

BUDGET REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the 2025 Interim

October 15, 2025

Call to Order and Roll Call

The fourth meeting of the Budget Review Subcommittee on Education was held on October 15, 2025, at 10:30 AM in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Kim Banta, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Kim Banta, Co-Chair; Senators and Stephen West; and Representatives Bobby McCool, James Tipton, Shane Baker, Tina Bojanowski, George Brown Jr., Mike Clines, and Timmy Truett.

Guests: Dr. John Garen, Scholar, Bluegrass Institute for Public Policy Solutions; Dr. Paul Coomes, Emeritus Professor of Economics at the University of Louisville; Alicia Sells, Chief Executive Officer, We Lead CS; and Chris Schmidt, Vice President of Technology Products, Fifth Third Bank.

LRC Staff: Liz Columbia, Mariah Derringer-Lackey, David Talley, and Amie Elam.

Teacher Compensation

Dr. John Garen, Scholar with the Bluegrass Institute for Public Policy Solutions, and Dr. Paul Coomes, Emeritus Professor of Economics at the University of Louisville, presented the results of a study examining teacher compensation.

In response to a question from Representative Bojanowski, Dr. Coomes agreed to provide the detailed calculations used in the study to address Representative Bojanowski's concerns regarding the methodology underlying the estimated "on-behalf" payments per classroom teacher.

In response to a question from Representative Truett, Dr. Coomes stated that the entire compensation package, rather than only base salary, was used for calculation purposes. Dr. Garen added that the data utilized in the study are included in the full report. Dr. Coomes further indicated that he would provide the committee with data comparing teachers' fringe benefits to those of other industries.

In response to a question from Representative Tipton, Dr. Coomes clarified that health insurance, pensions, and life insurance were the only fringe benefits included in the

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estimate.

In response to a question from Senator West, Dr. Garen agreed that the purpose of the presentation was to illustrate the salary and compensation packages for Kentucky teachers over time.

In response to a question from Chair Banta, Dr. Garen and Dr. Coomes agreed to send studies from the Bluegrass Institute regarding death benefits for surviving spouses.

2024-2026 Regular Session Appropriation Update

Alicia Sells, Chief Executive Officer of We Lead CS, and Chris Schmidt, Vice President of Technology Products at Fifth Third Bank, addressed the committee regarding We Lead CS's role in developing Kentucky's digital workforce pipeline.

In response to a question from Representative Tipton, Ms. Sells stated that it is more financially viable for school districts to utilize We Lead CS services than to hire an additional teacher. Mr. Schmidt stated that in Ohio, a public-private partnership exists in which employers and the state each contribute a percentage to support student education through We Lead CS.

In response to a question from Representative Bojankowski, Mr. Schmidt stated that investment is essential for developing the depth of understanding and foundational knowledge necessary for success in the workplace, even for so-called "digital natives."

In response to a question from Chair Banta, Ms. Sells answered that twenty-six districts currently use We Lead CS.

There being no further business before the subcommittee, the meeting adjourned at 11:43 a.m.