Acting Education Secretary Has Problematic Past

As we return from break, John King Jr. becomes the nation’s new Secretary of Education. President Obama appointed King “acting” deputy, and the “acting” chief secretary in the wake of Arne Duncan’s resignation. This means that he can start in this role without Congressional approval and stay there—at least until Obama leaves office at the end of the year.

King seems, on the surface, to be a decent choice. Most recently, King served as state commissioner of the New York schools. He has a Ph.D. in education and a law degree. But the nation’s teaching associations are issuing a very big “caveat emptor,” or “let the buyer beware.”

Randi Weingarten, American Federation of Teachers president, said recently, “We are disappointed to hear that Deputy Secretary of Education John King Jr. will be appointed as the acting secretary. His tenure as New York State’s education commissioner created so much polarization in the state with parents and educators alike that even Gov. Andrew Cuomo is finally doing a mea culpa.”

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King likely bringing the nation more of what resigning Secretary Duncan left behind. Like Arne Duncan, King has been at odds with the teachers’ unions. News media have reported:

- King rushed New York’s teacher evaluation system, accountability testing and implementation of the Common Core. He ignored the public pleas of superintendents, thousands of teachers, parents and other administrators to back off from these efforts.
- Twenty percent of the students slated to take New York state tests last spring opted out.
- King’s teacher evaluation rollout is facing legal challenges, and the New York legislature nullified any consequences for teachers.
- King tried to collect confidential student data and share it with software developers to they could market products to school districts. One public forum on the matter turned loud and angry—and led King to cancel the other scheduled forums on the topic.
- King supports charter schools. He served as director of a nonprofit charter-school management company in the early 2000s.

It is possible that King has learned from his mistakes. But it is wise to consider education reporter Valerie Strauss’ column in The Washington Post, which noted, “Were King’s expectations too ambitious? Perhaps. But that does not absolve responsibility. It is the job of leaders to establish achievable goals, build capacity and support, modify when needed and then focus resources on their accomplishment. That is how real progress is achieved.”

Support I Know I Can

For more than 27 years, IKIC has collaborated with CCS teachers and counselors to make a real difference in college access and success. We now know that CCS students who participate in three or more one-on-one advising sessions are twice as likely to enroll in postsecondary education. Additionally, over 80 percent of CCS graduates who receive financial assistance from IKIC enroll in college and have a success rate that is nearly four times higher than the national average. It is through our open hearts and minds that we have been able to collectively foster an environment where post-secondary education is an achievable goal for CCS students—students like Walnut Ridge HS graduate Kila.

Kila is currently volunteering with IKIC as an AmeriCorps Ohio College Guide in several CCS middle schools. She was the first in her family to earn a bachelor’s degree and looks forward to becoming a middle school teacher in CCS. She is an example of success.

There are more students like Kila, and we want to give them every opportunity to succeed. They need our help. IKIC’s Annual Campaign launched a few weeks ago, and IKIC staff will distribute pledge cards to personal mailboxes this week. Please consider collaborating with IKIC by investing in opportunity for our students. To give, please complete the pledge card and return to IKIC, Route 2, or donate by visiting www.iknowican.org/contribute/donate.
Reform Panel Update

Sometimes individual schools require changes to the Master Agreement or to Board Policy. On these occasions, they turn to the Reform Panel to make these changes called “variances.”

If your school is interested in obtaining a variance from the Reform Panel or you are unsure whether or not your school has correctly followed the Reform Panel process, call the CEA office at (614) 253-4731 for more information.

Here are the variances considered by the Reform Panel at the Dec. 16 meeting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mtg. Date</th>
<th>School/Unit</th>
<th>Variance requested</th>
<th>Panel decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 16</td>
<td>Walnut Ridge HS</td>
<td>To allow two teachers to have an additional duty in place of a fifth class to facilitate Building Leadership Team common planning time</td>
<td>Not approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hillonia MS</td>
<td>To implement a new discipline plan requiring additional paperwork</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salem ES</td>
<td>To allow a Unified Arts teacher to teach year-round subject to allow for common planning</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salem ES</td>
<td>To increase the time for a Unified Arts subject to allow for common planning</td>
<td>Approved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Records Day—Your Day!

When CEA members voted overwhelmingly to ratify the tentative agreement with the Columbus City Schools Board of Education in May, their vote placed two additional district-wide records days into our contract. The second Records Day of the 2015–2016 school year will occur on Tuesday, Jan. 19.

On this day, there will be no PD pull-outs, no forced TBTIs, no suggested meetings by supervisors or administrators; they also get and need this time. This is your day to spend working in your building on whatever professional items you need to do such as grade cards, progress reports, IEPs, RIMPs, lesson plans, etc. Remember, it is a work day. All members are expected to report to work at their regular start time and work the full day. Let’s show everyone how valuable this day is to us by taking full advantage of the time we have to get those things done that take valuable time away from our ability to provide additional support for our students.

Special Notes

- If you want enhanced, or super severance pay, you must notify the district of retirement intentions by Feb. 1 in the year you are retiring. To estimate the amount of your severance pay, access the intranet under “Treasurer’s Office,” “Payroll,” and use your latest pay stub to access the amount. Notification letters go to the Director of Human Resources, Columbus City Schools. The letter should include your name, your employee ID and your last day of service. You should hand deliver the letter and take a copy to be time-stamped for your records.

- From now until 5 p.m. on Feb. 16, you may declare your candidacy for the following Association positions in the Spring CEA Election: CEA President; CEA Vice President; Governors in Districts 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9; High School Governor-At-Large; 2016 NEA Delegates, 2016 NEA State Delegates-At-Large and 2016–2017 OEA Delegates. Campaigning will run until Mar. 14. Voting will take place from Mar. 1–14, with votes tabulated on Mar. 15. In the event of a run-off election, campaigning will be from Apr. 12–25, with votes tallied on Apr. 26. Declaration of Candidacy forms are available at www.ceaohio.org under the “Forms” tab, or from Judy Nelson at (614) 253-4731. If you have questions, contact CEA Elections Committee Chair Neil Moore at (614) 264-2188.

Know Where You Want To Teach?

Have a particular teaching preference? Now is your chance to make your request for the 2016–2017 school year. Section 211.05 of the CEA Master Agreement allows members to express their teaching assignment preferences in writing for the following school year to the building principal. The deadline is Feb. 1. There are no guarantees, but our agreement gives members this opportunity.

For questions, contact Sophia Fifner, I Know I Can Director of Development and Public Relations at sfifner@iknowican.org or (614) 233-9510.

IKIC works. It’s that simple.