

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION authorizing and directing the Kentucky Department of
2 Education to facilitate collaboration between the University of Kentucky's Human
3 Development Institute and local school districts to implement the "Kentucky Peer
4 Support Network Project" in public schools across the Commonwealth.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

27 WHEREAS, the University of Louisville's "Teaching and Learning Pathway" seeks

1 to reduce the shortage of special education educators in Kentucky by recruiting
2 participants of Peer Supports and Peer Network Programs to pursue a career in special
3 education; and

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

8 NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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

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

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