



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

STEVEN L. BESHEAR  
GOVERNOR

700 CAPITOL AVENUE  
SUITE 100  
FRANKFORT, KY 40601  
(502) 564-2611  
FAX: (502) 564-2517

June 22, 2009

Mrs. Mira S. Ball  
Ball Homes  
3399 Tates Creek Road, #1  
Lexington, KY 40502

Dear Mrs. Ball:

With the adjournment of the 2009 General Assembly, it is an opportune time to re-convene the Higher Education Work Group established on October 21, 2008, to address issues of college access and affordability in the Commonwealth.

Our work together has never been more important or more challenging. Our world and national economy is in deep recession – a recession that has challenged our ability in the Commonwealth to provide basic services while continuing to strategically invest in key priorities such as education at all levels.

The troubled economic reality we are facing must force us to re-focus our efforts with the commission and concentrate our attention and resources on the highest priority issues that will allow us to quickly address the questions of affordability and access.

To that end, I have carefully considered the recommendations advanced in the January report, *Expanding College Access and Affordability in the Commonwealth*.

I want to thank you for your hard work and dedication to this task, which has produced practical, well-researched, and innovative ideas to expand college access and contain costs. The report provides an excellent blueprint for our colleges, universities, and postsecondary partners, who will, with the support and encouragement of the Council on Postsecondary Education, work cooperatively to ensure these recommendations are implemented.

Now, as we renew our efforts, I am proposing some changes to the Work Group's structure and mission that will allow us to move forward in the most effective and expeditious manner possible.

As you know, when I originally conceived of this group, I envisioned a two-part structure and charge. The Affordability Subcommittee would deal with issues such as cost containment and state financial aid. At the same time, a Strategic Planning Subcommittee would develop a roadmap for reaching the level of state funding needed between now and 2020 to achieve the ambitious goals of postsecondary reform.



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However, the severity and potential length of the current economic crisis make it increasingly difficult at this time for us to develop a coherent long-term funding roadmap over the next few months. While that is a priority for the future, creating this roadmap in such a rapidly shifting economic environment would not be the most productive use of this group's considerable, but limited, resources.

Therefore, I am requesting that the Work Group disband the two current subcommittees and focus its attention on higher education affordability, and extend the timeline for completing the remaining work to November 1, 2009. Against that backdrop, the following issues represent our most timely and urgent priorities:

(1) Reviewing Kentucky's state financial aid program (both need and merit) to ensure the system adequately meets the financial needs of students (adults and traditional age), and recommend changes to promote greater efficiency, transparency, and access in the system.

(2) Recommending strategies to increase the number of successful transfer students from two-year to four-year institutions for bachelor-degree completion as well as promoting consistency in content and rigor among community colleges in terms of curricula.

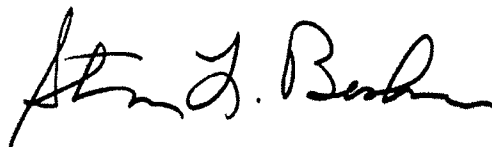
(3) Reviewing proposals as they develop under the auspices of Senate Bill 1 to significantly decrease remediation levels.

(4) Recommending additional cooperative agreements and arrangements that will result in greater operating efficiencies and cost savings for our colleges and universities.

Co-chairs Mira Ball and Pete Mahurin will be contacting you shortly to schedule an upcoming meeting of the Higher Education Work Group to discuss next steps. Increasing Kentucky's educational attainment and improving the quality of our system continues to be one of my administration's highest priorities. Education is the building block for our state's future. But these issues of cost, access and attainment must be addressed if our children and our system of public higher education are to reach their vast potential.

Thank you for your dedication and service, and I look forward to working with you in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven L. Beshear". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steven" and last name "Beshear" clearly legible.

Steven L. Beshear