

Steven L. Beshear
Governor



Terry Holliday, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CABINET
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Secretary Arne Duncan
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., SW
LBJ Education Building, Rm. 7W311
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

Thank you for taking the time to visit Kentucky to celebrate the Project PASS program in Hardin County. This collaboration between the Army and the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) has tremendous potential not only in Kentucky but across the nation to lower the dropout rate and prepare more children for college, careers and military service.

Also, thank you for taking the time to discuss with me the accountability model that Kentucky is developing. I agree with your recent comments to the U.S. House Education Committee regarding the problems with the No Child Left Behind accountability system. While some have challenged your projections that 82% of the nation's schools will not make AYP this year, I support them. We have estimated the number of districts in Kentucky that will not meet AYP for the 2010-11 school year to be 87%. Certainly, the system is broken and No Child Left Behind needs a major overhaul.

As you know, Kentucky has been heavily involved with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Next Generation Accountability Task Force. We have developed a system that could serve as an example of a more rigorous accountability model focusing on the goals of student growth and students graduating from high school being college and career ready. These goals will better serve our children, our nation and our schools than the existing variability of basic proficiency.

The Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) is scheduled to approve the Next Generation Accountability Model at its upcoming April 13, 2011 meeting. The model will be in place for the 2011-12 school year and beyond. Per our conversation in Hardin County, you expressed an interest in supporting the actions of the KBE. When Kentucky became the first state to adopt the Common Core Standards, we very much appreciated your video clip and would appreciate any method you select to express support not just for Kentucky but for the focus of changing No Child Left Behind accountability to a model that focuses on student growth and college and career readiness.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to education in our great nation.

Sincerely,


Terry Holliday, Ph.D.

Cc: David Karem, Kentucky Board of Education Chair
Gene Wilhoit, CCSSO Executive Director

TH:mam