



Doc H's Blog

**Kentucky Education Commissioner
Terry Holliday**



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This week, Joellen Killion from Learning Forward and Karen Kidwell, Director, Division of Program Standards with the Kentucky Department of Education, team up for a guest blog on the importance of professional learning and a new resource that can help ensure meaningful and effective professional learning opportunities, which are critical to the continuous improvement process and our overall success.

*Terry Holliday, Ph. D.
Education Commissioner*

The path to student success

Since Senate Bill 1 (2009), Kentucky has been leading the nation in education reform. To accomplish its goal, the department of education has examined every system, input, output, and outcome to focus and align efforts to ensure that every school and district has effective leadership, every classroom has an effective teacher, and every student graduates ready for college, career and civic life.

To achieve these results every Kentucky educator shares a collective responsibility to contribute to the success of each other and every student. All educators therefore must have the capacity for excellent performance in their individual roles and understand and communicate about how the Professional Growth and Effectiveness system works to create conditions in which educators and students succeed.

Professional learning is the primary vehicle to support educators' professional growth and continuous improvement. Educator learning that aligns with Kentucky's new professional learning definition and standards ensures that educators engage in sustained, job-embedded, collaborative learning to support the critical and necessary shifts in practice to achieve the goals of Senate Bill 1 (2009).

To guide implementation of professional learning that aligns with the revised regulation (704 KAR 3.035) in every school and district across Kentucky, the *Model Curriculum Framework* has been revised to include a more detailed section on effective professional learning. The extended professional learning guidance resulted from a three-year initiative, facilitated by Learning Forward and funded by the Sandler, Bill and Melinda Gates, and MetLife Foundations. The initiative involved a wide range of state and national education stakeholders including the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, Council of Chief State School Officers, National Governors Association, National Association of State Boards of Education, critical friends from six states, Kentucky educators, and representatives from Kentucky associations and education partners.

The guidance on professional learning provides suggestions for school councils, professional development coordinators, school, district, and regional cooperative staff who plan and facilitate professional learning, providers and vendors offering services to Kentucky educators, and institutes of higher education.

What can you expect to find in this resource?

- a seven step process for planning, implementing, and evaluating professional learning
- five questions for improving professional learning
- key roles and responsibilities for effective professional learning
- explicit connections to the Professional Growth Plan (PGP) process
- a sample professional learning plan aligned to the Standards for Professional Learning
- a self-assessment of the state of professional learning in your school/district
- links to multiple resources to support professional learning aligned to Kentucky's new Standards for Professional Learning
- Kentucky's Rubric for Exemplary Professional Learning

Higher levels of student engagement and success in school occur only when educators are supported in improving their own knowledge, attitudes, skills, aspirations and beliefs, and when they work collaboratively to extend and refine their practice and student success. Professional learning, implemented well, is the path to that success. Take the time to access this guidance and use it as you engage in continuous improvement at the regional, district, school, team, and individual levels to ensure that your efforts reflect the standards and effective practices illustrated. Your success in professional learning makes a difference – for Kentucky's educators and students!

You'll find the professional learning guidance [here](#).