



# Doc H's Blog

**Kentucky Education Commissioner  
Terry Holliday**



**August 8, 2014**

## **Exciting Time of the Year**

Many eager parents, teachers, school administrators and community members are looking forward to the new school year. Parents who take their kindergarten or first grade child to school for the first day will shed a few tears as they hand off their precious treasure to dedicated teachers and staff. Many parents will be very happy to return to a normal routine where the children are engaged in meaningful activities under the supervision of dedicated teachers and staff.

School administrators are nervous! They are checking to make certain that they have enough staff to meet the needs of all children. Do they have all the supplies and textbooks on hand to meet the needs of children and teachers? Does the school look clean and inviting? Has the grass been mowed? Are procedures in place to make certain schools are safe? Do the bus routes meet the transportation needs? Will the school cafeteria be ready for the first breakfast and lunch? Have we provided all the required and necessary training to all staff?

Teachers are nervous also but very excited to see children return to classrooms. Teachers are in their classrooms setting up materials to make certain the classroom is inviting and conducive to learning. Teachers have been working over the summer months to develop new curriculum and finding materials aligned to the curriculum. Teachers have been engaged in professional learning to either get an advanced degree and/or prepare for new state initiatives such as the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System or new science standards.

Many coaches and band directors have been working hard for several weeks. They have been getting fields ready for practice and equipment and uniforms ready for the students. Schedules have been planned. Buses have been ordered for transportation to games and events. Meals have been planned. Booster clubs are in full operating mode to raise funds to support students.

Students are excited to return to school. They are excited to see old friends and make new ones. They are excited to see which teacher(s) they have and what they will learn. They are excited about the first football game or band competition. For some, they are nervous as they begin to realize that this is their last year as a high school student and they have not finalized plans for what happens after high school. For others, they are nervous as they make the transition from the confines of an elementary school to the confusion of a middle school or a high school.

For community members, many are excited to see activities at schools. For most of our schools in Kentucky, the school is the center for community activities. Schools are a huge source of pride for communities. Community members are always prone to brag about the academic ranking of their local schools, the sports teams, and other student groups.

This will be my 43rd year as a teacher, principal, superintendent, or commissioner. This time of year continues to bring goose bumps as I think about the tremendous potential that our children in Kentucky have. I get excited thinking about the buzz that happens in more than 1,400 schools in Kentucky. I get excited to think about the many conversations among parents, teachers, administrator, and community members that will be focused on making certain all of our children have a bright future.

As school buses begin to roll and school zone signals start blinking, I hope everyone in the Commonwealth will slow down when driving through a school zone, take a moment to silently wish all of our students and educators a successful start to a school year, and whisper a wish that every student will achieve the promise of an excellent education to ensure a brighter future.

Terry Holliday, Ph.D.  
Education Commissioner