

# 2024 KEA Delegate Assembly to be held virtually

Delegates to the 2024 Delegate Assembly will convene virtually April 4-5 this year and get down to business establishing the Association’s path through 2024. This year’s DA theme is “Promote, Protect, and Strengthen Public Schools.” The KEA Delegate Assembly has met each spring since 1872 and is the highest decision-making body for the Association.

Pay, compensation, respect, and opportunity for both certified and ESP educators are major concerns for public educators. The educator shortage across the commonwealth has become epidemic. Gov. Beshear has championed educators and pressured the legislature to raise certified and classified public school employees’ pay 11 percent, but a majority of our legislators continue to drag their feet while classrooms go empty and busses remain idle for lack of teachers and drivers.

As the state’s largest professional association for public school educators, KEA is well positioned to communicate educator concerns to legislators and offer potential solutions to these ongoing challenges. KEA members have actively visited, phoned, and emailed their legislators advocating for a pay raise that respects the professions and can help stem the tide of educators leaving the classroom. Many have posted viral videos calling on the general assembly to act. Statistics and research support the harsh reality: legislative inaction on this issue is a direct cause of the current problem, which will only get worse without substantial investments in pay hikes. Television news and local newspapers are covering shortages in every legislative district across Kentucky. Make no mistake: legislators are feeling the heat thanks to the action and activism of KEA members and leaders.

The Delegate Assembly will begin its first business session at 7 p.m. Eastern on Thursday, April 4 and will reconvene at 9 a.m. Eastern on Friday, April 5. During that time, delegates will conduct the pressing business of the association, including electing one (1) NEA State Director and one (1) KEA Ethnic Minority Director at Large. They will also debate and approve the 2024-25 KEA budget and the legislative program for the coming year.



**Kentucky Education Association**  
Unite • Organize • Empower

**152nd DELEGATE ASSEMBLY  
APRIL 4 – 5, 2024**

**ATTENTION DELEGATES**

Assembly delegates are encouraged to submit proposed Legislative Program Amendments by 5 p.m. on Monday, April 1, 2024. Amendments must be submitted through the portal located at [KEA.org](https://www.kea.org) under the Members Section, 2024 Delegate Assembly.

## KEA Member Dorian Hairston’s Book of Poetry Speaks to the Integration of Baseball, Race, Grief, and Fatherhood



*The former UK baseball star, Fayette County Education Association board member, and elementary school teacher’s book “Pretend the Ball is Named Jim Crow, the Story of Josh Gibson,” brings history alive.*

Dorian Hairston is a lot of things. He’s an educator, KEA leader, husband, father, son, former baseball star, and now a published author of a book that is a collection of poems about legendary Negro League baseball star Josh Gibson, who never made it to the majors due to segregation. At a book signing and launch party in February, Hairston welcomed a full house of friends and fans to the Carnegie Center for Literacy in Lexington and read from his poems. He often writes from Gibson’s perspective. In one poem he writes a letter to

Gibson’s wife, who the ballplayer met at 17. Gibson became a widower with two young children by age 20. “Dear Helen, I snuck this one into the bucket of game balls. Sealed the envelope by stitching it closed with the bright red laces from your favorite shoes. Spent hours trying to squeeze each second of two years into five and a quarter ounces of white leather wound tight around the core of a bomb. This is my first letter, the first of

*Continued on page 4.*

# Election for NEA RA Statewide Delegates for KEA Ends March 31

Each year, Active KEA members elect statewide delegates to attend the NEA Representative Assembly, which will happen this year in Philadelphia, July 3 to 7.

Each affiliate of the National Education Association is allotted delegates based on its Active membership; this year Kentucky can send 19 delegates. Elections are held based on two voting regions, East and West (see the chart below), with 8

delegates elected from the East, and 11 elected from the West.

Remember, only Active members are eligible to vote in this election; Aspiring Educators and Retired members will elect their own delegates in separate elections.

On March 1, all eligible Active members received an email from KEA at the email address we have on file for you. Included in that message is a link to the ballot along with the member number and passcode

you will need to log in. If you haven't received an email or if you have any trouble accessing the website, please contact Sherry Castle at sherry.castle@kea.org or John Lynch at john.lynch@kea.org. You can also call 502-875-2889.

Electing KEA representatives to the national meeting ensures that Kentucky's members are heard and can influence the work of the NEA. Please take a few minutes to vote before March 31.

