



Doc H's Blog

Kentucky Education Commissioner
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Improving Kentucky's educator effectiveness system

This week Kentucky's educator effectiveness system was a topic for discussion at a meeting sponsored by the Southern Regional Education Board. Teams from six states (Kentucky, Oklahoma, Maryland, South Carolina, Mississippi and North Carolina) convened to review progress on statewide teacher effectiveness models and identify possible improvement strategies for the models teams. Each team had a teacher, principal, superintendent, state department and education association representative. Kentucky's 2014 Teacher of the Year Holly Bloodworth, Fayette Co. Principal Ron Chi, Boone Co. Superintendent Randy Poe and Chief Academic Officer Karen Cheser, Kentucky Education Association Executive Director Mary Ann Blankenship and President Stephanie Winkler, and myself constituted Kentucky's team.

It was apparent from the discussions with other states that Kentucky has a strong state model for teacher effectiveness. The Kentucky model, the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES), was developed over a 4-year period with input from teachers, principals, superintendents, parents and other stakeholders. The PGES was fully implemented during the current school year. While the implementation has been successful, we have identified several challenges and areas for improvement.

Challenge #1 – too many of our principals and teachers are more focused on compliance with the PGES data collection rather than a focus on professional growth linked to the Framework for Effective Teaching. This is to be expected in the first year of implementation. With any new process, teachers and principals are trying their best to comply with expectations. It will take more time, resources, and support through training to move from compliance to professional growth.

Challenge #2 – the software got in the way of the focus on professional growth. As with most software companies, our provider of the PGES evidence system over promised and then under delivered. We have gotten feedback from all stakeholder groups and are in the middle of making decisions about how to improve the evidence gathering process for PGES.

While there are other areas of improvement for PGES, these two challenges seemed to be the most pronounced based on stakeholder feedback and data analysis. Moving forward, we will continue to work with our Teacher Effectiveness Steering Committee and review the results from the first year of full implementation as we strive for improvement.

At the meeting it was evident that what Kentucky does better than most is work well together. We have been very successful in developing an excellent model for teacher effectiveness and I am confident that through continued collaboration, Kentucky will revise the system and ensure the system makes an impact on professional growth and student learning.

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Commissioner of Education