of all of the art forms, and the middle school students should go deeper in understanding and begin to focus on the art form that particularly holds their individual interest; and at the high school, each student should have the opportunity to really dig into one or more arts forms that provides his or her best avenues for artistic expression. Courses at the high school level should be available in all four art forms. They should be varied and multi-leveled in order to help students gain the strength of artistic skills necessary for a lifetime of using the arts to express themselves and more fully appreciating the artistic expressions of others. I direct the Immanuel Baptist Church Orchestra in Lexington. We have about thirty members from the ages of 15-95. Some of those members are students, doctors, teachers, builders, engineers, computer programmers and operators, etc. They use their school preparation in music to enrich their lives and the lives of others on a weekly basis. I don't know of many single subjects in school that are as useful in continually enriching and balancing lives as music. In a technological age that has the potential to be very dehumanizing, our children need to build a capacity in understanding and communicating in the arts that will last a lifetime. I want to</p>
Same	<p>What school characteristics are most important? Research has confirmed that the single most important factor in student success is a highly effective teacher. You would not assign a teacher ignorant of French to teach a French class. But currently we are certifying and delegating many non-arts teachers to teach the arts disciplines in our elementary, middle and high schools. These teachers are, I am sure, fine teachers, and they can teach students ABOUT the arts---but only someone who has DONE the arts can teach another how to DO the arts. Since SB1 in 2009, Fayette County has lost eight percent of their arts specialist teachers at the elementary level. Sixty-four percent of the teachers teaching the History and Appreciation of the Visual and Performing Arts in the high schools of Fayette County have no artistic background and no teacher training in the arts. In Jefferson County, over half of the elementary schools do not have arts specialist teachers while others have world class arts specialists teachers. Certifications must be revised and standards must be in place for those teaching the arts discipline. That is not the same as using the arts to enhance learning and engage students in other subjects. Those are legitimate uses OF the arts, but that is not study IN the arts. In music, that means learning to sing, play an instrument, construe artistic meaning from a symphony or a bluegrass tune, compose, improvise, etc. The lists are similar for the other arts. That kind of study requires time set aside to specifically learn the skills and concepts of each art discipline. That kind of study builds capacity for a lifetime of inquiry, consumption, and participation in the arts. Regulations must be put in place that has some minimum time requirement for arts disciplines study on a weekly</p>
Same	<p>How should we measure school success? Further, as long as there is high stakes assessment and accountability, where schools are ranked against each other, the focus will always be on validating adult competency rather than helping children succeed. Gaming the systems becomes an important factor. Children end up paying the price. They lose their art teacher so a school can hire a reading teacher to boost reading scores. They lose time in their arts classes, because they are pulled to do extra remediation to boost math scores. Students are counseled into career pathways that may or may not be in their best interests and are cut out of elective possibilities that include music, theater, dance, and visual arts as schools are incentivized to do so through the potential of extra accountability points. School decisions should be focused on the success and well being of children—not adults. School effectiveness should be measured against a standard of proficiency, and if all Kentucky Schools meet the standard, they should all be duly identified as such. Ranking schools, using cut scores is as inaccurate a measure of school success as grading a classroom of Rhodes scholars by the bell curve method. Let's set a standard of expectation, and if all schools in the Commonwealth meet it, then they all should be considered proficient. Set a benchmark for needing improvement, and those who fall below get extra help. We need to take the gaming out of accountability. We need to use assessment to help us, help students improve. Arts program accountability must remain a part of school accountability. However, the program review process must be made simpler. Kentucky has spent thousands of dollars and millions of manpower hours sifting through program reviews, and because they</p>
Same	<p>How Do we ensure all schools are successful? First, fix the unqualified teacher permissions for teaching the arts and protect time for teaching artistic skills and concepts. Time on task and a truly qualified teacher will solve most of our arts deficiency problems. Second, establish a “gold standard” for arts education programs so that everyone knows where “there” is. Provide some real guidance on how to get “there,” by identifying great models across the state where programs emulate that standard and have implemented innovative ways of achieving it. Identify schools that fit into similar demographics and facilitate the sharing of ideas and strategies that worked for “gold standard arts schools” in those demographic groups. The KDE staff should serve as a resource for helping schools find grants, resources, and professional training in the arts. Set aside a state “grant money pool” each year for schools who would like to apply for financial assistance to implement new arts offerings, innovative arts strategies, etc.</p>
Same	<p>How should we celebrate school success? Kentucky has specific learning goals that set a minimum expectation—that schools develop all students’ artistic skills and capacities. Anything less than this, is below expectation. There has been some discussion of emphasizing the importance of the arts by giving awards to schools that for instance have 80% of their students involved in the arts. On reflection, I think this diminishes the fact that the arts are identified as core subjects in the curriculum. In my view, that is recognizing schools for performing below the minimum expectation to develop students’ talents and interests in the arts. First, establish that gold standard for arts education based on national opportunity to learn standards and identify those schools that meet that standard. Identify schools that are doing creative and innovative things with their arts programs. Spotlight student achievement in the arts through publicizing the student achievements of those selected for the Governors School for the Arts. Publicize school and student arts achievements in state arts education associations’ student events (all-state groups, statewide assessments, and other achievements), gather and disseminate data on arts scholarships in Kentucky. Use “gold standard” programs as models-and highlight them in KDE publications. Upscale the KDE webpage for the arts to promote these kinds of truly meaningful achievements. Ensure, through regulation, that arts program data is required as part of the school report card. Such data might include: staffing credentials and the number of arts staff, course offerings, resource allocation, time allocations, facilities, after school enrichment activities, and arts program and student achievements.</p>