## Counties by Region

Counties in the West Region					Counties in the East Region				
Allen	Christian	Hart	Marshall	Shelby	Adair	Clay	Harrison	Lincoln	Perry
Anderson	Crittenden	Henderson	McCracken	Simpson	Bath	Clinton	Jackson	Madison	Pike
Ballard	Cumberland	Henry	McLean	Spencer	Bell	Elliott	Jessamine	Magoffin	Powell
Barren	Daviess	Hickman	Meade	Taylor	Boone	Estill	Johnson	Martin	Pulaski
Breckinridge	Edmonson	Hopkins	Metcalfe	Todd	Bourbon	Fayette	Kenton	Mason	Robertson
Bullitt	Fulton	Jefferson	Monroe	Trigg	Boyd	Fleming	Knott	McCreary	Rockcastle
Butler	Graves	LaRue	Muhlenberg	Trimble	Boyle	Floyd	Knox	Menifee	Rowan
Caldwell	Grayson	Livingston	Nelson	Union	Bracken	Franklin	Laurel	Mercer	Russell
Calloway	Green	Logan	Ohio	Warren	Breathitt	Gallatin	Lawrence	Montgomery	Scott
Carlisle	Hancock	Lyon	Oldham	Washington	Campbell	Garrard	Lee	Morgan	Wayne
Carroll	Hardin	Marion	Owen	Webster	Carter	Grant	Leslie	Nicholas	Whitley
					Casey	Greenup	Letcher	Owsley	Wolfe
					Clark	Harlan	Lewis	Pendleton	Woodford

# Nominations for Delegates to NEA Aspiring Educator Leadership Conference & 2024 NEA Representative Assembly due by April 10

KEA Aspiring Educators (AE) Program will hold an online election, if necessary, to choose its voting delegates to the 2024 NEA Representative Assembly, scheduled to be held July 3-7 in Philadelphia. Elected delegates will also attend the Aspiring Educators Leadership Conference, which will also be held in Philadelphia and will occur June 28 to July 2, immediately prior to the Representative Assembly. The number of delegates elected will be based on KEA Aspiring Educators membership as certified by NEA on March 15, 2024.

Any member of KEA Aspiring Educators who wishes to represent Kentucky as a delegate to the Representative Assembly

and Aspiring Educators Leadership Conference must **complete and submit the official nomination form to KEA by 5 p.m. Eastern on Wednesday, April 10, 2024.** The form is available at KEA.org and must be submitted online.

If there are more nominations than delegates allocated, an online election will be held at KEA.org beginning at 6 a.m. Eastern on Tuesday, April 23 and ending at 6 p.m. Eastern on Tuesday, April 30. If you are a member in good standing of KEA Aspiring Educators, you will be eligible to vote in the election. To log in you will need to provide your last name, the last four digits of your social security number and the name of the county in which you attend

school. The results of the election will be unlocked and posted on the KEA website on Wednesday, May 1.

KEA provides a stipend to all elected delegates to offset the cost of attending the NEA RA. KEA Aspiring Educators affiliate will pay for transportation, lodging and meals for delegates to the Aspiring Educators Leadership Conference. All delegates must submit a completed voucher to KEA, with appropriate receipts, within 60 days of adjournment of the NEA RA, as required by KEA Board Policy 3.2. Successful delegate candidates must read the guidelines for delegates posted at KEA.org and agree to be bound by them.



# Artistic Skills Shine Through in Student #DifferenceMakers Art Contest

*Winners were chosen from hundreds of talented student-artists*

Talented student-artists from all across the commonwealth entered this year's KEA #DifferenceMakers art contest, and judges from the Membership, Organizing, Visibility and Engagement (MOVE) Committee were tasked with choosing only four winners among the hundreds of entries. One winner was chosen for each of the P-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12 grade categories.

Each entry depicts a public-school employee who has made a difference in the student-artist's life and portrays the person's job within public education. Any media can be used to create the artwork, and entries varied widely.

Winners in each of the four grade categories receive \$50 and their instructor also receives \$50. The winning entrants will be framed and displayed publicly at the Kentucky Department of Education. All entries will also be displayed on the **KEA.org** website.

Winning entrants in this year's contest are: Reuben Montgomery from Providence Elementary School in Webster county, in the grades P-2 category; Liliana Gonzalez from Reidland Intermediate School in McCracken county, in the grades 3-5 category; Lexi Justus from Lexington Traditional Magnet School in Fayette county, in the grades 6-8 category; and Avory Haublin from Washington County High School in Washington county, in the grades 9-12 category.

