

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the 2022 Interim

September 20, 2022

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 4th meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Education was held on Tuesday, September 20, 2022, at 11:00 AM, in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Max Wise, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Max Wise, Co-Chair; Representative Regina Huff, Co-Chair; Senators Danny Carroll, David P. Givens, Denise Harper Angel, Jimmy Higdon, Stephen Meredith, Gerald A. Neal, Adrienne Southworth, Reginald Thomas, Stephen West, and Mike Wilson; Representatives Shane Baker, Kim Banta, Tina Bojanowski, Jeffery Donohue, Myron Dossett, Mark Hart, C. Ed Massey, Bobby McCool, Felicia Rabourn, Steve Riley, Killian Timoney, James Tipton, Russell Webber, and Lisa Willner.

Guests: Jim Flynn, Executive Director, KY Association of School Superintendents; Emma McCallie, Senior Director of Grow Your Own, Tennessee Department of Education; Senator John Schickel; Laura Edwards, parent; Mark Messingschlager, Director of Financial Aid, Thomas More University; Joel Edwards, 11th Grade, homeschool student; and Svava Ghering, 12th Grade, homeschool student.

LRC Staff: Jo Carole Ellis, Lauren Busch, and Maurya Allen.

Approval of Minutes – August 16, 2022

Representative Timoney made a motion to accept the minutes of the August 16, 2022, meeting. The motion was seconded by Senator West and passed by voice vote.

Tennessee Teacher Apprenticeship Program

Jim Flynn, Executive Director, KY Association of School Superintendents, briefly discussed the teacher shortage crisis facing Kentucky's schools. Mike Borchers, Superintendent, Ludlow Independent Schools, spoke of the results of a Northern Kentucky school district survey. The findings illustrate the teacher shortages they are facing, including the fact that over 500 employees and teachers are eligible for retirement. Their retirements would further compound the difficulty schools are facing to fill positions, even using emergency certification expansion. Mr. Flynn said the education profession is worth the investment as the parent profession for all professions, as students get their foundations for future learning and careers in the primary and secondary schools. Schools are also

fundamental building blocks of community, as every citizen is invested in the teaching of the next generation. Funding increases for schools, teachers, and school safety in the most recent budget was appreciated and much needed, but there is still more work to do. Making the teacher training pathway a high demand sector would allow utilization of work ready scholarships as well as elevating the profession in the minds of the public and students.

Emma McCallie, Senior Director of Grow Your Own, Tennessee Department of Education (TDE), introduced the innovative approach Tennessee took to address current staffing challenges as well as expanding the pool of quality teachers in the future. Educator shortages is not a new challenge, especially in the ESL and special education areas. Teacher apprenticeships address not only these high needs sectors, but also expand the pool of quality applicants to fill all vacancies. The fundamental challenges faced by candidates are the cost of becoming a teacher, the lack of preparation for the realities of teaching among new teachers, and the fact that teachers do not always reflect their communities. The Tennessee Grow Your Own program was designed to address these three challenges. Grow Your Own is a program that recruits and prepares local community members to enter the education profession through an apprenticeship program. The initial investment included \$2 million in state funded grants. They began with 14 educator preparation program partnerships, and there are now 65 partnerships in districts throughout Tennessee.

Tennessee was the first state to receive federal approval by the U.S. Department of Labor for a K-12 teacher apprenticeship model. By leveraging federal recognitions and funding sources, Tennessee can address shortages with state reviews, monitoring, and locally driven apprenticeship programs. The critical aspect for this program is getting on-the-job training and mentorship so that no new teacher who has come through the apprenticeship program is inexperienced, having acquired hands-on experience during their apprenticeship. They also incorporate an ‘earn-as-you-learn’ element to receive wage increases as they gain higher level skills. Program participants receive nationally-recognized credentials as they matriculate and can then take their skills to any school district, even nationally. The Grow Your Own program is a collaborative solution to expand the pool of quality teaching candidates through on-the-job learning, based on a proven apprenticeship model used in many career pathways.

In response to a question from Representative Banta, Mr. Borchers said he would research how many teachers have moved out of the classroom into consulting positions and return that data to the committee.

Responding to a question from Representative Bojanowski, Ms. McCallie said the strategy has been to use state and federal funds to compensate mentors through stipends. Additionally, mentor teachers and apprentice teachers work closely together and the apprentice teachers gradually expand their responsibility and involvement to contribute more fully into the classrooms as they move through the programs.

Responding to a question from Representative Willner, Ms. McCallie said the initial launch of the Grow Your Own program in 2020-2021 started with \$4 million from state funds (\$2 million in each year). The \$20 million of federal investment came later and is being utilized to expand and stabilize the program.

In response to a question from Senator Wilson, Mr. Flynn said there is an option for a teaching assistant to teach while acquiring a teaching degree, but the Grow Your Own model is more robust. Ms. McCallie said there are 58 districts in Tennessee with the Teaching as a Profession pathway built into their school curriculums. Additionally, she said many teachers recruit against themselves, and it is important for high school teachers to speak highly of the profession at career fairs. Individual districts also know their own communities and know who to contact to recruit individuals changing careers or retirees looking to reenter the workforce. The program has been very successful largely thanks to the TDE's partnership with the Tennessee Department of Labor and using workforce investment messaging.

Responding to a question from Chair Wise, Ms. McCallie said some universities have gained enrollment, but other educator preparation programs have had to be convinced of the value of the apprenticeship program. TDE is working closely with traditional educator preparation programs to build programs responsive to the needs of districts.

