

TODAY/TOMORROW

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Changes, Changes, Changes!



The past few months have been a very challenging time especially for older adults and people with underlying health conditions. We hope this finds you healthy and secure in your protected environment. Do not hesitate to contact KEA-R if you have a need or concern that we may be able to help you with.

What a year this association year has been!

- We have gone from a governor who demeaned public school educators and devalued public education to a governor with a keen focus on the role that public education plays in a democracy.
- We have gone from a Kentucky Board of Education with tunnel vision seeing only vouchers and charter schools to a newly appointed board filled with some of the brightest and best educators in the state.
- We have gone from face-to-face meetings to virtual ones. Zoom meeting? We thought Zoom (along with Zap and Bang) was a sound effect left over from the old Batman TV series.
- Our newly elected governor, Andy Beshear, presented a budget that funded the requests of educators and the needs of school children.

And then the sky FELL! Not Chicken Little as a former governor mocked but Coronavirus along with Covid-19, the disease it causes.

Changes, Changes, Changes!

Stay-at-home strategies, quarantine, hand washing, face masks, non-essential businesses closed, large gatherings discouraged, schools forced to offer non traditional instruction---on and on and on. Will it ever end? Maybe, maybe not. Some of the changes we have seen in the past three months may remain—more virtual meetings, virtual doctor visits, masks in public, less travel---but we will get through this and adapt to our new reality because we are resilient.

Changes, Changes, Changes!

Most major association governance meetings begin in the spring and continue into the summer. Coronavirus gave us more grief---do we postpone, cancel, conduct virtually? When to reschedule or do we reschedule?

KEA-Retired General Meeting---canceled. Adoption of constitutional amendments and officer elections will be postponed until the 2021 General Meeting. The current constitution allows for the continuation of current officers until such an election can be held. The 3 positions that must be filled prior to June 30 (KEA-R members of the KEA Board, the KEA Budget Committee, and the KEA Teaching and Learning Committee) will be filled by the KEA-R Board until the next General Meeting at which time these elections will also be held. In this newsletter you will find a report delineating the implementation of NBI 1 – Better Beginnings.

KEA-DA---Virtual. Retired delegates to the KEA delegate assembly will receive notification by direct mail of when this meeting will be and how to access the

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link allowing you to participate in the meeting. Reports from the President, the NEA Directors and the Standing Committee chairs will be presented. Nomination and acceptance speeches for offices will be included allowing elections to be held. The KEA budget and the legislative program for 2020-21 will be presented for adoption. If you are one of 107 delegates to this meeting, please make every effort to participate. You may use a smart phone, a tablet, or a computer to gain access to the virtual meeting.

NEA-Retired Annual Meeting—Virtual. KEA-R has 17 delegates to this meeting. Once the specifics are determined, the delegates will receive a direct mail communication providing the information they will need to access the meeting. The meeting will be held June 29 and 30 from 3:00 P to 5:00 P EDT (2:00 P/4:00P CDT). Voting for officers will be conducted via a mail in paper ballot. Again, smart phone, tablet, or computer.

NEA RA—Virtual. This is scheduled for July 2-3 from 3:00 P ET 7:00 P ET both days. Other information will be forwarded to our 17 delegates when available. The agenda will be narrowed to election of officers, recommendation regarding the general election of President of the United States, and presentation of the Strategic Plan and Budget. Any debate will be limited. Again, smart phone, tablet or computer.

In our past normal, each of the meetings would have provided an opportunity to raise funds for the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education. Money donated to the NEA Fund is used to assist candidates for national executive and legislative elective offices. Please consider making a donation to the NEA Fund. Any amount no matter how small would help elect education friendly candidates across the nation. You may donate via this web site, www.neafund.org/donate.

Changes, Changes, Changes! Do they lead to Opportunities?

As you read through the various articles in this newsletter, you will notice a strand of engagement emerging. This is definitely intentional. Please read the article by Assistant Executive Director Rich Mullins. He writes about the value you as a KEA-Retired member bring to KEA. Then scan the other articles and the district news section to see how others are engaging their district area retired members. What opportunities do you see to engage with KEA-R? Feel free to steal, modify, or expand on any of these in your own district.