Each year, the amazing artistic talent of Kentucky students continues to impress, and 2024 was no exception. #DifferenceMakers continues to be one of KEA's most popular contests, so please encourage your students to participate and celebrate the educators who make a difference in their lives. Check KEA's social media platforms and email updates for next year's #DifferenceMakers art contest.



P-2 Winner  
Reuben Montgomery



3-5 Winner  
Liliana Gonzalez



6-8 Winner  
Lexi Justus



9-12 Winner  
Avory Haublin



nea **Members**  
Insurance Trust

## NEA Member Exclusive

Get this benefit at no cost to you

As an active NEA member, did you know you receive \$1,000 of term life insurance at no cost to you? You're already enrolled in the NEA® Complimentary Life Insurance Plan, but it's a good time to make sure you've selected a beneficiary.

When you do, you'll not only get peace of mind that your loved ones will receive their benefits in a time of need, but you'll also get our new tote bag—free!



**Scan the code or go to [neamb.com/free-tote](https://neamb.com/free-tote) to review your beneficiary and claim your tote!**

DT200323



(Continued from page 1.)

many. Just one of these can't hold all this love, so I will pretend each ball can fly its way through the stars to you. I'll split each message up. Ball after ball, home run after home run, 'til God get tired of all them broken windows up in heaven, and bring me there too. Love, Josh."

Hairston credits Mrs. Schlick, his high school English teacher at Bates Creek High School in Lexington, with pushing him to seek out and discover a subject like Gibson, who to many has been lost to history.

Hairston also acknowledges other important influences in his life and in his writing. First and foremost, Hairston is committed to family. He and his wife and two kids live in Lexington a few miles from his boyhood home, where his parents still reside. He loves to grill for his family and friends.

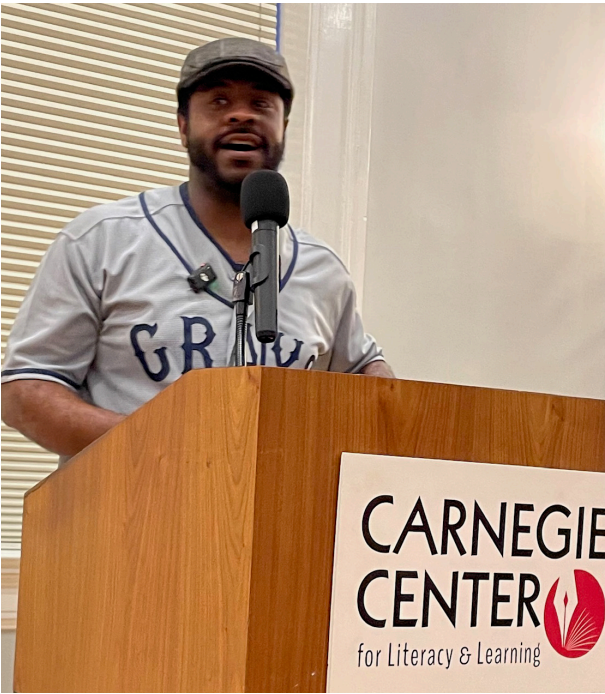
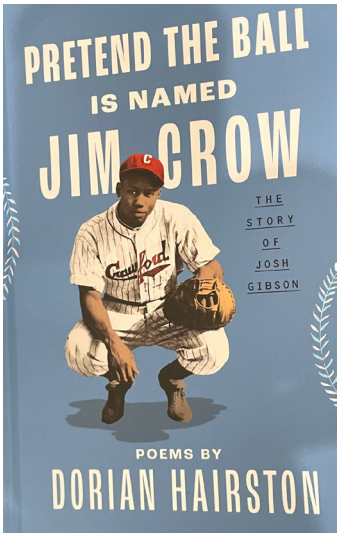
Frank X. Walker, a former Kentucky Poet

Laureate, is Professor of English and African American and Africana Studies at the University of Kentucky and directed Hairston through the UK's Masters of Fine Arts program. Walker introduced Hairston at the launch party and praised him for having his priorities in order and finding the time to publish this work.

"Dorian has always been focused on the prize," says Walker. "If you look close enough to Dorian without even looking too far, you will see his beautiful wife and kids, his commitment to family and the fact that he consciously made a decision to commit to education like his parents."

