



# Doc H's Blog

Kentucky Education Commissioner  
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## Teachers' voices make a difference

A guiding principle for our work in Kentucky is that we do the hard work of reform WITH teachers and not TO teachers. What does this principle look like in practice?

In 2011, Kentucky implemented the [TELL Kentucky Survey](#) to allow teacher voice on key working conditions such as facilities, resources, leadership, professional development, time, etc. In 2011, more than 80 percent of teachers in Kentucky responded to the survey and in 2013 administration, more than 86 percent of teachers responded. The [2015 survey](#) is currently open for teacher response and within the first three weeks, more than 60 percent of teachers and other school-base personnel have responded.

When Kentucky adopted the Common Core State Standards for English/language arts and mathematics, teachers were heavily involved in the process. After adoption, teachers led the way through regional networks to unpack the standards and translate the standards into teacher-, parent- and student-friendly language. When we began to prepare assessments based on the standards, teachers were heavily involved in the development of assessment items. Teachers have continued to be involved in sharing lesson plans, formative assessment items, and professional development resources through our statewide online instructional system.

We have utilized a similar process of teacher involvement in the development and implementation of science and social standards.

Teacher voice in the revision process for standards also is very important. In August, 2014, we launched the [Kentucky Core Academic Standards Challenge](#). This online tool is a way for teachers, parents and all Kentucky residents to provide feedback on how to improve the English/language arts and mathematics standards. We have had more than 3,000 thoughtful responses to date and more than 80 percent of the responses have come from teachers. The survey remains open through the end of April.

Teachers also provided leadership in the development of the [Professional Growth and Effectiveness System](#). A teacher-led committee developed the components of the model and continues to monitor the implementation and results from the model. Future changes to the model will be driven by the results and teacher voice.

There are many other examples of teacher voice in Kentucky.

- The [Hope Street Group](#) utilizes teacher leaders to communicate directly with teachers and encourage teachers to voice their opinions concerning current education issues.
- There is significant collaboration among education groups to support [National Board Certified Teacher](#) (NBCT) applicants and utilize current NBCTs as leaders and coaches.
- Kentucky is working to develop career pathways for teachers to provide leadership opportunities that do not require a teacher to completely leave the classroom.
- Teachers serve on numerous statewide advisory committees and provide voice for the profession when policy makers are considering changes that would impact classrooms.

Kentucky teachers are among the most professional and most dedicated educators I have worked with in my career and I look forward to seeing the results from the 2015 TELL Kentucky Survey. There will be reasons to celebrate, yet no doubt there will be areas that need to be addressed in order to improve the working conditions of our teachers.

Thanks in advance to all of our teachers for taking time to complete the survey and for being leaders in Kentucky public education. Your voice is very important!

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Education Commissioner