



Doc H's Blog

Kentucky Education Commissioner
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Legislative Agenda for 2013

As legislators return next week, I want to ask superintendents, local boards and readers of this blog to contact their local legislators to push for a couple of issues.

1 – Raising the dropout age – I recently sent Governor Beshear a [letter](#) supporting this legislation. The legislation is also a priority for the Kentucky Board of Education. I hope readers will review the letter and contact their local legislator to support this important legislation.

2 – Preschool funding – This is a fairly straightforward concept and one that I know local superintendents support. We need to move from the complicated formula that has been used for preschool funding since the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) to a fairer and simpler formula.

3 – Career and Technical Education (CTE) – The Governor, through executive order, merged the Workforce Cabinet CTE program with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) CTE program and placed the merged program under KDE. We need legislation this term to sustain this merger.

4 – Teacher/Principal Effectiveness – Last session we were able to get legislation through the House and a resolution through the Senate to implement the work of our Teacher/Principal Effectiveness committees. The session adjourned prior to the House and Senate agreeing on a compromise bill. A similar bill will be filed when this session reconvenes and we need strong support from all stakeholders to move the bill through quickly. Failure to move the bill through this term could have a negative impact on federal funds and Race to the Top grants.

Finally, I sent a letter to Governor Beshear that expresses my concern about support for our schools. I hope that readers will take time to review this [letter](#) and contact their local legislators to express concern about school funding.

Kentucky has made tremendous progress as evidenced by recent EXPLORE/PLAN scores, AP scores, ACT scores, NAEP scores, and Education Week's *Quality Counts* report. However, we will not be able to maintain our progress without some restoration of funds for schools.

I am concerned about the recent announcement by the Kentucky School Boards Insurance Trust (KSBIT) and the Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA) about the unexpected \$50-60 million assessment to districts to cover shortfalls and the increased costs for districts that will come as result of having to procure new insurance coverage once KSBIT is closed.

Also, I am concerned that federal sequestration (cut of 9.2 percent) will happen in March with impact seen in the 2013-14 school budgets.

Given that this is not a budget session for our legislators should not deter readers from beginning this conversation with local legislators about additional education funding. We do anticipate discussion at some point, possibly in a special session dealing with tax reform. It is critical that education be a primary consideration of any tax reform discussion.

I hope readers will use the information in my letters to the Governor and this blog as you contact your local legislators.

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