"And then this book project. This journey is long and wide, and every single one of these words has been rushing to get here. So, when you hold this book, see all those people that he loves standing with him."

Hairston's involvement in KEA and his local education association comes from his mom Valerie, who is a Lexington teacher and



KEA member as well.

"My Mom was the first person to tell me to join the union because it brings people together," says Hairston. "KEA is our strongest advocate for issues that directly affect us educators, our students, and our communities. It unites us and lifts our professions."

KEA is proud to call Dorian Hairston one of our own. We congratulate him on the publication of his book and wish him continued success, both in the classroom and out.


To purchase a copy of Dorian's book, get an autographed copy, or see a schedule of upcoming readings, go to [DGHpoet.com](http://DGHpoet.com) or visit [kentuckypress.com](http://kentuckypress.com).

***"Hairston's involvement in KEA and his local education association comes from his mom Valerie, who is a Lexington teacher and KEA member as well."***


In the dark about

# STUDENT DEBT


Prudential's new study reveals that many current students borrow for college without understanding the terms of their loans.

**74%**  Don't know how long they have to pay off their loan.


More than half of students—56%—don't know that college federal loan repayment starts 6 months after graduation.

**53%**  Don't know what their monthly payment will be.


Those who do know expect monthly payments between \$200 and \$300—in line with the nationwide median of \$203 for today's borrowers.

**59%**  Don't know how much of their income will go toward repayment.

One in four graduates in debt say if they'd known more about their loans in college, they would have chosen higher-income careers.

**52%**  Don't know if anyone cosigned their loan.

Two million Americans age 60 and up carry student loans for themselves or their children. Among those 65 to 74, 27% have loans in default.





**Let KEA help you with Student Loan Debt!**

Learn more about the federal CARES Act.

You can be on the path to student loan forgiveness with KEA's help!

**Go to [www.neamb.com/student-loan-debt](http://www.neamb.com/student-loan-debt) for questions and more information.**



# Statements of candidates for KEA Offices at the 152nd Delegate Assembly\*

Delegates to elect NEA State Director, Seat 2,  
and KEA Ethnic Minority Director at Large, Seat 2

\*Per KEA Board policy 8.1, "Campaign rules and regulations for elections conducted at the Delegate Assembly," KEA will publish candidate statements or biographical information along with a photo if submitted by the applicable deadline.

## Tyler Murphy for NEA State Director, Seat 2



Serving as your NEA Director is an honor and exceptionally rewarding. You know I am no stranger in our shared work and fight to support each and every child in our schools, protect public education in every community, and advocate for the educators who make it all possible.

I am proud to stand for you and with you from Frankfort to Washington to help educate and mobilize elected officials and our members as we recruit allies and partners in our mission.

In my first term, we have made significant progress even in a challenging political environment. Serving on NEA's Legislative Committee, I bring the voice of Kentucky students and educators to the table to ensure issues like repealing GPO/WEP, supporting rural schools, and protecting ESPs remain key elements of federal lobbying efforts. We've secured bipartisan support for many of these priorities--and all six Kentucky House members now co-sponsor GPO/WEP repeal.

All eyes were on us in 2023 when we re-elected Governor Andy Beshear. Our national association was instrumental in this work—I stood for us in multiple NEA Board meetings to support channeling needed resources to Kentucky for this effort. And I joined Andy, NEA President Becky Pringle, and local KEA members and leaders on the campaign trail mobilizing educator support.

Our work is only getting started. Every time I step foot in DC, I remember I'm there for each of you and—most importantly—the children entrusted to our care. Thank you for trusting me with this work and sharing it with me.

## Barry Woosley for NEA State Directors, Seat 2

## Vickie Gregory for KEA Ethnic Minority Director at Large, Seat 2

## Latonia Wimberly for KEA Ethnic Minority Director at Large, Seat 2



Greetings, I am Latonia Wimberly, and I am announcing my candidacy for the Kentucky Education Association Ethnic Minority Director. In this position, I will bring a deep understanding of diverse cultures and perspectives, which can enrich the organization's approach to inclusivity and equity.

My presence as a leader can inspire and empower individuals from all backgrounds, providing role models and representation within the organization. I will offer unique insights into the needs and preferences of diverse communities, contributing to more effective outreach and engagement strategies.