As Aibilean says in the movie, *The Help*, “*You is kind. . . You is smart . . . You is important.*” I will add, and *You is valuable!* My apologies to Mrs. Briggs, Mrs. Hodges and Mrs. Hines – my high school English teachers who are cringing as they read this over my shoulder.

Stay #Healthy at Home.

Brenda

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is seeking retired educators who would like to work with a team to proctor digitally based assessments on tablet with fourth- and eighth-grade students in schools. You must be available for online and in-person training during the month of January 2021 and able to proctor between January 25 and March 12, 2021, when work is available. NAAEP offers paid training, hourly wages paid weekly, and mileage reimbursement for local driving. This is a part-time, temporary position.

Visit <http://www.WorkNAEP.com> and provide your contact information. We will send you a link to our online application in July 2020.

For more information about NAEP, please visit: <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>

Questions? Email: NAEPrecurit@westat.com

WESTAT

EOE Minorities/Females/Protected Veterans/Disabled

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Better Beginnings – A One Year Report

Lisa Petrey Kirk

Approved at our annual meeting last year, Better Beginnings is a program implemented under the guidance of Juanita Spangler (Eastern KY), Marie Nance (Western KY), LuAnn Asbury (Northern KY), Nancy Reed (South Central, KY) and Lisa Petrey-Kirk (Central KY). The program was to build a voluntary base of retirees to work with teacher's years 1-5 who request assistance in an informal mentorship. After contacting superintendents and principals, teachers were paired with a volunteer to provide mentorship through site visits, phone calls and emails agreeing together on what issues or problems on which to work.

Project overview:

Eight districts were approached with the opportunity for mentorship; six districts became involved to some degree. One district thought there would be too much "KEA influence" and declined. Two districts did not have retiree volunteers to implement mentorships. Mentorships were formed in 5 districts.

Conclusion:

- More work must be done to engage more volunteers.
- A minimum of five volunteers should be available in each district.
- More work must be done to introduce and engage district leaders of the value of the program.

Mentorship work

Most work was done by 6 volunteers with 16 teachers in varying levels of contact. Six volunteers mentored 16 teachers on varying issues and varying amounts of time. Teachers preferred virtual contacts and preferred using emails, phone calls, text messages for communication. Volunteers did a variety of things such as classroom observations, researched materials, taught model lesson, worked on behavior plans for classroom, provided guidance on basic issues/questions. Two of the teachers required large amount of time from the mentors while the majority required several contacts or just a confidence building phone calls. In one case, a principal requested a mentor with the teacher agreeing. This teacher was experiencing significant issues.

Conclusion:

- Care must be taken in pairing volunteers to teachers so they begin on some common ground whether it be subject, grade level, or school knowledge.
- When working with a principal request it is imperative to build a degree of confidentiality between volunteer and teacher.

Overall, this is a good use of retiree time and experience, gives KEA R members visibility and has a very positive effect on the mentored teacher. However, to attempt this is overwhelming if not enough volunteers exist in an area. Principals and superintendents prefer that mentors are retired from their districts. Mentors should keep an informed record of their time and contact with teachers. Mentors and teachers should make a written plan before beginning the mentorship. A better procedure for requesting volunteers' needs to be in place and a basic training should be conducted with the volunteers.

KEA --- A Nonpartisan Advocate for Public Education

The 2020 session of the Kentucky General Assembly was bound to be an historic one. What started as a normal session where we sought to increase needed resources for students and educators alike, shifted into one requiring The Commonwealth to marshal all educational resources toward continuing student

education while keeping them safe in this year defined by a global pandemic.

In many ways, this pandemic showcased both how educators are continuously asked to shift, often times with little notice, to meet the evolving needs of our students, and how vastly underfunded the infrastructure has been. Nontraditional instruction has shown the need for resources as well as how critical our classified and certified staff are.

