

February 11, 2011

Note: Dr. Holliday often uses personal stories and reflections that are not part of his prepared remarks. The comments below reflect the major components of his prepared remarks.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to meet with you today and share some of my thoughts about music educators. I have been very impressed with the level of professionalism displayed by the leaders of your organization. I have been very impressed with the level of professionalism and excellence in music programs that I have seen as I visit Kentucky schools.

As a former music educator, I have taught at all grade levels. I have been a middle and high school band director. I have been a church choir director and choral music director at the middle and high school levels. I have taught elementary general music. I have conducted orchestras and musical theatre groups. I have been a performer as a trombone player, choir member, and I once played Freddie in *My Fair Lady* (the reviews were so bad that I never went back down that road). So when I say that musicians and music educators are the heart and soul of our culture and our education system, I am not just saying it, but have also lived it.

Today I want to quickly highlight three topics – music educators make great leaders; music educators develop great leaders; and we need music educators to take leadership roles in Kentucky right now to help make the future brighter for our children and our Commonwealth.

Music Educators Make Great Leaders

As I visit with superintendents and chief state school officers across the nation, I find that many of them worked as music educators. Music educators become great school, district and state leaders. Why? Music educators understand systems and how to put the parts of a system together to create a synergy that is greater than the parts. Here are some parts of the system that you really understand well.

Music educators understand their customers. They understand their audience. When you guys are creating a marching band show, you know how important it is to have highs and lows. You know how important velocity, emotion, creativity and showmanship are for your audience and your judges. When you develop a choral concert, you know how important it is provide various types of music, voicing and stage presence (I know that *Glee* is raising the bar on many of you.) If you are preparing an orchestra concert or putting on a Broadway musical, you all know how important your audience and customers are. As a chief state school officer or superintendent, that was always where I started. What do my customers or audience expect and how am I doing in meeting their expectations?

You make great leaders because you know how to set goals. You set goals about your marching performance. You set goals for membership in honors choirs or orchestras. You set goals for continuous growth throughout your various performance seasons.

You make great leaders because you know about process management. As a band director, I normally had about 200 or more students in the marching band program. Every rehearsal had to be timed to the second. Uniform fitting had to be precise. Scheduling of buses and timing of events had to be done well. Budgets had to be developed. Supplies and

materials needed to be on hand when they were needed. We had to have contingency plans for emergencies. You do the same things. You are great at process management.

You make great leaders because you understand the human relations side. You have to juggle the needs of emotional teenagers during the day and then switch gears to deal with the emotional adults at the booster club that evening and in between you have to attend faculty meetings where you listen to other adults complain about how unmotivated children are these days.

Finally, you understand results and how setting goals, great rehearsal processes, and great people skills can produce unbelievable results like I saw this year at the state marching competition and heard yesterday and today with performances at this conference.

You Create Great Leaders

I was so moved by the tribute to Bob Gregg yesterday. Look at the impact he made on leaders who are now making an impact on the future leaders of our Commonwealth.

As I talk to business and higher education officials throughout the state, they tell me the types of leaders they are looking for and I strongly believe that music educators are creating these leaders for the future. They are looking for leaders who are self-disciplined. They are looking for leaders who have good time management. They are looking for leaders who understand teamwork. You do all those things but you also do much more. You create leaders who have heart, emotion and empathy for their fellow human beings. I want to relate just a couple of personal stories about this intangible trait that is so important for the future. *(Throughout this section Dr. Holliday shared several personal stories that were not included in his prepared remarks.)*

You Need to be Leaders Now

Finally, I want to ask for your help. I want you to become leaders in your school systems. As you know, we are implementing some of the most far-reaching educational reforms in the nation. Not since the advent of KERA in 1990 has Kentucky been positioned as a leader of education reform in the nation. We are implementing new standards, new assessments, new accountability systems and new teacher and principal effectiveness systems. I need your help as music educators to make certain that music education is the model for the rest of the content areas.

I need your help with program reviews. Thanks to your leadership, the Kentucky Board of Education has directed KDE staff to develop, with your participation, a rubric for music education programs that designates distinguished, proficient and needs improvement levels. Schools and districts will be held accountable for program reviews.

I need your help with teacher effectiveness. When you define the opportunities and evidences in the program reviews, we then need to move those to the new statewide teacher evaluation system that we are developing. Music educators are experts in using student performance results to improve instruction.

I need your help to make certain that music and the arts are part of the accountability model. We must ensure that music education remains an important part of our curriculum and that it is taught by certified specialists.

I need your help with involving more children in music programs. In all my years of teaching, I never had a student drop out of school that was in the music programs. In Kentucky we have over 6,000 children who drop out of school each year. You can help by engaging more children in music programs where they have adults who care about them and they are part of a team and family.

I need your help to lobby not only our Kentucky General Assembly but also the Congress to keep music as an important component of a well-rounded education. As NCLB is reauthorized, we need to ensure music and the arts are important part of any federal accountability model.

Thank you again for allowing me to speak to you today. As leader of K-12 education in Kentucky, I will make a commitment to you today that music education and the arts will not be set aside. The heart and soul of our children, our Commonwealth and our nation are built through music and the arts, and I thank you for what you do for children everyday to ensure they have a bright future.