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**Auditor Edelen and Education Commissioner Holliday Call for Superintendent Contracts,
Benefits, Evaluations to be More Transparent to Taxpayers**

*Move Comes on the Heels of Scathing School Examinations by Auditor's office, Push by Holliday to
Require Strengthened Superintendent Evaluations, Training for School Board Members*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (March 14, 2013) – Education Commissioner Terry Holliday supports a recommendation by Auditor Adam Edelen to require superintendent contracts, benefits and annual evaluations be made available online after a series of school district special examinations found a lack of transparency and oversight.

The Auditor's office last week released a scandalous special examination that found the former superintendent of Dayton Independent Schools received \$224,000 in benefits and payments over an eight-year period that were not authorized by the board. An examination released last fall found the former superintendent of the Mason County School District also received compensation in excess of his contract.

“When school boards are in the dark about the benefits and payments their own superintendents are receiving, how can the public ever be confident their tax dollars are being spent to provide our children with the world-class education they deserve?” Auditor Edelen said.

The recommendation follows a recent announcement by Commissioner Holliday of his plans to impose stricter requirements for superintendent evaluations and ethics and fiscal oversight training for school board members.

“We're seeing far too many cases where adults are making choices that are right for them rather than what's really right for students and their future,” Commissioner Holliday said. “The focus needs to be on supporting what happens in the classroom and ensuring all our students graduate college/career-ready.”

Superintendent salaries are currently posted on the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) website, but more information about superintendent contracts and benefits is needed to give a complete picture of superintendents' total compensation packages.

Later this spring, KDE will send a letter to all school board chairs outlining the reporting requirements, process and deadline for submission, Commissioner Holliday said. Once the information is assembled, it will be available to anyone on the Kentucky Department of Education website.

In addition to copies of contracts, the department will be asking for information including:

- Monthly travel allowances
- Exclusive use of a district vehicle, including if it is for personal use
- Use of district fuel or district credit card to purchase fuel, including if it is for personal use
- Payment or reimbursement for cell phone and Internet services
- Insurance
- Leave time and maximum leave allowed to be accumulated
- Reimbursement for personal retirement contributions
- Reimbursement for the purchase of retirement service credit
- Payment or reimbursement for retirement annuity
- Payment or reimbursement for educational tuition assistance
- Association memberships

This move comes at the same time the Office of Education Accountability, at the request of the Education Accountability and Assessment Review Subcommittee (EAARS) of the Kentucky General Assembly, is looking into superintendent employment issues as part of its 2013 study agenda.

“State and local government have come a long way in becoming more transparent, making everything from state contracts to our basketball coaches' compensation packages readily available, yet important information about our schools is still cloaked in darkness,” Auditor Edelen said.

Under KRS 61.870-61.884, the Kentucky Open Records Act, all the information that will be collected is currently available to the public. But it isn't always easily accessible, Holliday said. These efforts will make the information available to anyone, anytime in one location in a format that is clear and straightforward, Auditor Edelen added.

“I have always been an advocate for openness and transparency,” Commissioner Holliday said. “I welcome the auditor's recommendations and hope this will result in a greater level of fiscal oversight and responsibility in our school districts. It is the duty of us all to be accountable and good stewards of the taxpayer's money.”

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