



Doc H's Blog

**Kentucky Education Commissioner
Terry Holliday**



September 12, 2014

Feedback is critical to success

Kentucky began implementing a new state accountability system in 2011-12. The system is called [Unbridled Learning](#). It was built on the requirements of Senate Bill 1 (2009) and is used to meet both state accountability requirements as well as the federal requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education/No Child Left Behind Act.

The system has been very successful in pushing improvements in the percentage of students who graduate from high school ready for college and career. The system has also been successful in increasing high school graduation rates and the percentage of students who are ready for school when they enter kindergarten. We have also started to see significant improvement in areas such as ACT, grades 3-6 reading and math and closing of achievement gaps for several of our student groups.

While we have seen success in some areas, we have not improved in 7th- and 8th-grade math and language arts achievement and we have not improved as quickly as needed to close the achievement gap and boost student performance on high school end-of-course tests.

We originally committed to a three-year window for implementation of the Unbridled Learning model before we made any significant changes. School year 2013-14 completed that three year cycle and we are tentatively scheduled to share results publicly on October 2.

This summer, we began gathering feedback from our stakeholders so that, at the October Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) meeting, we could provide recommendations for any changes to the Unbridled Learning system. We have met with advisory groups representing students, parents, business, teachers, principals, school boards and numerous advocacy groups. We had an online tool for the public to provide feedback also. This week we gathered superintendents from all of our 173 school districts and provided them with the results of the feedback and polled the superintendents on their support for the numerous recommendations we had received.

What happens now? Next month, the KBE will review all of the feedback and the results of the superintendent survey on recommendations. Kentucky Department of Education staff will take direction from KBE on what changes need to be made to the accountability system and will modify existing regulatory language to reflect those changes. In December, staff will present proposed revisions of the regulatory language for a first reading. Second reading of regulatory changes will occur in February and, if approved, the regulatory changes will start moving through the legislative review process. There are many opportunities for public comment along the way. If the revised regulation becomes law, the changes will not take effect until the 2015-16 school year. School districts will continue to operate under the existing Unbridled Learning accountability model for the 2014-15 school year.

This process sounds complicated and, at times, it can be confusing to teachers, parents, and administrators. However, it is critical to engage all stakeholders in gaining feedback. The strength of our Kentucky education improvements has been and will continue to be collaboration and communication with all stakeholders.

Kentucky education results will continue to improve as long as we listen to concerns from all groups and make improvements. Feedback and action on the feedback are critical to the success of our students, schools and districts, and meeting our goal of college/career-readiness of all students.

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Education Commissioner