



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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BOARD FOCUSES ON NEED FOR SCHOOL FUNDING

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – At today’s Kentucky Board of Education meeting, Commissioner Terry Holliday warned of teacher layoffs and an increase in the number of school districts that will fail financially if they do not receive a restoration of funding in the upcoming legislative session.

“With sequestration, district bailout of the Kentucky School Board Insurance Trust (KSBIT), and budget cuts, we are headed for the ‘perfect storm’,” said Holliday. “By next March or April, we predict 10-12 districts will fail to meet their basic financial commitment and we will see pink slips like we’ve never seen before.”

Holliday said in the last three years Kentucky has lost an equivalent of 1,800 full-time teachers. He said sequestration, KSBIT and continued inadequate funding will mean the loss of 1,500-2,000 more teachers or teacher assistants.

“These are real people, real layoffs and they can’t continue,” Holliday said. “We are losing our most important resource – our classroom teachers.”

The need for improved school funding in Kentucky was a recurrent theme throughout today’s board of education meeting.

In other business, the board placed the Fleming County school district under state assistance based on results of a management [audit](#) that showed “a significant lack of effectiveness and efficiency” in multiple areas including financial management. The district is operating under a balanced budget but does not meet the requirement for a 2 percent contingency fund. It is the fourth district in the past year to receive state assistance or management due to finances.

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The board also approved 2013-14 local district [working budgets](#) and [tax rates levied](#). This year, 93 of 173 districts levied an optional 4 percent tax rate to make up for a lack of state funding, but Holliday said this has created inequities in funding among districts. Those with a low tax base are at a disadvantage. “There is currently an \$11,000 gap in per pupil spending between the highest and lowest districts,” Holliday said.

At the meeting, the board addressed the issue of school finances by making funding its top priority in the final [legislative agenda](#) for the General Assembly beginning in January. In the 2014-16 biennial budget the board is asking the legislature to:

- restore Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funding to 2009 levels, raising per pupil funding from \$3,827 to \$3,866;
- restore Flexible Focus Funds for professional development, safe schools, extended school services, textbooks and preschool to 2008 levels (*Professional Development \$9,700,000; Safe Schools \$6,200,000; Extended School Services \$19,600,000; Textbooks \$21,700,000; Preschool \$3,800,000 – TOTAL FY 15: \$61,000,000 FY 16: \$61,000,000*);
- provide technology funding to increase bandwidth and pay back a bond that would support district replacement of computers and/or mobile devices with up-to-date instructional devices (*FY 15: \$20,300,000 FY16: \$20,300,000*);
- provide funding that would expand career opportunities and technical skills attainment for high school students in support of college/career-readiness (*FY15: \$7,755,500 FY16: \$7,779,500*);
- support district turnaround efforts that would assist schools, especially persistently low-achieving schools and districts in need of improvement and turnaround (*FY15: \$3,400,000, FY16: \$4,770,000*);
- provide funding for capital projects at the Kentucky School for the Blind, the Kentucky School for the Deaf, a maintenance pool and \$50 million Instructional Device Replacement Bond (*Capital Plan TOTAL: \$62,364,000*)

The board will also pursue statutory changes to require district finance officers to meet minimum qualifications/certification and pursue digital learning legislation.

In an update on the proposed Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) for teachers, the board learned that a [summative model](#) is almost finalized. As it stands now, the model will combine elements of Professional Practice (ratings on the four domains in the *Framework for Effective Teaching*, evidence from measures of effective teaching -- observation, student voice, professional growth plans, self-reflection and district-determined measures) along with Student Growth ratings (student growth percentiles) that will determine an overall performance category of exemplary, accomplished, developing or ineffective and a rating of professional growth – low, expected or high. Where a teacher falls on that matrix will determine his or her improvement plan, how long it will run and whether it will be a directed or self-directed plan.

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The Teacher Effectiveness Steering Committee will consider the PGES plan next week. The regulation outlining the plan is scheduled to come before the board at its next meeting in February with statewide implementation without employment consequences in the 2014-15 school year; it will be used for personnel decisions the following year.

In other action, the board approved:

- the [statement of consideration](#) for [704 KAR 3:305](#), Minimum Requirements for High School Graduation
- [703 KAR 5:080](#), Administration Code for Kentucky's Assessment Program
- [703 KAR 5:070](#), Procedures for the Inclusion of Special Populations in the State-Required Assessment and Accountability Programs
- restoration of school-based decision making (SBDM) authority to Highland-Turner Elementary (Breathitt Co.), Trapp Elementary (Clark Co.), Deer Park Elementary (Daviess Co.) and Horse Branch Elementary (Ohio Co.)
- the first reading of [702 KAR 3:300](#), Approval for school district lease and retirement incentive annuity agreements
- the appointments of Wendy M. King, a teacher at Mount Vernon Elementary in Rockcastle County, and Patti J. Bowman, a parent from London, to the State Textbook Commission
- the appointment of Mike Flynn, a community business person, to the Kentucky School for the Blind Advisory Board
- Commissioner of Education Terry Holliday's [evaluation document](#) along with review of the commissioner's [goals](#) for 2013-14

The full agenda for the meeting and supporting documents can be accessed [online](#).

The next regular meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education is scheduled for Feb. 5, 2014 in Frankfort.

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