

Public Education: Tomorrow's Economy Starts Here

**2024 Legislative Recommendations for
Retaining Current Educators &
Recruiting Excellent Educators
for the Future of Kentucky**

**Presented to the
Kentucky Interim Joint Committee on Education
July 18, 2023**

**Kentucky Association of School Administrators
87 C. Michael Davenport Blvd., Frankfort, KY 40601
(800) 928-5272 • www.kasa.org**

Executive Summary

The teacher shortage in Kentucky is real, and it is getting worse. In the fall of 2022, the Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) began leading an effort to develop recommendations for various stakeholders including the Kentucky General Assembly, Kentucky public school districts, and other state agencies to address this shortage. Executive Director Dr. Rhonda Caldwell recruited experts and policymakers from the fields of business and industry, K-12 and post-secondary education, labor, and government, to serve on the Coalition to Sustain the Education Profession. This group of volunteers has stepped forward to assist the General Assembly by providing suggestions and guidance as our elected leaders to address a critical issue facing our commonwealth.

Even a cursory examination of economic research reveals that an educated population is essential for the economic health and progress of any society in the world. Business leaders know that without an educated workforce, their firm's ability to produce and compete on the world stage will be dramatically hindered. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development notes that the benefits of education accrue not just to individuals in the form of higher wages, increased job satisfaction, and better health, but to governments which gain enhanced tax receipts and whose citizens are less dependent on welfare assistance, and to businesses that can employ productive and innovative employees. These sentiments are echoed in research conducted by the World Bank, the Hoover Institution, and so many others that the linkage between education and prosperity on a societal scale is very close to being self-evident.



To have an educated population and all the benefits and blessings that go with it, we simply must have teachers. It has been clearly documented, in Kentucky, in the U.S. as a whole, and in many parts of the Western world, that there is a scarcity of individuals who wish to enter the profession at current wages and under current working conditions. Talented individuals who would be effective educators are rational actors seeking to maximize their happiness and financial security, and when these individuals survey their current opportunities, too many are deciding that becoming a teacher is not their best option to meet their goals. This means our elected leaders must take steps to make the teaching profession one that will attract and retain the best possible talent, or they will be responsible to our posterity for a less prosperous, healthy, and fulfilling future.



The Coalition to Sustain the Education Profession is composed of a Steering Committee to guide the overall work in three focus areas including Teacher Retention (keeping the teachers we have), Teacher Recruitment (attracting new teachers), and Marketing (publicizing the efforts of the other two areas and promoting the profession as a whole). Supporting these focus areas are nine task forces composed of 125 volunteers from across Kentucky, 30 of whom are current practicing classroom teachers.

The Coalition's current focus will be on the first three recommendations as the most impactful to recruiting and retaining high-quality educators in Kentucky. There are an additional 14 recommendations submitted by the various Task Forces that are currently being reviewed and refined in conjunction with the various chairpersons. These are listed for the reader's information, but may be changed, supplemented, or postponed prior to finalization of the recommendations.

Once approved by the Steering Committee in the coming weeks, these recommendations for a legislative program for the 2024 session of the Kentucky General Assembly will be submitted as the complete recommendation to help Kentucky sustain the teacher profession.

Summary of Recommendations

Primary recommendations to be highlighted in today's testimony

1. Increased Compensation for Teachers

Establish a funding stream to support districts to raise the minimum teacher salary in Kentucky to \$45,000 beginning for the 2024-2025 school year, along with upward adjustments to the remaining positions on the salary increments.

Other states, such as Arkansas, that have established higher minimum starting salaries, have reported the need to initially compress their salary schedules in a manner that all veteran teachers earn more than the new starting salary, but not at the same percentage increase to get to the new minimum starting salary. They expect their salary schedule steps and ranks to expand over time with percentage increases.