We laud the budgets proposed by Governor Beshear, the House, and the Senate all with increases to the SEEK formula. Due to Covid-19, the legislature took the extraordinary step of passing a one-year budget which, even in the midst of this global crisis, included a general fund appropriation of \$6.2 billion.

The budget fully funded the Teachers Retirement System of Ky (\$1.2 billion) as well as the health insurance plan for retired teachers under age 65 (\$61.7 million). Any changes to defined benefits were rejected. The monies generated in TRS will not be, as of this budget, swept to other state retirement systems.

Senate Bill 8 allocated \$38.4 for implementation of the School Safety and Resiliency Act, 2019 SB 1. Included were reforms such as \$18 million to upgrade school facilities, \$13 million for the School Safety Commission, and \$7.4 million for new mental health professionals.

Senate Bill 42 requires student identification cards to include domestic violence, sexual assault, and suicide prevention hotlines. This will ensure that students and their families have access to potentially lifesaving resources.

House Bill 312 supports children in foster care who often move from one school to another by ensuring greater communication between the former and current schools. This lifts possible barriers to success.

House Bill 458 allows for teaching to be delivered through electronic means for students who are unable to attend school in-person due to being hospitalized in a different district.

Senate Bill 63 provides an opportunity for high school dropouts 21 years of age or older to complete their high school diploma via virtual programs provided criteria is met. This can be done in a district of their choosing.

Senate Bill 158 changes the timeline to identify schools in the bottom 5% from the current annual reporting to every three years, allowing schools more time to improve their standing. High school seniors will no longer be required to pass state tests or demonstrate readiness for life after high school to graduate.

Senate Bill 174 allows educators to earn Rank II status by obtaining National Board Certification.

House Joint Resolution 82 directs the commissioner of education to convene a strategic assessment and accountability committee to study ways for improving the current approach to student assessment and school accountability to better meet the diverse needs of Kentucky students. Findings will be reported to Interim Joint Committee on Education by Dec. 1, 2020 and again on Dec. 1, 2021.

The session is over but the work of KEA continues. We must be resolute that as the path forward from COVID-19 develops the investments needed in public education and keeping the pension promises are unimpeachable parts of the conversation and paid for in the outcome.

This means that we need you to continue your home lobbying efforts. Please continue conversations with the Representatives, the Senators, and those running in the 2020 races. When you have those conversations, feel free to let us know by using the online lobby sheet found on the KEA website.

Thank you for all that you do! KEA-Retired has been the steady presence in our successful efforts to not only gain investments in public education, but also our successful efforts in stopping some of the most potentially crippling legislation proposed to dismantle public education.

Yet, our work continues!

Coronavirus Dilemma

Every day many Kentuckians spend their late afternoon watching “Andy at 4” or if you live in the Central time zone, “Andy at 3.” Governor Beshear opens every broadcast with the phrase “We will get through this. We will get through this together.” This sentiment rings very true for those of us who are privileged to be elderly. We wonder if the coronavirus will next attack the persons, we hold dear or maybe even us. We listen intently to the stats, hoping for a decline in new cases and no deaths due to Covid-19. We have practiced the requested mitigation: frequently washing our hands, staying home, limiting our number of visitors, and wearing masks when venturing outside.

Mitigation has apparently worked for us. At the time of this writing, there are less than 20 members of Teachers Retirement System (TRS) who are age 65 or older who have received treatment for Covid-19; none of these have passed away. We do not have similar data from the health insurance company that provides coverage to retirees in the Kentucky Retirement System; but one could assume their data would be similar.

Aon, a large professional service firm, serves as an insurance consultant for TRS. The firm has created models showing estimates of how many people eligible for TRS sponsored health insurance (40,782 members and spouses,) primarily Kentucky’s retired public-school teachers, could die in this pandemic. Aon’s estimates, which have been presented to TRS and its trustees, show the potential consequences. This information is organized in the table below.

