



# Doc H's Blog

Kentucky Education Commissioner  
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February 10, 2012

## Kentucky's Work Banishes the Winter Doldrums

It was my honor this week to represent Kentucky at the White House [press conference](#) announcing the states who received the first-round [waivers](#) from No Child Left Behind (NCLB). From the announcement of the waiver process in September, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) team and partners have worked many hours to prepare and negotiate the waiver and flexibility from the rigid requirements of NCLB. I especially want to thank Mary Ann Miller and staff in the Commissioner's Office for pulling together all the components of the waiver and editing the entire application. Also, I want to thank Associate Commissioners Kevin Brown, David Couch, Ken Draut, Hiren Desai, Dewey Hensley, Felicia Smith and their staffs for the extra efforts in preparing the waiver application.

The waiver process actually began in April 2009 as KDE and partners began to plan for the implementation of 2009's Senate Bill 1 ([SB 1](#)). The goal from the beginning has been to have one accountability system rather than two -- state and federal. Having two accountability systems was confusing to parents and schools. Also, the federal system began to lose credibility due to the details of NCLB.

Since April 2009, hundreds of meetings have been held with all stakeholders to gain feedback on the key components of SB 1 that also ended up being the key requirements of the NCLB [waiver](#). These requirements are adopting new college/career readiness standards, implementing a more rigorous accountability model, implementing support for teachers and principals, and increasing flexibility with funding.

The NCLB waiver will have an immediate impact in Kentucky. This year, teachers and students are working with the new college/career-ready standards in mathematics and English/language arts. Schools and districts are planning for the accountability measures of college/career readiness, cohort graduation rates, student growth, closing achievement gaps and Program Reviews in arts and humanities, practical living/career studies and writing. Teachers and principals are working to develop new models for teacher/principal effectiveness. Educators are now supported by the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System ([CIITS](#)) that is the envy of many states. Our partners at the [Prichard Committee](#) and [Kentucky Chamber of Commerce](#) are helping spread the word about the new standards and accountability system.

Over the coming weeks, we will be working with schools and districts to implement the funding flexibility requirements. This flexibility comes at a very important time. State budgets for education have been reduced, and schools/districts will be looking at ways to redirect existing dollars to address the components of Senate Bill 1.

I am very proud to be education commissioner of a state that is leading the nation in education reform efforts. My thanks to Governor Steve Beshear and the General Assembly for setting the expectations in Senate Bill 1 that provided the path to the NCLB waiver and assured Kentucky's position as a national leader in education.

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