



The Commissioner's Blog

Thoughts from
Kentucky's Commissioner of Education
Kevin C. Brown, Interim Commissioner



September 4, 2015

Change is in the air

This time of year, a lot of things change: students and families settle back in to the school routine, football season begins, the weather starts to moderate, before long the leaves on the trees will begin to show their beautiful fall colors, and come November Kentucky will have a new governor.

This September brings another change as well. As you probably know, we will soon have new leadership at the Kentucky Department of Education. After more than 40 years in education – as a teacher, principal, superintendent, and for the past six years as Kentucky Commissioner of Education – Terry Holliday has retired. And while the Kentucky Board of Education completes its search for a new commissioner, it will be my privilege to serve as the interim commissioner.

I'll be honest with you – Dr. Holliday is a hard act to follow – there's no other way to put it. While his decisions weren't always the most popular, no one could question his motivation. His focus was always on what is best for the kids – which was not necessarily what was the most convenient for adults. But it was this drive and determination that moved Kentucky forward at a rapid pace over the past six years.

Dr. Holliday freely admitted that there was a lot – almost too much – going on at one time. But there had to be. The changes mandated by Senate Bill 1 (2009) were intertwined and could not be accomplished without a systemic approach. As he explained to the staff at the Kentucky Department of Education when we began to fatigue from the frenzied pace, "The children won't wait." And luckily, they didn't have to. With Dr. Holliday at the helm, we all forged ahead with our focus on college/career-readiness for all children, and it paid off. More Kentucky students are graduating from high school and are ready for college and careers than ever before.

Despite the progress we've made over the past several years, there is much work still to do to close achievement gaps, expand career and technical education opportunities, and raise the level of student achievement. Also we must continue to work to ensure adequate school funding. These areas are where our energies need to be concentrated – not dwelling on the past. We must focus on the future.

We anticipate the new commissioner will be named within the next couple of weeks, and when that happens, I hope you will join me and the rest of the staff at the Kentucky Department of Education in welcoming this individual to the position and pledging to work with him for the betterment of Kentucky's system of public education and for the students of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Kevin C. Brown
Interim Commissioner