



Doc H's Blog

**Kentucky Education Commissioner
Terry Holliday**



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Kentucky Rising

“Kentucky's first settlers brought with them a dedication to democracy and a sense of limitless hope about the future. They were determined to participate in world progress in science, education, and manufacturing. The early years of statehood were an era of great optimism and progress and the eyes of the nation often focused on Kentucky. ... Globally oriented Kentuckians were determined to transform the frontier into a network of communities exporting to the world market. ...”

These words come from a book titled *Kentucky Rising* and while they describe Kentucky more than two centuries ago, they serve as inspiration today for a new initiative in our state on which work has already begun. We call it Kentucky Rising.

In order for the economy of the Commonwealth to continue to grow and create jobs for our citizens, the education community must respond and create a stronger workforce that meets the requirements of foreign industries who are investing directly in Kentucky and industries that are creating trade with other countries. Kentucky Rising will establish criteria for a diploma/certificate/endorsement that certifies a high school graduate meets the requirements to take the next steps, whether that is pursuit of a career or postsecondary education, to ensure our workforce is an asset for global economic development.

A joint meeting of the chairs and vice-chairs of the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) and Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) and their agency heads is being planned for some time in January to gain support for the Kentucky Rising initiative. A statewide meeting to gain support from multiple partners will follow. In addition, a comprehensive needs-assessment will be completed to identify current initiatives and programs that should be integrated with Kentucky Rising.

All of these activities will be used to gather input for creating a unified plan in which CPE, EPSB, KBE and the Kentucky Department of Education, and other partners will have key roles and responsibilities. Funding and staff support for Kentucky Rising will be managed through The Fund for Transforming Education in Kentucky.

This is an exciting venture that holds great promise for our children and our state. I will share more about Kentucky Rising as we move forward.

On another topic, I wanted to briefly follow up to my blog, [Politics as usual or not?](#), from several weeks ago about federal waivers and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Since then, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) has notified Kentucky that our state is one of seven eligible to apply for a four-year renewal of its ESEA Flexibility Waiver (most states can apply for only a three-year renewal) and participate in an expedited review process. Our current waiver expires at the end of the current school year.

Kentucky was granted this opportunity because of the focused work that our educators, partners and state department staff have carried out to implement Kentucky's plan under ESEA flexibility. By participating in the expedited review process, the due date for the revised waiver request will be January 30. USED will provide a final decision by the end of March.

As is customary when the waiver document is revised, it will be made available to education constituents, the public and the board for review and feedback before it is submitted. Any feedback that we receive is reported to USED as part of the waiver submission process.

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Education Commissioner