

BUDGET REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the 2025 Interim

September 17, 2025

Call to Order and Roll Call

The third meeting of the Budget Review Subcommittee on Education was held on September 17, 2025, at 10:30 AM in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Steve Rawlings, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Steve Rawlings, Co-Chair; Representatives Kim Banta, Co-Chair; Steve Riley, Co-Chair; Senators Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Christian McDaniel, and Stephen West; Representatives James Tipton, Shane Baker, Tina Bojanowski, George Brown Jr., Mike Clines, and Timmy Truett.

Guests: Representative James Tipton, District 53; Senator Stephen West, District 27; Dr. John Williamson, Director of P12 Programs and Superintendent of Model Laboratory School, Eastern Kentucky University; Amy Scarborough, Government Relations Officer, Eastern Kentucky University; Dr. Lynette Breedlove, Director of the Gatton Academy, Western Kentucky University; Ashley Taylor, Assistant Director, Alumni Relations and Outreach, Western Kentucky University; Dr. Joseph A. (Jay) Morgan, President, Morehead State University; Mike Borchers, Special Advisor to the President, Northern Kentucky University; Jenny Sand, Executive Director, Government and Community Relations, Northern Kentucky University; Dan Ginn, Director, Educational Partnerships, Northern Kentucky University; Hargis Davis, Chairman, Gallatin County School Board; Dr. Gary Houchens, Board of Scholars, Bluegrass Institute for Public Policy Solutions.

LRC Staff: Mariah Derringer-Lackey, Justin Smith, Ethan Williams, and Amie Elam.

The minutes from August 20, 2025, were approved by voice vote.

Funding Innovation for K-12 Education with Postsecondary Institutions

Representative James Tipton and Senator Stephen West discussed 2025 Regular Session Senate Bill 207, which outlines a framework for schools of innovation. Representatives from Model Laboratory School, Gatton Academy, Craft Academy, and Young Scholars Academy also shared information about their programs' history, mission, and accomplishments.

In response to a question from Chair Rawlings, Senator West explained that while other states may issue private charters, all charter schools in Kentucky are public. He added that

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the current proposal would give districts greater control.

In response to a question from Representative Truett, Senator West clarified that entities would not be permitted to cherry-pick students. He explained that 2025 Regular Session SB 207 does not establish new schools, but instead allows an entity to assume control of an existing school, which would remain subject to the same open enrollment standards.

In response to a question from Representative Brown, Senator West explained that while wealthy families in Kentucky have long had access to school choice, this measure would extend the same opportunity to students from lower-income families. He added that the state would continue to play an oversight role and noted that the inclusion of a limited-term contract would, in fact, result in greater accountability.

In response to a question from Representative Bojanowski, Senator West explained that the primary distinction between this measure and a typical charter school bill is the initiation of the initial request. He added that teachers would remain district employees and retain their existing pension benefits; however, the measure would allow for the possibility of increased teacher salaries. Representative Tipton clarified that a school district could implement these changes within its own capacity, rather than entering into a contract with a third-party entity.

In response to a question from Representative Riley, Senator West said that the same rules for suspension and expulsion that apply to a typical school district would apply to these schools.

In response to a question from Senator McDaniel, Dr. Williamson explained that Model Laboratory School offers minimal financial aid and that students must be able to pay tuition to attend. He added that nearly 20 percent of students have at least one parent employed by Eastern Kentucky University.

In response to a question from Representative Clines, Dr. Williamson explained that Model Laboratory School has no admission requirements and provides small tuition discounts for the children of faculty members.

In response to a question from Senator West, Mr. Ginn explained that students are on campus during their 11th and 12th grade years. They arrive at 8 a.m., attend classes, network with staff, and connect with peers before being picked up by buses at 2 p.m. He added that students take a full course load.

In response to a question from Senator West, Dr. Houchens explained that the budget reconciliation package requires scholarship-granting organizations to be established to

screen applicants.

There being no further business before the subcommittee, the meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.