



Commissioner's

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Comments

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An Education Run for the Roses

It's Derby Week – my first as a Kentuckian. I look forward to experiencing the Derby and all its festivities as a resident of the Commonwealth. I have learned, and been told by many, that the most exciting two minutes in sports takes an entire month to celebrate, and I am trying to experience it all.

Last week, I finished my own race of sorts – 11 Education Town Halls meetings across Kentucky in six weeks. Based on the feedback I received and the turnout for each meeting, I plan to make this my own annual event, but next year will spread it out over a longer period of time.

To me, what we have ahead of us is every bit as exciting as the Run for the Roses. In order to cross the finish line to in a way befitting our children, we will have to work together. It may be a bit cheesy, but as I thought about the task ahead of us, the song, *The Run for the Roses* kept playing in my head.

"It's a run for the roses, as fast as you can."

The opportunity to develop a new accountability system is our education run for the roses. And, we have much to do in a very short period of time. Now we are taking the results from the town halls, determining themes and identifying key features of the law to which we must adhere. We are in the process of identifying our steering committee and our working committees to devise the draft system. We will post the draft online in November and start regulatory process in January. As fast and furious as this is, I am confident it will end up with a system that sets the gold standard in education across the country.

"Your fate is delivered, your moment's at hand."

Kentucky has seen incredible growth over the past 25 years, and the past six in particular. But, our moment is at hand as we take this next step into ensuring our children have the best education possible. This is our moment, this is our time. For the first time, we have the chance to develop a system based on our views, Kentucky's views.

"It's a chance of a lifetime, in a lifetime of chance."

Building a new accountability system is the chance of a lifetime. I am sure it will be the biggest opportunity during my career. Everyone must realize that this opportunity, if done well, will be a game changer for our children. If not, our children may well get a lifetime of chance, hoping to get a quality education that ensures equity, achievement, and integrity; but there will be no guarantee.

"It's high time you joined in the dance."



It IS high time we all joined in this dance. No longer can accountability be considered compliance or about a single school or district. If we are to make a difference in the Commonwealth, it is high time we realize that we must take shared responsibility for our children. I have said several times during the town halls, “It take a village to raise a child, but a Commonwealth to educate one.” I do not say that because it sounds good or is a good tweet, I say it because I believe it. We cannot push education forward without all shareholders making students the center of the system rather than the adults.

I hope you will all join us for this race. The town halls have been nothing short of amazing with the number and diversity of people who gave of their time to come share with me what they value in education. Their passion, their commitment and their desire to move us forward was inspiring. We are in the second turn with three quarters of the race left, so hang on and stay focused on students. This is going to be a great ride.

And, as a final note, this is Teacher Appreciation Week. This is a special week and a special month as it celebrates what I call, “the greatest and most honorable profession, teacher.” I will spend my full blog next week on teaching, but I can tell you the greatest professional decision I ever made was to be a teacher. In the meantime, share your thoughts about the teachers who made a mark on your life – #thankakytteacher. Teaching is the root of all other careers and I am proud to be among the ranks of the profession.