



Doc H's Blog

**Kentucky Education Commissioner
Terry Holliday**



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The danger in oversimplifying achievement gaps

In several recent blogs, ([Moving in the Right Direction](#) and [Making the Numbers Real](#)), I congratulated Kentucky students and educators on the significant progress we are making in college/career readiness rates and graduation rates.

We are also beginning to see significant improvement in proficiency rates and our unduplicated gap group has improved in all areas. However, I did stress the need for Kentucky to redouble our efforts in closing significant achievement gaps. The Kentucky Department of Education will be developing very specific plans across curriculum, instruction, interventions, accountability and assessment to support schools and districts as they work to close the achievement gaps.

In the coming weeks, achievement gap concerns will certainly continue to be a public and legislative focus. There are some stakeholders using the achievement gap issue to promote charter schools. There are others using the achievement gap to push for targeted funding. The public discourse will continue to grow in intensity and we may have some excellent recommendations and we may have some recommendations that are not based on research on how to close the gaps that have persisted for too long.

I came across an excellent blog this week, that highlights some of the key challenges to using a simplistic approach of comparing student performance across groups of students. As the General Assembly, Kentucky Board of Education, school districts, and the public engage in discussion of achievement gaps, I would recommend reading this [blog](#) by the Albert Shanker Institute in preparation for those discussions.

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