

KEA President's Points

January 10, 2018



The Kentucky Education Association is the preeminent voice for quality public education.

We unite, organize and empower members to advocate for themselves and to ensure a quality public education for every Kentucky student.

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Dear Member,

Last week was the first week of the 2018 regular Legislative session. Time was spent by legislators debating rules and leadership positions. Both the House and the Senate gavelled in for brief periods of less than one hour each day. Many bills related to education have been filed. Some of those relate to school vouchers, tuition tax credits, financial literacy, site based councils, tenure, principal selection, and many more. While many of these issues could have detrimental effects on public schools and public school employees we continue to remain vigilant on the main task of the session: the budget. The Governor's budget address is scheduled to be on January 16th. Cuts to education are likely if tax reform, or other means of new revenue are not enacted. Sustaining a defined benefit pension system that will be available to public employees in the future also creates challenging budgetary decision making. Please stay aware of what's happening in Frankfort. Our students and Kentucky's thriving public schools depend on it!

PENSION NEWS

There has been no pension reform bill filed or reviewed by KEA at this time. There are drafts of bills that have been sent to TRS for scoring but that is the only information we can confirm. Please try and refrain from spreading speculation and unsubstantiated information on social media as this only adds to misinformation and rumors being spread that deepen the unnecessary angst of our members. I assure you that KEA will send out timely and accurate updates when we know about them.

Bill Watch

This bill is slated to be heard in the Senate Education Committee on Jan. 11th at 11:30 am ET

[SB 36](#) (BR 251) - [R. Alvarado](#), [M. Wilson](#), [M. Wise](#) AN

ACT relating to opportunities in education and making an appropriation therefore.

Create a new section of KRS Chapter 141 to establish a separate income tax credit for tuition assistance based on contributions made to a qualified scholarship-granting organization; create a new section of KRS Chapter 141 to provide goals and reporting of metrics related to those goals; amend KRS 141.0205 to establish the order in which the credits may be taken; create a new section of KRS 136.500 to 136.575 to allow financial institutions to take the tax credit against the tax imposed by KRS 136.505; create a new section of KRS 136.500 to 136.575 to order all tax credits; create a new section of KRS Chapter 156 to require the Kentucky Department of Education to publish a list of certified nonpublic schools and nonpublic schools seeking certification; require the Department of Revenue to report information to the Legislative Research Commission; amend KRS 131.190, 131.135, 131.618, 131.650, 131.990, 141.389, and 131.020 to conform.

KEA OPPOSES THIS BILL- If your Senator is on the Senate Education Committee please contact them and ask them to VOTE NO on SB 36! Click [here](#) for a list of Senate Education Committee Members. Please see the talking points below.

Regardless of what they are called, vouchers, tuition tax credits, and education savings accounts rob public schools of vital funding and resources.

- o We need to ensure that taxpayer dollars are invested in public schools - not shifted into vouchers for religious and other private schools - so that every child in every community has the opportunity for a great public education at a neighborhood public school.

- o Vouchers take scarce funding away from public schools and give it to private schools that are unaccountable to the public. Private schools are not required to meet any public standards for accounting, education or transparency.

- o At a time when our nation and our state are continuing to face serious budget challenges, the last thing we need to do is spend scarce taxpayer dollars on vouchers for private and religious schools that can pick and choose students based on economic status, academic achievement, disabilities, or even gender.

- o Vouchers only weaken our public schools, and

even with vouchers, most parents still would not have the money to pay for private schools. We simply cannot afford to fund two different education systems- one private and one public-on the taxpayer's dime.

Please take a look at the following resource from NEA- [NEA Tax Subsidies Policy](#)

Looking for an easy way to keep track of the status of bills filed? Want to know the daily schedule of what's happening at the Capitol? Do you want to be able to watch the House and Senate proceeding live? Then these websites should be bookmarked as favorites, or made as apps on your phone:

<http://www.kea.org/issues-action> , www.lrc.ky.gov and <https://www.ket.org/legislature/> . These three sites are very helpful in keeping track of what's going on in Frankfort and are updated every 24 hours.

Please consider taking time during the 2018 Legislative Session to visit your legislators and talk to them personally about how you feel about pensions, public education and public service. If you want to know more about how you can arrange to visit legislators please contact your local president or KEA Staff.

We must continue to let legislators know that we are paying attention. Please call your legislator at 1-800-372-7181! Remember that snow days are the perfect opportunity to join us at the Capitol! KEA's team of lobbyists will be there every day and we love having company. Please make plans to attend your Day of Learning and join us on days when school is canceled due to weather if at all possible to do so safely.

Dates to Remember:



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| Jan. 15 | MLK Holiday- KEA Offices Closed |
| Jan. 16 | Deadline for: KEA Constitutional Amendments, Filing for KEA Election |

Sincerely,

Stephanie Winkler

KEA President

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