In response to a question from Senator Thomas, Mr. Flynn said Kentucky has been a leader in education reform and has built systems that support children as they grow into citizens and contributors to their communities. Additionally, investment in school safety and resiliency has been critical to create the spaces for students to learn and teachers to teach. Collaborative discussions have historically been the best way to create strong solutions and similarly will be the way forward to address teacher shortages.

Responding to a question from Representative Tipton, Ms. McCallie said teachers that leave the profession in the first three years typically do not return. Those that stay through the fifth year are most likely to be in the classroom many years more. Teacher apprentices get to experience the aspects of a teacher's day-to-day, and receive support through compensation and mentorship. This greatly increases the likelihood that they will be prepared to weather the first three years of teaching in their own classrooms.

In response to a question from Representative Huff, Mr. Flynn said there is a significant challenge preparing teachers for handling students with special needs and those with behavior problems. There needs to be more resources devoted to staffing, as well as training teachers to work in these challenging environments. Teachers need to be better equipped to handle student behavior, as do administrative staff, and judges in the juvenile justice system to help get troubled kids back on track. Mr. Borchers said districts need to address the social-emotional struggles for staff in the same ways they do for students.

Teachers in special education face enormous challenges and deserve additional compensation to prevent burn-out and leaving the profession.

Proposed Legislation – KEES Scholarships for Homeschool Students

Senator Schickel spoke briefly to the history of the legislation and why it is necessary to invest in homeschool students going into higher education. Laura Edwards, parent, said she was an educator who went on to homeschool her own children. Her daughter was a very high achiever in homeschooling and yet when she went to college, she was ineligible for much of the KEES award. Students in certified high schools are eligible for up to \$10,000 in KEES, while homeschoolers are only eligible for \$2,000 in KEES based on ACT scores. Ms. Edwards explained that in Kentucky, college readiness is determined by GPA and test scores, yet some KEES money is awarded based on GPAs that would not indicate college readiness. To address the concern regarding homeschool transcripts, Ms. Edwards suggested alternatives for high school GPA to be used to award KEES to homeschoolers, primarily using dual credit course GPAs or using standardized test scores. She briefly discussed the merits of these suggestions as well as how other states have addressed this same issue. Mark Messingschlager, Director of Financial Aid, Thomas More University, spoke to the rigor of dual credit courses and the excellence of homeschool students in those courses. Additionally, homeschool students routinely apply for and receive merit-based scholarships based on their academic achievement and success.

Joel Edwards, a homeschooled junior from Northern Kentucky, said he enjoyed the ability to take coursework on an accelerated schedule through homeschooling. The flexibility of homeschooling has also allowed him to start a successful lawn care business. He said the expansion of KEES to homeschoolers would encourage more high achieving homeschoolers to pursue higher education. Svava Ghering, a homeschooled senior, also spoke to her experience as a homeschooled student and her apprenticeship with an optometrist.

In response to a question from Representative Bojanowski, Mr. Messingschlager said information regarding the impact of an expansion for homeschool students would be available from the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) who administers the KEES program. He added that because KEES is statutorily funded first, before the other lottery funded grants, any expansion would be fully covered.

In response to a question from Senator Higdon, Ms. Edwards said there are benefits for each of the proposed models, but the ones receiving the highest preference from homeschool groups is the ACT blended with a first year GPA.

Responding to questions from Senator Givens, Ms. Edwards said successful homeschools and traditional classrooms both make education relevant to the students. Students who are not engaged in coursework struggle regardless of setting. Homeschool parents who get caught up in checking off curriculum checkboxes, will struggle to keep

their students engaged and take ownership of their own learning. Ms. Ghering said she had a positive and personally successful experience with homeschooling, but two of her siblings did not benefit from homeschooling and went to public school. Mr. Edwards said his sister had excelled in homeschooling and that was largely because she was driven to achieve more. He has also seen friends that did not become as engaged in their homeschools and choose a more traditional path.

Senator Southworth shared her own experience as a homeschool student who did not even consider Kentucky colleges because of cost. If homeschool students must achieve a 3.0 GPA before applying to dual credit courses, that should be taken as a starting point for KEES awards as well.

In response to a question from Senator Wilson, Ms. Edwards said approximately 10 percent of children in Kentucky are enrolled in a homeschool, and typically 30 percent of that population are high-schoolers.

Senator West said the KEES program is a state program that should be fairly distributed to all Kentucky students, including homeschool students.

Representative Timoney said the time has come to address KEES equity for homeschool students and to ensure that students in homeschools are being adequately educated.

Consideration of Referred Administrative Regulations

Todd Allen, General Counsel, Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), was present to address questions regarding administrative regulation 702 KAR 1:140 – Student records, hearing procedures.

In response to questions from Senator Givens, Mr. Allen said the regulation is necessary to implement federal FERPA laws, as well as recently passed state laws. A school district had approached KDE with questions regarding the regulation in December of 2021, as portions of it were confusing. KDE took the opportunity to review the regulation for clarity and to align it to state and federal law. He does not believe that this regulation is used frequently, however, the department is not apprised of all such hearings held at the district level. The disinterested party requirement is required by federal law. The section regarding the certified individual was the part in question in December 2021. The desire was to expand the definition to clarify that a classified staff member, certified by EPSB, could serve as a hearing officer.

In response to a question from Senator Southworth, Mr. Allen said the local districts will develop more detailed procedures, based upon this regulation, for the structure of local hearings. The regulation forms the state guardrails and standard requirements for hearings. The intent of the regulation is to clarify that it is an informal process and that disputes can

be settled before implementing formal hearing procedures. No action was required on this item.

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:52 p.m. The next meeting of the committee will be Tuesday, October 18, 2022, at 11 a.m.