Sensitivity of Mitigation through September 30, – TRS Eligible Population -- Data provided by AON

	Predicted Number of Deaths	Predicted Number Hospitalized in Critical Condition
Continue Shelter-At-Home through Sept. 30 with non-essential businesses shut down	21	75
Safer-at-home through June with spike in cases leading to full shut down through Sept. 30	44	152
Safer-at-home with non-essential businesses opening with restrictions until Sept. 30	161	565
Safer-at-home through May 31 followed with full reopening through Sept. 30	1342	4863

In reviewing these Aon models, remember ours is a population at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 due to being older than the general population and dealing with more medical factors than the general population. These factors include such medical issues as high blood pressure, heart problems, breathing difficulties, diabetes, lupus, and other auto-immune diseases. The more factors one has, the more susceptible to the virus (s)he is.

These numbers are fluid and depend upon the amount of mitigation practiced, a cure or some other major change. The model indicates the number of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths will increase regardless of when shelter-at-home ends. But the modeling also found that the percentage of that increase is smaller for the retired teacher population the longer mitigations remain in place. If shelter-at-home ends May 31, the Aon model shows a 150% increase in deaths by June 30. If this practice is extended to June 30, the one-month increase on July 31 is 56%.

Brenda’s thoughts: It is frightening to look at how drastically the reduction of stay-at-home efforts increases the impact of coronavirus on our population. This information is provided to help you make your own wise choices. Please give serious thought to continuing **#Healthy at Home** practices and using any resources provided in your area. If it sounds like I am begging, I am. We will get through this. When I say “We will get through this together,” I am affirming **WE** and **TOGETHER**. I look forward to entering a new normal allowing WE-all KEA-R members-to work TOGETHER for the betterment of our retirement.

KEA-Retired, the Bedrock of KEA Advocacy

Rich Mullins, Assistant Executive Director for Affiliate Relations

Once an educator, always an educator. Educators are a profession built on the foundation of those who came before them. As a member of KEA-Retired, you have been on the forefront of fighting for public education for decades. While I've never been an educator, I have been fortunate enough to work for you through KEA. I have the pleasure to work with our Kentucky Education Support Professionals Association, Aspiring Educator program for student teachers, New Educators, and of course, our retirees like you! While every facet of our organization is integral to protecting public education, our KEA-Retired are the bedrock of our advocacy.

As a retired educator, you have seen the shift in policy over the years and helped us fend off countless attacks on public education. More than that, you represent an invaluable wealth of knowledge that other organizations could never hope to assemble. Within KEA-Retired, our members house more than 400,000 years of educational experience. This kind of expertise cannot be replicated or bought and makes the KEA-Retired the most brilliant resource for education issues and policy in the entire state.

As an expert in your field, you have the unique privilege to be leaders for our Aspiring Educators and New Educators. Education has a cyclical nature where everything old becomes new again. Various programs and structures are rebranded and sold to districts across our Commonwealth. You have seen this countless times over your career and can help protect our newest members from falling victim to the whims of policymakers who spend more tax dollars on purchasing curriculum than investing in your profession. These quick fixes often lead to more educators leaving the field. You know this all too well as you watched friends and colleagues leave your worksites over the years.

KEA-Retired is one of the largest programs of KEA and has the ability to be the most influential group within our organization, as well as in local and statewide politics. Through guiding our newest members, you have the ability to ensure that our organization flourishes well into the next century. Our newest and future educators will benefit from your knowledge and from seeing you as role models who have earned every hard-fought victory you have won, from defeating malicious potential legislation to ridding Kentucky of one of the most destructive governors we have ever seen.

Your voice is the most important tool you have as a member of our organization. You use it to help lead in your profession, but you can also utilize your voice to influence and advise elected officials. Now more than ever, we need you to continue contacting your legislators early and often to let them know what is best for students, educators, and public education in Kentucky. You can leave messages for your legislators at the Legislative Message Line (1-800-372-7181). If you don't know who your legislators are, you can find out at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/findyourlegislator/findyourlegislator.html>. While you couldn't be a member of your local school board as an active educator, now that you are retired, you can run to be on your local school board and help shape decisions with the knowledge and expertise you hold. Choosing to run for office would mean adding a valuable educator voice to any forum you choose. Thank you for allowing me to work for you and I look forward to helping you lift your voice.

