Dr. Pruitt’s talk speech at KSTA Conference

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqfHEFf8gnQ>

[What'd he say?﻿](http://ngssky.weebly.com/my-ngss-blog/whatd-he-say) 11/7/2015

Today, Kentucky's Commissioner of Education (and science rockstar), Dr. Stephen Pruitt, addressed science teachers from across Kentucky at the Kentucky Science Teachers' Association's annual conference.  If you weren't there to hear the address, weren't following on Periscope, and didn't see my Twitter feed, you missed a great speech.  I've gone back through my notes and my Twitter feed in an attempt to capture some of the highlights for you.  What I quote below are not exact quotes since I didn't record the speech, but it does represent what was presented by Dr. Pruitt, Karen Kidwell, and other science staff from KDE.

About Teaching and Leading

Dr. Pruitt reminded us that it's important that people go into education and stay in education because it's their calling, not because it's convenient.

He encouraged us to always use our teacher voice to say proudly, "I am a teacher."  We never need to marginalize ourselves by saying, "I'm *just* a teacher."

He stated that he took this job to work for kids, and he assured us that his office will not make decisions that aren't in the best interest of students.

He also reminded us that Kentucky has been talked about across the nation in every educational meeting he's been in over the past 5 years.  People know that we're moving forward in Kentucky and they are anxious to follow our lead.  Kentucky has great respect in the educational arena across the country.

About Assessment

KDE is working to make sure that everything is right before releasing any sample items for the new assessment system.  Dr. Pruitt said that although we are slated to have an NGSS summative assessment in 2017, he will not release a bad test, so it may not be ready in 2017.

In further discussion of assessment, KDE staff suggested that if students can answer an assessment question solely by pulling information from something they've read in a book, then the assessment item isn't deep enough.

Dr. Pruitt assured us that the summative assessments that will be designed (probably for 4th and 7th grades) will be very different from the tests we are used to taking.  They will not be focused on memorized facts and vocabulary.

Regarding our current assessment and accountability system, he suggested that our accountability system is far too complex, but that at the state level, Kentucky does a good job of limiting the amount of assessment it places on students.  He did suggest that we need to look at the amount of assessment mandated at the district level, though.

Regarding Science Instruction

Dr. Pruitt suggested that we need to get rid of the myth that students can read about science and understand it.

He mentioned that we need to address instructional practices in science, and we need to ensure that all students have the opportunity to access high-quality science instruction at every grade level. (Eliminate the opportunity gap.) Then, he suggests, we can work on assessment.

"3-dimensional learning is hard" ~Dr. Pruitt

"We are going to have a STEM agenda in Kentucky." ~Dr. Pruitt

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The Takeaway

The new science standards, much like the Common Core State Standards, require a depth of thinking that many students have not been asked to use before.  Instruction and assessment must focus on this depth and complexity as students use Science and Engineering Practices, elements of Disciplinary Core Ideas, and Crosscutting Concepts to explain phenomena from their world.

The bad news

The only bad news that Dr. Pruitt shared today came when he answered the question, "UK or UofL."

His answer was, "War Eagle."

I think we can get past that one (for the kids).

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This is from a blog from David Grossman

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