C - e-mail - 4/8/16	<p>Miscellaneous Comments. Thank you again to you and your team for a great town hall meeting. I would like to again express my concern for the lack of diversity of those that attended last night. If I can help take the questions to the individual you are trying to reach I would be happy to serve. I also would like to share my 2 cents worth about Kentucky schools. I love Fayette County Public School and our new superintendent, Emmanuel Caulk, is a breath of fresh air. I think we need to look at how to better support out wrap around services. The state is moving to do more with college and career readiness. But how will are children get there if they are not ready for kindergarten. Let's not set our children up to fail before they have even started. I have already spoke to Manny about some possible ideas for our per-k families. I look forward to great things.</p>
C - e-mail - 4/8/16	<p>Miscellaneous Comments. On behalf of all Kentuckians I would like to extend gratitude to Commissioner Pruitt for these Town Hall Meetings to hear from stakeholders about defining successful schools in the Commonwealth. I believe this effort to gather input from stakeholders will provide the Kentucky Department of Education with a wealth of feedback on which to design the next schools success model. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires us to reconsider all that we have been doing in education for a good number of years. Alignment with this new law is imperative as the state considers a new design for accountability</p>

Same	<p>What do you expect from our schools? • A well-rounded education that is inclusive of all traditional core subjects which includes the visual and performing arts. Like other core subjects, the visual and performing arts instructional programs should be discipline-specific, not simply integrated into other contents. • All instruction, including the visual and performing arts, should be provided by highly-qualified content specialists with teaching credentials specific to the discipline being taught. • An education for all students that centers on accommodating for individual needs, and provides student access to all instructional programs.</p> <p>• High quality curriculum and instruction built on research-based standards. • Schools that effectively use all resources, staffing, and best-practice strategies to ensure that each student is working up to, and achieving, his or her potential. • Schools that involve the community and are inviting to those traditionally outside the walls of the school building.</p>
Same	<p>What school characteristics are most important? • A clear vision for student success in all areas, including the visual and performing arts, and an action plan with clear goals to achieve student success. Woven into that plan should be: • A student-centered environment. • Community involvement. • Teamwork and collaboration among school leadership and staff on behalf of achieving individual student success. • An open and positive environment. • Love for students and the educational process. • Utilization of ongoing reflection and review processes in order to improve instruction and instructional programs. An eye on continuous improvement. • A clear plan for professional learning which leads to best-practice teaching behaviors and content expertise.</p>
Same	<p>How should we measure school success? • Classroom based assessment of student progress, quality curriculum based on standards, and instruction. De-emphasize standardized assessments in the accountability system. Consider alternatives such as classroom based performance tasks and stealth assessments. Measure the adequacy of opportunities to learn provided by the school (as defined by educators with specific expertise in the content and processes of each subject area). Measure how well administration and leadership supports instructional programs and facilitates the improvement of teacher effectiveness. This is a key component to school success. Measure student successes within individual capabilities and potential at the school level. Traveling from point A to point B is a different journey for each and every child. School success should be based on individual student progress. Accountability percentages tend to encourage administrators toward allocating more funding and support where there is the most return in accountability points. In Kentucky we have witnessed points and percentages taking priority over individual student growth. Create an accountability system that will minimize or eliminate the “chasing points” game. Keep adults accountable and measure student progress in all core areas including the visual and performing arts. Don’t let important learning drop off the table and don’t allow students be victims of accountability. Keep the arts as part of the accountability model and program reviews are a good way to accomplish that. <i>(Program quality reviews have been used in the United Kingdom since the 19th century. Perhaps we should take a look at what they are doing.)</i></p>
Same	<p>How do we ensure all schools are successful? • Schools classified as unsuccessful should get assistance from KDE in identifying turn-around teams that partner with schools to develop and implement improvement plans. Consider removing the authority of SBDM councils in unsuccessful schools until turn-around is achieved. Collect models of success to share across the state, and employ successful schools as mentors for struggling schools. Work to create a culture of success by supporting schools and avoiding penalizing them. Use site visitations (e.g., program review audits) to work with schools in the improvement of instructional programs. Getting assistance into schools in a partnership format goes a long way. Team with state education associations to develop a reservoir of trained auditors. Provide for outstanding teachers by nurturing new teachers and placing high emphasis on effective research based professional learning.</p>
Same	<p>How should we celebrate school success? • School success centers on student success. Celebrate student successes first. There are thousands of opportunities to do so every day. Every student can be successful in his or her own light. Provide equal recognition for student success whether it be athletic, artistic, or academic. Provide recognition that makes it “cool” to achieve at a high level. Using main stream publicity, celebrate schools that develop instructional programs which enable students to achieve at high levels and which provide high quality opportunities to learn. Include multiple measures of success on the school report card—including instructional program quality and success, along with student improvement and achievement.</p>