



Doc H's Blog

Kentucky Education Commissioner
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Key Education Issues for 2013

Over the holiday season I was catching up on my professional reading. Also, I was tracking education writers and their predictions for 2013. I thought it would be good to summarize what I think will be key issues for Kentucky education at the state and national level.

Funding – Funding for education will continue to be on the front burner. At the state level, we see several key issues that will impact funding. The state pension system reform will require significant resources that will eventually have a negative impact on state education funds.

At the national level, the fiscal cliff deal only delayed [sequestration](#) decisions for two months. In addition, there will be cuts to federal education funds as Congress has to cut \$24 billion due to the two month delay in sequestration.

At the state level, we will see significant discussion over the [report](#) by the [Blue Ribbon Commission on Tax Reform](#). My guess is that this issue will be dealt with in a special session. Overall, my prediction on education funding is that we will see continuing reductions in state and federal funds due to the many pressing issues and lack of willingness to increase revenues.

Programs – Early childhood will be one of the top priorities at state and federal levels. Investments in early childhood provide the best return on investment for education dollars. We will also see a state push to raise the dropout age from 16 to 18. A number of other states will also have legislation proposed. This will be a year where [Title II](#) issues such as teacher preparation and teacher evaluation gain a lot of momentum and the Secretary of Education will release new guidelines for Title II funding that will support this reform agenda. I have absolutely NO hope to see reauthorization of [No Child Left Behind](#) in 2013, however, the state waiver process will inform the debate on reauthorization and lay the groundwork for reauthorization in 2014.

School safety – Everyone agrees that we need to focus on school safety, however, there will not be agreement on specifics. Armed guards have been proposed but funding limitations will hinder that proposal. More focus on gun control laws will be debated and we will see legislation proposed to allow teachers to have concealed permits to carry arms on campus. We will see a lot of debate about reforming mental health. We will also see significant discussions about a culture of violence promoted by media and video games. In the end, I am not certain if much will be accomplished due to the polarization of this issue.

All in all, 2013 does look like a very busy year and a year that I believe will see some significant reform on several fronts. As always, Kentucky educators will be leading on key issues and heavily involved in others.

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