This Call is For You!

In the next few weeks you may receive a phone call from one of the KEA-R Officers, your KEA-R board member, KEA staff, or other KEA-R members. KEA-R wants to know you are OK, not suffering from Covid-19 or other issues.

Many of you have changed your contact information since you retired. You may have moved, changed your land line or cell phone number, or added an e mail address. The caller will be glad to update your contact information during the call. If you do not receive a call, please share this information with Kathryn Whitlock, 401 Capitol Ave., Frankfort KY 40601.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Land Line: _____

Cell Phone: _____

E mail address: _____

Preferred method of contact: _____



Your having received this newsletter means you are a member of Kentucky Education Association – Retired. All active members whether you joined as a classified active member or a certified active member become members of KEA-Retired upon retirement.

Districts: News & Notes

Third District Education Association-Retired – took a step into the technological world of campaigning by piloting the use of HUSTLE, a software program. This allowed the sending of text messages to members explaining why then candidate Andy Beshear was worthy of educators' votes. Many thanks to Empowered Educators, David Strode and Margaret Groves, for their willingness to try this new approach.

Fifth District News – Like most of the other districts, Fifth had many plans for the year. Beyond the regular meeting, we had several project events and a social event planned. However... life happens on your way to follow your plan! Safe to say our year was packed with regular meetings, legislative visits, campaign work, a social event and reading events. We held two regular meetings both concentrating on legislative action and one centering on the Retired Grant Training. It was an eye opener for the 12 folks who were about to make the training. We customized it by turning the process of budget building into a simulation, interesting enough our groups increased educator salaries by cutting carefully other areas and not proposing new revenue streams! Following our training session, we had a pottery painting session. Winner Mona Ball and her amazing platter! We continued to work on a project to capture updated contact information funded by the NEA grant and had members who frequented the Legislature. James Ray Morgan and Lisa Petrey-Kirk logged in 18 visits, attending a variety of meetings and visiting with legislators. We became believers in year round contact and had some of our best meetings at Frisch's and through texting with our representatives. Finally, we originated a program called Destination Read. In this retired teachers sign up to be readers at district elementary schools, an active teacher/principal in the school organizes a schedule and we arrive in mass and read a book appropriate for the level, leaving the book, bookmarks, pencils and an item related to the book behind. Each book bears the label "Provided to you by a retired teacher". It's been a tremendous success with the kids and teachers and gives up that much appreciated contact with "the kids". To date we have descended on five school visits, and best estimate read to about 650 kids! Several events have been cancelled but there's always tomorrow... well next school year!

NKEA Retired – had an interesting year, in addition to conducting our regular meetings (which we were able hold) we partnered with our NKEA friends in hosting "Read Across America" at the Florence Mall on Saturday February 29. NKEA Retired participated in planning and organizing the event. We helped setup as well as taking down the props. We manned the table for the volunteers and guest readers to sign in. Activities included Guest Readers, face painting, Middle School students performances, Public Libraries were present as well as NEA Member Benefits representatives. We also had Dr. Seuss characters including The Cat in the Hat, Thing 1 and Thing 2. Age appropriate books and gift bags (RAA book-marks, stickers, pencils and erasers) were given to children attending the event. There was a backdrop where parents could take pictures of their children with one of the Dr. Seuss characters. We were grateful to students from public schools in our district who volunteered their time on a Saturday to help make the event a success.

Upper Cumberland Education Association-Retired – will hold their Annual Meeting on Tuesday September 29, 2020 at David's Steaks in Corbin. 11:30am lunch (provided) Business meeting 12pm. Agenda items: 1. Election of President, Vice-President, Secretary for terms (2020-2022) 2. November 2020 elections 3. Other items of interest to members. ALL KEA/UPPER CUMBERLAND EDUCATION-RETIRED MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND. For additional information contact: President Pat Bingham, Bell County (fsdir@hotmail.com), Penny Robinson, Vice-President, Clay County, or Sandra Harbin, Secretary, Bell County.