Also, I will act as a bridge between different cultural groups within the organization, fostering understanding and collaboration. Having faced many challenges related to discrimination and bias, I will bring high resilience and determination to this role.

With a diverse perspective and having navigated various cultural spaces that required a demonstration of high adaptability and flexibility in leadership style, I will provide innovative solutions and approaches that benefit the organization. For these reasons and many others, I ask for your vote!

# Educators Across KY Deserve A Raise

Currently, Kentucky ranks 44th in the nation for average teacher starting pay at \$38,010, 40th in average teacher salary at \$54,574, and 48th in average earnings for classified staff at \$26,686.

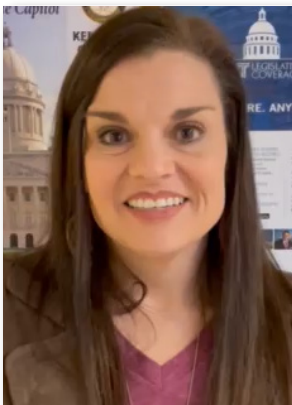
When faced with a shortage of qualified workers, it's obvious that Kentucky's General Assembly knows what to do: provide overdue raises to those working in the profession.

In 2023, to recruit and retain social workers, state police officers, and state employees, legislators tackled systemic staffing problems by providing an 8 percent across-the-board raise that included annual salary adjustments going forward.

In 2021, state police received a \$15,000 per year pay bump and 6.5% raises, while social workers received 10% raises.

Today, in 2024, facing a massive educator shortage across the commonwealth, legislators should again know what to do: address educator pay similarly to truly solve the problem and ensure that Kentucky's students have quality educators and receive a quality education.

Neither classified nor certified employees in Kentucky schools have received a statewide mandated raise since 2009. KEA members are taking their dissatisfaction to legislator's offices in the halls of the statehouse. Here's what KEA members are telling their representatives:



***"The people here in Frankfort are the ones responsible to give us resources. We have wonderful things going on in our building. But do we have enough bodies to actually implement those programs with fidelity so that we can serve our kids the best way possible? We want to do what's best for our children every single day and provide the absolute best educational experience possible for them. But we need those resources. We're here to plead with them and to let them see what it's like to be a day in the life of a teacher. So that they know what we need, and they can kind of see our side of it a little bit and just get some insight into what we've got going on."***

**— Brooke Vincent, Teacher,  
Warren County Education Association**



***"I ask you to please increase funding for public education and also provide the funds for pay raises because these children deserve our best here in Kentucky. Let's show them that education matters."***

**— Jennifer Hamlet, Bus Driver,  
Davis County Education Association**



***"As I've been a teacher, I've never not had a second job. I've always done something in the summer or something on the side and that barely makes ends meet. Even with a two-income family. It's incredible the pressure they put on educators. I've seen numerous educators leave the profession because they're not getting paid. A lot of people leave because of the rising cost of daycare. They can't afford it. Our lack of benefits disproportionately really affects women that are in the workforce because they have to choose to spend time with their kids or work. At the end of the day, educators don't get what they deserve."***

**— John Epley, Teacher,  
Davis County Education Association**



***"We are losing teachers every year to different jobs or who went to another state to work. We're not making enough money to sustain our living. We aren't retaining teachers because the job is very challenging, and they can make as much money doing something else that has fewer challenges. And as much as we love children, we love what we do, this isn't sustainable. Financially, we need support from everyone to help us reach our goal of getting the best teachers."***

**— Heather Howard, Teacher,  
Boone County Education Association**





***“I’m here to talk to my legislators about the importance of a fully funded education budget when Kentucky has a surplus of money. I think that it’s a great time to set up our education system to be a beacon to other states. We can have fully funded transportation and teacher PD, higher paying salaries to recruit and retain teachers, and overall have better student experiences. It’s so important to have a well-rounded education budget, and that’s what I’m here to ask from my legislators.”***

**— Sage Bray, Teacher,  
Madison County Education Association**



***“Our voice is supposed to be what guides and drives them. But if we don’t speak to them and tell them what is important to us, they get to make all the decisions without any input. So, I really want to encourage everyone to reach out to your elected officials, make phone calls, emails, come up to Frankfort in person, face to face, any of those things to really engage with your elected leaders. Because they need to hear from us and what’s important to us to do their job more effectively and appropriately.”***

