



NEWS RELEASE

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KEA Applauds Governor Beshear's plan to balance the state budget while maintaining funding for public education

Kentucky Education Association President Sharron Oxendine today praised Governor Steve Beshear's plan to balance the state budget. "Despite record state funding shortfalls and a state economy that does not yet show signs of recovery, the Governor is maintaining his commitment to K-12 schools, students and school employees, and to keep Kentucky learning." Oxendine said.

KEA urges members of the Kentucky General Assembly to maintain school funding, either by passing Beshear's plan or creating one of their own that prioritizes education equally.

KEA agrees with Governor Beshear that no other state function is more important than its investment in our children's future. Their future will determine the future of our state and whether we all thrive. "We are heartened that the Governor literally is willing to put his money where his mouth is," said Oxendine.

According to the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center, Kentucky children face more educational obstacles than children in all but three other states. The center's research also indicates that Kentuckians get better results than almost any other state for their investments in public schools. KEA believes the Governor's plan to maintain funding for public schools while most other states are cutting such funding will allow Kentucky to make gains in educational achievement. These gains will translate to gains for the Commonwealth's economy, health and safety.

KEA also praised President Barack Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and increased levels of federal reimbursement for Medicaid expenses. Oxendine said, "Without this federal stimulus funding, the Governor would almost surely have had to make deeper cuts to school funding."

KEA is especially appreciative of the Governor's plan not to cut basic school funding through the SEEK program, to maintain one percent raises for teachers and classified staff, and to fund retirement and health care for school employees. "Teachers and classified staff design and deliver our children's education. If we do not



attend to their economic and professional needs, our public schools and students would suffer.”

Oxendine went on to say, “Of course, we are not satisfied with a budget that makes no increases to school funding. At the same time, KEA recognizes the difficult position the Governor and legislators are in with a projected deficit of nearly one billion dollars in the fiscal year that begins next month. Our children and our schools, however, continue to have real unmet needs.”

KEA supports comprehensive tax reform to create a system that sustains important government functions like public schools through good times and bad. KEA supports a tax system that grows with the economy and taxes Kentuckians in proportion to their ability to pay. KEA supports legislative action to create such a system.

Oxendine said, “No one really likes taxes, but everyone wants good public schools, good roads, and safe communities. As Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said, ‘Taxes are the price we pay for civilization.’”

KEA represents nearly 41,000 educators all across Kentucky, including active teachers and school classified employees, students studying to become teachers, and retired educators.