



Doc H's Blog

Kentucky Education Commissioner
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Interesting Paradox

I was in Washington, D.C., attending two meetings this week. The first meeting was a convening of folks who were discussing the national landscape for teacher evaluation systems. The group was very interested in the work we are doing in Kentucky to integrate the implementation of Common Core Standards and teacher evaluation.

The second meeting I attended was the National Assessment Governing Board ([NAGB](#)). I am currently serving a four-year term on this group, which sets policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress ([NAEP](#)), or the Nation's Report Card.

I was struck by the undercurrent at both meetings. All of D.C. is talking about the fiscal cliff and the potential impact not only on the economy, but on specific programs. What started as great hope for a resolution after the election has now turned into another stand-off between Democrats and Republicans.

It is paradoxical to me that in Kentucky and other states, we are talking about education reform and working hard to implement reform; however, we are looking at across-the-board cuts of 8-10 percent in federal funds. That reality came clear to me in the NAGB meeting when we discussed preparing for the 10 percent cut in programs and services for NAEP in 2013.

In the past, I have clearly [communicated](#) to superintendents the impact of sequestration of federal funds. It is time for local school officials to make direct calls to our congressional delegation to let them know that we need them to resolve this issue. Failure to resolve this issue means that school districts, when making employment decisions in the early spring, will be looking at significant staff reductions in all federal programs.

This means a significant impact on education reform efforts across Kentucky and the nation. Our children deserve better than what Washington is currently offering.

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