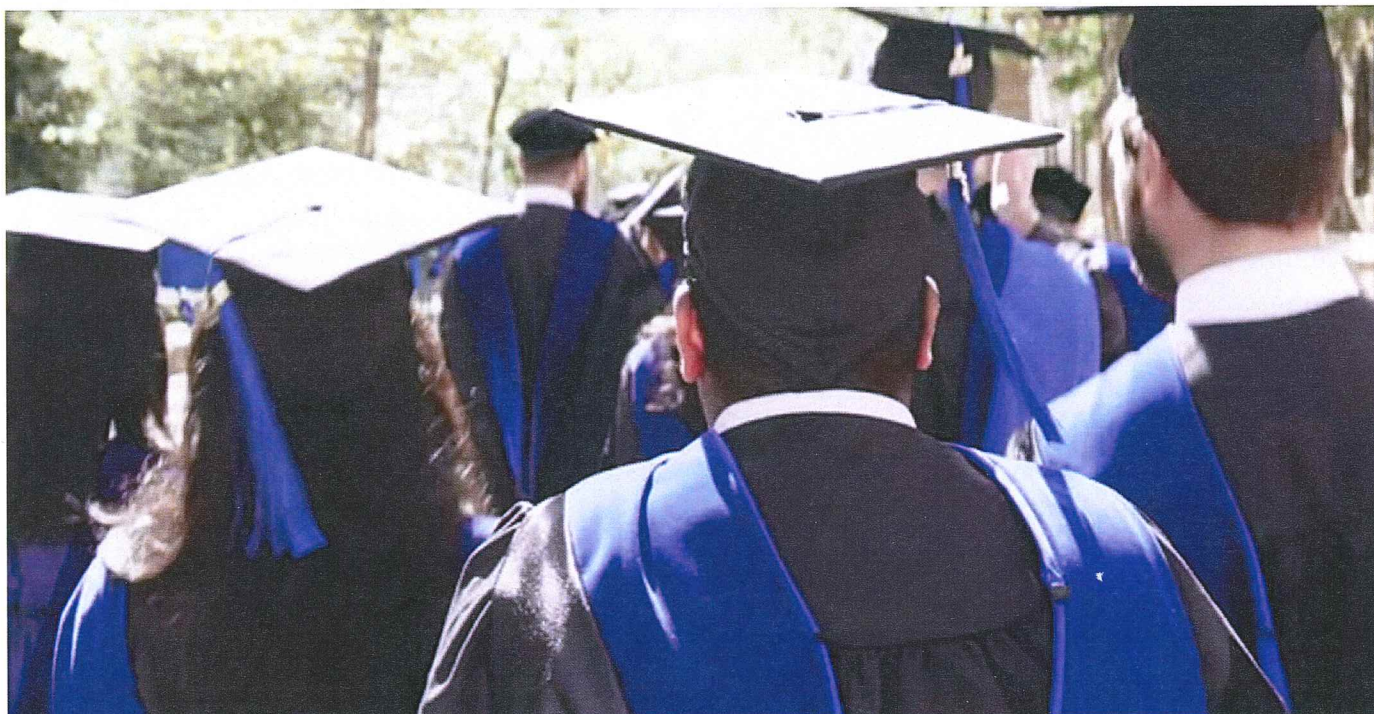
Our proposal calls for a five percent increase for all education professionals in the second year of the FY 26 biennium and a goal of 10 percent over the course of each biennium going forward.

2. Kentucky New Educator Training (K-NET)

A comprehensive and robust onboarding and retention plan featuring intentional recruiting, strong mentorship, comprehensive continuing education, and meaningful tenure attainment for master teachers.

3. Kentucky Educator Stabilization Fund

A fund established to provide financial incentives to work in high need schools, and incentives for critical need positions.



Additional Recommendations to be Brought Forward in Coming Months

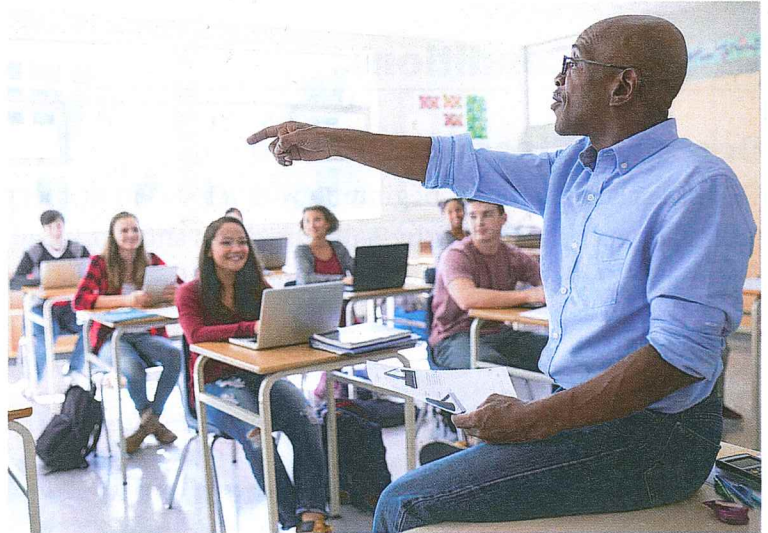
Compensation

Encouraging Classroom Based Leadership

Explore and compile current opportunities for classroom teachers to take on additional paid responsibilities that occur across the state. Consider how these additional responsibilities impact teacher compensation and working conditions.

