

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9 NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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

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

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

- 1 adequate funding to maintain operations through July 1 of the following year.