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Kentucky Education Commissioner
Terry Holliday



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Kentucky Focuses on Career and Technical Education

This week, Governor Steve Beshear [signed](#) an executive order that brings the Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE), located in the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, into the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) as a new office. The new Office of Career and Technical Education will be led by Associate Commissioner Dale Winkler, Ed.D. The merger is effective October 16.

This merger is the result of several years of work. The concept surfaced during meetings with the Governor's Task Force on Transforming Education in Kentucky, and there were several key [recommendations](#) from the task force that led to the formation of a Career and Technical Education advisory group to work through the steps needed to complete the merger. Staff from KDE and OCTE worked behind the scenes to coordinate the necessary steps to make the merger a reality.

The OCTE has 54 Area Technical Centers across Kentucky, and the KDE career and technical education staff work with all high schools that offer local centers and high school course offerings. The merger builds on the excellent collaboration that has been happening between OCTE and KDE over the past few years and is a reflection of the outstanding staff we have in both areas.

Superintendents, principals, teachers and students will not see a lot of immediate impact from the merger. Much of the collaboration has already happened. The adoption of a new accountability model based on 2009's Senate Bill 1 that is now called Unbridled Learning elevated the focus on career and technical education through a measure called college- and career-readiness. Through collaboration with the Workforce Investment Board, the Governor's Office, and the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, we have a focus on "work-ready" communities across Kentucky. Work-ready communities provide additional leverage and support to ensure that high school graduates are prepared for job, military and citizenship opportunities available in the future. The Education and Workforce Development Cabinet has developed industry sectors that the state will focus on to bring jobs to Kentucky citizens.

Our immediate concern is to find efficiencies through the merger in order to offset reductions in career and technical teachers that were a result of recent cuts in the state budget. Through the merger, Dale Winkler and staff have identified a number of efficiencies that have led to

replacing teachers in critical career and technical centers across Kentucky. Throughout the early stages of the merger, this will continue to be the number-one focus.

There will be several additional areas that Associate Commissioner Winkler will be leading as a result of the merger. The integration of the Kentucky core academic standards with career and technical courses will continue. Also, we will continue to work on identification of nationally recognized industry certifications that are aligned with the 16 [career pathways](#). The implementation of Senator Jack Westwood's career pathways [bill](#) also will be a high priority. Thanks to the leadership of the Governor, General Assembly, Kentucky Association of Manufacturers, Kentucky Farm Bureau, Toyota and other business and education leaders, Kentucky is demonstrating to the nation our continued leadership in helping all high school graduates to meet the standards required for college and career readiness. Our high school graduates will have a brighter future thanks to this merger.

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