Retaining Late Career Teachers

Require districts to extend step increases on their salary schedules to include steps at least every five years through year 40.



Benefits

Shared Experience Teacher Scholarships

Create scholarships for graduating high school students from populations typically underrepresented in teacher education programs and in public school settings to assist in certification preparation programs by lessening the financial burden on individuals to enter the field of education and provide programs to enable future students to learn from teachers who faced the same demographic challenges they face.

Student Loan Forgiveness

Establish a loan forgiveness program for teachers. Each teacher would receive \$5,000 per year for the first five years of their career to satisfy qualified accumulated student loan debt.

Teacher Time Allocations

Enact a law to establish clear policies and procedures for how teachers' time is allocated, and it would provide teachers with adequate planning time, breaks, and support staff.

Financial Incentives for Student Teaching

To lower the barrier due to lost wages for pre-service teachers who must be full-time student teachers for one semester, Kentucky should implement a program to provide stipends during this critical clinical experience preparing students to become full-time educators.

Standardize All Leave Allocations

Develop a universal sick and personal leave allocation across all school districts.

Health Insurance Benefits

Continue to improve/expand KEHP benefits.

Working Conditions

Decrease Class Size Ratios

Decrease class size ratios beginning with a focus in primary (Kindergarten-3rd) making the teaching profession more attractive by reducing stress and workload for teachers and leading to higher retention rates and improving the quality of education for Kentucky students.

Other

Statewide Educator Pathway Model

Direct the creation of a standardized educator pathway that pairs every Kentucky school district with a Kentucky College of Education to coordinate matriculation through graduation and teacher certification.

Educator Preparation Assistance Clearinghouse

Consolidate all funding and incentive programs for teacher preparation and certification into one coherent repository/clearinghouse that is easily accessible to all pre-service teachers and teachers seeking additional certification.

Certification Options Reform

Direct the Education Professional Standards Board and the Kentucky Department of Education to review and revise the myriad of certification options and pathways, both regular and alternative, to make them clear and concise and incorporate technological tools such as interactive web pages or AI chat and dedicated individual counselors to assist individuals who are exploring their certification options.

Educator Marketing Campaign

Expand GoTeachKY Marketing Campaign to recruit the next generation of teachers with focused and funded advertising and promotions that reach potential candidates across the commonwealth.

PRAXIS Revisions

Pass a one year wavier to allow teacher candidates to have an additional year to pass all sections of the state required PRAXIS Assessment and provide tutoring programs to teacher candidates to allow professional growth in knowledge and skills required by the state of Kentucky.

Coalition Steering Committee

The Coalition is comprised of a Steering Committee to guide the overall work in three focus areas including: Teacher Retention, Teacher Recruitment, and Marketing. Supporting these focus areas are nine task force sub-groups composed of 125 volunteers from across Kentucky, including 30 currently practicing classroom teachers.

Steering Committee Co-Chairs

David Meinschein
Superintendent, Livingston Co. Schools

Terrie Morgan
Superintendent, Hardin Co. Schools

Focus Area Chairs

Retention Focus Area Co-Chairs

Robbie Fletcher
Superintendent, Lawrence Co. Schools

Jason Glass
Commissioner, KY Dept. of Education

Recruitment Focus Area Co-Chairs

Sally Sugg
Superintendent, Shelby Co. Schools

Aaron Thompson
President, KY Council of Postsecondary Education

Marketing Focus Area Chair

Jason Booher
Superintendent, Mercer Co. Schools

KASA Staff

Rhonda Caldwell, Executive Director
rhonda@kasa.org
(502) 875-3411, Ext 101

Keith Davis, Coalition Coordinator
keith@kasa.org

Abby Piper, Contract Lobbyist
abby@kasa.org

Bob Rowland, Director Government Affairs
bob@kasa.org

KASA Officers

Contessa Orr, President
Superintendent, Muhlenberg Co. Schools

Nick Carter, President-Elect
Superintendent, Breckinridge Co. Schools

Jesse Bacon, Vice President
Superintendent, Bullitt Co. Schools

Bobby Bennett, Immediate Past President
Emeritus Member

A complete list of all Coalition members can be found at: bit.ly/3pMvm30



THE SCHOOL LEADERS ASSOCIATION

Rhonda Caldwell, CAE, Ed.D., Executive Director
87 C. Michael Davenport Blvd. Frankfort, KY 40601
800) 928-5272 • www.kasa.org