Middle Cumberland Education Association Retired – For the third year, MCEA-R was honored to receive a Read Across America grant. Each year we have worked with a different school in the MCEA area. This year's grant included, buying books for the library, prizes for a art contest and volunteering to read to primary classes at Pulaski Elementary School. On March 3rd we enjoyed sharing a favorite book with the students.

KEA-Retired/Central District – members always enjoy helping with the Read Across America activities at Fayette Mall in Lexington. First, 12 members put together nearly 1000 bags (each bag had a book) to be distributed to children at the event. Then we showed up at the mall to participate in welcoming readers, youngsters and parents to our tables. (This year we made it under the wire before everything shut down.) KEA-Retired member Janet Cartmell chairs the RAA committee for Fayette County Education Association that sponsors the festivities. The theme this year was "Wild About Reading". Decorations included wild animals, palm trees and jungle things. "Clifford the Big Red Dog" made an appearance and stood still for many pictures with excited children. Stations were set up for local personalities to read to small groups. KEA-Retired/Central District members were an important part of RAA as we greeted everyone and handed out the book bags. We loved seeing so many enthusiastic young readers.

Eastern Kentucky Education Association-Retired – focused much of their time this year on Political Action. We not only spent a great deal of time in Frankfort; we participated in a lot of activities in our own communities. From parades to attending rallies, writing post cards & editorials to phone banks, emails & text messages, we wore our "Red for Public Ed" and carried our signs. We vowed to let our voices be heard one way or another.

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*A Quarterly Publication for
members of KEA-Retired*



Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
Paid
Louisville, KY
Permit No. 406

KEA-Retired

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Oh The Places We'll Go... You Could Go To

Lisa Petrey Kirk

It happens standing in the line at Kroger, across the gas pumps and from table to table at the steakhouse (well pre-virus), people see you and ask "Heard you retired, miss teaching?" If you're like me, you have an answer and it usually ends with "but I sure miss the kids. It's a common denominator in most retiree's conversation. Don't miss the meetings, the lesson plans and the early mornings and late evenings, but we miss the kids. Another given is that it is just hard to corral retired folks long enough to get them involved in the district activities. So pair the two and try this project with your district.

Destination Read was born when Fifth district leaders were looking for a way to engage members, connect them to the active teacher in the classroom and connect with kids! A year later we have made five school wide visits and connected with best guess over 650 kids of elementary age!

It's really pretty simple. We invite and engage retirees who are interested. They pledge to give up about 2 hours, buy a grade appropriate hardback book and an item that is directly connected to the book. (For example, one teacher chose to read *Where Is Green Sheep?* to kindergarten kids and bought a green sheep stuffed animal to the reading. The district then adds pencils and bookmarks and a ribbon tied bundle of Sharpie's with a colorful note that reads "Thank you for Making a Mark in the Lives of Children!" All the books are labeled with a district sticker reading "Provided by a public school retired teacher"!

Behind the scenes it's a little more work. An active KEA teacher from the building takes on the task of meeting with the principal, engaging teachers who want a reader, and building a schedule that honors the school schedule and gets the approval of the principal. When reading day rolls around, retirees gather and the excitement is palatable. Readers meet their class, read the book they selected to share engaging the children as they read. They present the book and items to the classroom teacher and goodbyes and smiles abound! Some retirees opt to read to multiple classes. Some read picture books and some a couple of pages in a chapter book. In most cases, schools ask for a return visit and best of all teachers say that the kids are eager to check the book out and take it home to share! One reader reads a book to Kindergarteners entitled *Where is Green Sheep?*, she keeps the stuffed green sheep in a bag till the end of the story and the kids are charmed lining up to take a turn holding him. Another teacher dresses like Humpty Dumpty and reads the book *After the Fall*. The kids are enthralled with what Humpty did after his fall, eager to tell the story of when they had boobos and were hurt too It's been a great project and although we were unable to read to several schools we had planned to visit this year. There's always Humpty Dumpty, Green Sheep and next year...