



Doc H's Blog

**Kentucky Education Commissioner
Terry Holliday**



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Progress on a Professional Growth and Effectiveness System

This week, Kentucky made significant movement toward a statewide teacher and principal effectiveness system.

While Kentucky usually is one of the first states to implement education reform ideas, on teacher/principal effectiveness we have moved very deliberately. Why? The research in this field is developing, so there are many strategies but not many proven strategies to improve teacher/principal effectiveness systems. With the recent release of the Gates funded [Measuring Effective Teaching Project](#) results, we are now seeing “causal” relationships between teaching and student learning. Kentucky is replicating the MET project on a state level and hopefully our work will inform the field.

Our significant progress with the teacher/principal effectiveness work has been led by a terrific team of Kentucky Department of Education educators led by Associate Commissioner Felicia Cummings Smith. They have had the honor of working with a stakeholder group that has teachers in the majority. This week, I shared the honor of working with the [Teacher Effectiveness Steering Committee](#) and have included my remarks to that group below.

By the end of the two-day meeting, the committee had made significant progress toward development of key recommendations to guide legislation and regulatory language. The Kentucky Board of Education will receive an update on this work at the February meeting. Also, we anticipate Rep. Carl Rollins filing legislation in February that reflects the work of the group; then the Kentucky Board of Education will implement the regulatory language process in April.

Remarks to Teacher Effectiveness Steering Committee January 23, 2013

In 2009, Senate Bill 1 gave us a new vision for education in Kentucky -- a vision that was grounded in college and career readiness for all students. About the same time, the Obama administration was moving us toward a new vision for American public education -- a vision grounded in improving America's competitiveness in the global marketplace by improving American education. With the announcement of Race to the Top grants and eventually the No Child Left Behind waiver process, the President and Secretary of Education provided the components of the vision.

In response to these initiatives, Kentucky assembled a stakeholder group that articulated our state vision and strategies aligned to the national focus. This has become our strategic plan in Kentucky and is guiding the work of KDE, districts, schools, and classrooms. What I consider to be the most important strategy in this work is teacher effectiveness. As Commissioner of Education, I appointed this task force to develop recommendations for the Kentucky Board of Education to incorporate into proposed

legislation and subsequent regulation -- with the charge to Kentucky Department of Education to implement them through the [Professional Growth and Effectiveness System](#).

Many other states have done this work **TO** teachers. My intent was to do this work **WITH** teachers. While other states have moved quickly to develop models, Kentucky chose to be deliberate and involve the voice of the teacher and other stakeholders in the development of the professional growth system. There were several goals of a growth system that were considered.

- 1) According to the [“Widget Effect.”](#) 99 percent of teachers in states were rated as satisfactory or above while there were significant differences in student achievement between the states. Therefore, a goal could have been to improve the distribution of teacher evaluation ratings so they would be seen as more valid and reliable.
- 2) According to most national reports, the impact of the teacher on student growth and achievement is the most significant school-based factor. Therefore, a goal could have been to improve student growth and achievement.
- 3) My charge to this task force was to develop a system of growth and support for teachers. By improving the observation tool, feedback to teachers for instructional growth, and providing the support for a professional learning system, then Kentucky would certainly achieve the first two goals.

This group has done unbelievable work over the last 18-24 months. We arrive now at a point where we must complete our recommendations for the Kentucky Board of Education and move from recommendations to implementation, monitoring and improving the growth system that we developed.

Terry Holliday, Ph.D.