



Doc H's Blog

**Kentucky Education Commissioner
Terry Holliday**



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Creating a world-class system of technical centers

What do you envision when someone says career and technical education? Unfortunately too many people harken back to days gone by of a “shop” with kids who couldn’t cut it in regular academic classes and were destined for low-paying jobs. While that may or may not have been an accurate account in the past, today it could not be further from the truth.

Not only does [career and technical education](#) (CTE) demand a strong foundation in academics, but often leads to higher paying jobs that are in greater demand than those held by college graduates with a bachelor’s degree. And CTE isn’t just for one group of students. In 2012-13, almost 70 percent of Kentucky high school students participated in career and technical education.

The goal of Kentucky K-12 public education is to prepare students for life after high school which means readying students for college and/or career. To achieve that goal, there must be viable alternative pathways.

In 2010, Governor Beshear created the Transforming Education in Kentucky Task Force. This group worked to develop recommendations and how to build on the great work of KERA and Senate Bill 1 (2009). One of the key recommendations was to merge the two existing career and technical programs in Kentucky and create a world-class system of career and technical education. Governor Beshear followed up with an Executive Order that moved the state-operated career and technical centers from the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet to the Department of Education. In 2013, the General Assembly passed legislation in support of the Executive Order and created a Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee that includes state and local center teachers and administrators, higher education, and business leaders.

As we began the work of the advisory committee, one of the first actions was to obtain the services of the Southern Region Education Board (SREB) to conduct a study and make recommendations on how to move from two systems of career and technical education to one world-class system of technical centers.

This week, Dr. Gene Bottoms of the SREB presented the [report](#) to the Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee and the Kentucky Board of Education. The report includes four major recommendations.

1. Develop one system of technical centers with equitable and adequate funding for all centers. This recommendation will require additional study and research in regard to adequate funding for assessment and accountability, career pathway programs of study, facilities, equipment, suppliers, industry certification examinations, salaries and staffing, and staff development.

2. One system of accountability and support for all technical centers. This recommendation will require significant work with vision setting, goal setting, and continuous improvement plans in all centers.
3. One system of world-class centers. This recommendation requires us to think differently about state versus local centers. We need to think about a new governance structure and delivery model like Delaware, Massachusetts, and other states. The new model could look like regional technical centers that offer full-day education that merges academic and technical programs. This recommendation will require site visits to states where this delivery model is working well.
4. One system of technical centers in partnership with postsecondary and industry. This recommendation will require significant collaboration between business and industry, postsecondary, feeder high schools, and technical centers.

Next steps include:

- The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) will fund the study to determine equitable and adequate funding.
- The Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) will take the recommendations from the SREB report and move toward a work plan to implement the recommendations. Stakeholders across the state will be involved in reviewing the recommendations from the SREB report and providing feedback to OCTE on how best to implement the recommendations from the report.
- KDE will support travel to other states that have strong regional centers to discover best practices.
- With funds allocated in the recently passed FY15-16 budget, KDE will work with five counties to develop a possible model for a regional center
- Funding provided for additional CTE positions will go toward restoring positions in technical centers based on the recommendations from the report.

Kentucky has long experienced success with career and technical education. The SREB report will continue that success. Career and technical education is a critical component of our K-12 education system and is critical to our success in helping every student reach college- and career-readiness.

We will provide regular updates to the Kentucky Board of Education and the Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee on our progress with implementation of the SREB report.

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Education Commissioner