



Doc H's Blog

Kentucky Education Commissioner
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Success hinges on alignment, communication, resources

Back in April 2013, I met with the Executive Board of the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents (KASS). Superintendents were concerned about the increasing challenge of balancing budgets with increasing demands for improving performance. Also, during that time a number of issues surfaced surrounding school district audits that were raised by the Office of the State Auditor and in KDE communications. I certainly can understand superintendent concerns about public perceptions and communications. I wrote about this meeting in my [April 19 blog](#).

I have made several commitments to superintendents regarding actions that I would take as commissioner to address the concerns cited above. The purpose of this blog is to highlight a few of the steps the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has taken as follows:

--Hired a chief of staff – Recently, KDE hired Dr. Tommy Floyd, former superintendent in Madison County, as chief of staff. Tommy will be very accessible to superintendents to help resolve issues before these become major concerns. Tommy also will provide a “local superintendent’s” perspective to KDE staff to help them better understand the potential impact of KDE’s decisions and initiatives on local school districts.

--Scheduled a statewide superintendent meeting – KDE has scheduled a meeting of superintendents with senior KDE staff and me on September 5. This meeting, which is only for superintendents, will provide them with ample opportunity to offer feedback on state budget issues and key statewide initiatives.

--Regularly scheduled senior staff and commissioner’s visits to regional cooperatives – KDE has updated its liaison list for regional cooperatives to ensure superintendents have a regional connection to senior staff at KDE. Also, Tommy Floyd and I will each visit a cooperative per month to ensure we hear directly from superintendents.

--Scheduled Superintendents Advisory Council (SAC) and regional superintendent LYNC sessions – Using the Microsoft Office 365 technology, we are scheduling “virtual” meetings with the Superintendents Advisory Council and with each region’s superintendents to provide additional opportunities to hear directly from superintendents.

--Regular meetings with Kentucky Association of School Superintendents (KASS) Executive Board – Wilson Sears has committed to schedule time on the KASS Executive Board’s meetings for me to meet personally with KASS leadership.

--Weekly highlight of districts – Starting in August, KDE will highlight one district superintendent per week in the *Fast Five on Friday*. We want to take this opportunity to highlight the great work going on in school districts.

These new initiatives should provide numerous opportunities to improve communications between KDE and superintendents. In addition, we will continue the existing practices of sending out the Monday E-mail and Fast Five on Friday along with conducting monthly superintendent webcasts. The connection between KDE and local superintendents is extremely important to educators across Kentucky. It is our goal to ensure that every educator in Kentucky has timely information about the Unbridled Learning strategic plan, and every educator has an opportunity to provide feedback about the components that impact the day-to-day work.

We are making tremendous progress in Kentucky; however, our ability to reach the vision of “every child proficient and prepared for success” hinges on alignment, communication, and having the resources to do the work. My commitment as commissioner is to work on all three.

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