**— Jolena Sizemore, Teacher,  
Laurel County Education Association**



***“The time is now to talk to legislators because there are so many things going on right now that need our voice. I hope that more people speak up and talk to their legislators. I hope that they call, text, email, and visit with legislators here in Frankfort. Our voices are important, and we would be stronger if all 40,000 KEA members across the state were to have their voice heard by legislators.”***

**— Sara Fay, Teacher,  
Boone County Education Association**



***“I’m here to speak to our legislators to hopefully indicate to them the pressing need for a raise for educators in Kentucky, one of the most underpaid states in the country.” We’re not competitive as far as salaries go, and we need to find ways to encourage other educators to come into the profession before we run out of new recruits to fill the void of the massive teacher retirements that are on the horizon.”***

**— Ryan Ray, Teacher,  
Fayette County Education Association**



***“The profession needs to be elevated and the pay needs to reflect that. As someone who came from a corporate background and has two master’s degrees, I left making more than I ever will teaching. At this point in my career, year nine, I have coached as supplemental duties, served as department chair as supplemental duties. My husband works at EKU, so between the two of us we are very much public servants. It is hard to make a living wage these days.”***

**— Amber Snell, Teacher,  
Madison County Education Association**



***“I want to uplift and support the 11% raise that Governor Beshear proposed in his budget and really encourage our legislators to hold that. It’s well deserved. There’s been too many years since we’ve had a mandated, statewide raise given to us. In many of those years they’ve given raises to other public agencies or police or fire departments. But they continually cut us out every year.***

*Our teachers are leaving. They’re leaving because they don’t have the pay. They don’t have respect. They don’t have support. They need all three of those to be successful. The raise would be a very big incentive for teachers to stay on board. If we want to support public education, we need to support our teachers and support their families.”*

**— Kumar Rashad, Teacher,  
Jefferson County Teachers Association**



***“Pay is a huge issue that needs to be addressed, not just for teachers but for classified staff as well. This being a budget session, everything concerning our job, whether we like it or not, revolves around funding. You know there’s a problem when I have a masters’ degree and 13 years of experience, but yet my spouse works in manufacturing with a bachelor’s degree and makes \$27,000***

*more a year than I do. If we want to retain teachers, we’ve got to step up our game. Like every legislator that I talked to, they all agree that we need to pay teachers more, that we need to increase funding for PD, for supplies, and for transportation costs. But yet they don’t seem to have any answers on how they can accomplish that. Just excuses for why they’re not doing it.”*

**— Ashley Burnette, Teacher,  
Warren County Education Association**

## KEA NEWS

**Volume 60 Issue 2  
March 2024**

**Eddie Campbell  
President**

**Joel Wolford  
Vice President**

**Mary Ruble  
Executive Director**

**David Patterson  
Editor**

Periodical postage paid at Williamsport, PA.  
**KEA News** is published four times a year by the Kentucky Education Association, 401 Capital Avenue, Frankfort, KY 40601. Phone 800-231-4532.

**KEA News** is the official publication of KEA and reaches all KEA members. The annual subscription rate to members is \$1.50, included in annual dues. The subscription rate to others is \$5. ISSN 0164-3959

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to **KEA News**, 401 Capital Avenue Frankfort, KY 40601





Kentucky Education Association  
401 Capital Avenue  
Frankfort, KY 40601

[KEA.org](http://KEA.org)

Periodical Mail-Time Sensitive

Address service requested



# KEA NEWS

The preeminent voice for quality public education

## What's Inside This Issue:

- 2024 KEA Delegate Assembly to be held Virtually
- KEA Member Dorian Hairston's Book of Poetry
- Election for NEA RA Statewide Delegates for KEA Ends March 31
- Nominations for Delegates to NEA Aspiring Educator Leadership Conference & 2024 NEA Representative Assembly
- Artistic Skills Shine Through in Student #DifferenceMakers Art Contest
- Statements of Candidates for KEA Offices at the 152nd Delegate Assembly
- SPEAK OUT: Educators Across Kentucky Deserve a Raise

Kentucky Education Association  
March 2024  
KEA.org  
Volume 60 Issue 2



*KEA's First District Read Across America Event was a great success this year! Held at the Kentucky Oaks Mall in Paducah in February, volunteer teachers, staff, family, and friends all took part and helped make the event special for the young and the young at heart. Kids got to meet a favorite superhero or super villain and take home a bag of goodies and balloons. More than 550 books were distributed to children and families across the entire First District. Thanks to all who took part in this event.*

