

CHAPTER 110**(SJR 52)**

A JOINT RESOLUTION authorizing and directing the Kentucky Department of Education to facilitate a partnership with the University of Kentucky's Human Development Institute, University of Louisville College of Education and Human Development, and local school districts to implement the "Kentucky Peer Support Network Project" in public schools across the Commonwealth.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly recognizes the need to expand and provide meaningful services and supports to students with significant disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Kentucky grants the management and control of common schools, and all programs operated in common schools, to the Kentucky Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, the University of Kentucky's Human Development Institute, through funding from the Commonwealth Council on Developmental Disabilities, in partnership with Kentucky special educators and the Kentucky Department of Education, is training schools and professionals throughout the state to establish Peer Supports and Peer Network Programs; and

WHEREAS, Peer Supports and Peer Network Programs involve identifying and equipping a group of peers to provide ongoing support to individual students with significant disabilities in and outside of the classroom; and

WHEREAS, within inclusive classrooms, Peer Supports programs train peers to provide academic and social support during ongoing learning activities; and

WHEREAS, beyond the classroom, a group of peers form a Peer Network around a student with a significant disability to help foster social connections and friendships between classes, at lunch, in extracurricular activities, or beyond the school day; and

WHEREAS, students participating in Peer Supports and Peer Network Programs experience clear benefits and demonstrate more effective communication skills, increased participation in the classroom, enhanced academic engagement, and increased self-confidence and self-determination; and

WHEREAS, the University of Louisville's "Teaching and Learning Pathway" seeks to reduce the shortage of special education educators in Kentucky by recruiting participants of Peer Supports and Peer Network Programs to pursue a career in special education; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly envisages all local school districts in the Commonwealth implementing Peer Supports and Peer Networks to identify and equip groups of peers to provide ongoing support to individual students with significant disabilities in or outside of the classroom;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. The Kentucky Department of Education shall partner with the University of Kentucky's Human Development Institute, University of Louisville's College of Education and Human Development, and local school districts to implement the "Kentucky Peer Support Network Project" in public schools across the Commonwealth.

➔Section 2. The Kentucky Department of Education shall partner with the University of Kentucky's Human Development Institute and University of Louisville's College of Education and Human Development to identify and secure grant funding for the "Kentucky Peer Support Network Project" and "Teaching and Learning Pathway."

➔Section 3. No later than July 1 of each year, the Kentucky Department of Education shall report in writing to the members of the Interim Joint Committee on Education on the status of efforts to identify and secure grant funding for the "Kentucky Peer Support Network Project." The report shall include a copy of all grant applications submitted by the Kentucky Department of Education or Human Development Institute during the previous academic year for the purpose of funding the "Kentucky Peer Support Network Project." This reporting requirement shall be lifted for any year the Kentucky Department of Education determines the "Kentucky Peer Support Network Project" has adequate funding to maintain operations through July 1 of the following year.

Became law without Governor's signature April 11, 2018.

