



KEA Legislative Program 2026-2027

KEA Vision:

KEA is the preeminent voice for quality public education.

KEA Mission:

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

KEA's priority for the Kentucky General Assembly is the full funding and statutory support of a system of public education which shall allow and assist all students to acquire the following capacities:

- (1) Communication skills necessary to function in a complex and changing civilization.
- (2) Knowledge to make economic, social, and political choices.
- (3) Core values and qualities of good character to make moral and ethical decisions throughout *one's* life.
- (4) Understanding of governmental processes as they affect the community, the state, and the nation.
- (5) Sufficient self-knowledge and knowledge of *one's* mental and physical wellness.
- (6) Sufficient grounding in the arts to enable each student to appreciate *one's* cultural and historical heritage.
- (7) Sufficient preparation to choose and pursue *one's* life's work intelligently; and
- (8) Skills to enable *one* to compete favorably with students in other states.

In order to support these priorities KEA will:

A. Advocate for equitable and adequate funding for P-12 education by:

1. Ensuring that the SEEK formula fully funds a high-quality education for every public-school student in the Commonwealth and draws more equitably from Kentucky's biennial budget resulting in responsibility shifting from majority local to majority state.
2. Advocating for increased state revenue through non-regressive tax reform and other appropriate means.
3. Prohibiting/not establishing vouchers, scholarship tax-credits, or any other means by which public dollars or resources are taken from Kentucky public-schools and used to fund private or charter schools

B. Advocate for a high-quality education for every public-school student in the Commonwealth by:

1. Ensuring all instruction is provided by teachers certified in the subject matter.
2. Providing state-funded pre-school programs for all three- and four-year old children.



3. Guaranteeing all children have access to visual and performing arts, physical education, library skills with library access, world language, both spoken and signed, and world cultures education, ~~practical living and career studies~~ **and Career and Technical Education** classes taught by an appropriately certified teacher.
4. Continuing to allow school districts to determine the start and end dates of their school calendar.
5. Establish a minimum 30-minute lunch for every student **and educators**.
6. Establishing indoor/outdoor air quality standards for public schools, including, but not limited to prohibiting the use of tobacco and vaping products by students and adults on school premises, within school sanctioned vehicles, and at school sanctioned events.
7. Establishing high standards and accountability for home-schooled students.
8. Establishing the deadline for bringing classes within maximum size at twenty (20) days after the first student attendance days.
9. Opposing the involuntary transfer of any educator after election to or during service of a term on the SBDM council.
10. Opposing charter schools other than public schools authorized and overseen by existing boards of education that do not divert resources from existing schools.
11. Mandating that any new state education initiative be accompanied by a school impact statement and is not required to be implemented without adequate funding and support.
12. Advocating for a student assessment system that uses formative and authentic assessment processes to improve learning and growth of critical and creative thinking skills that utilize multiple and varied sources of evidence to demonstrate student learning.
13. Supporting and advocating for a significant overhaul of Kentucky's accountability system so it better captures and communicates the depth, breadth, and complexity of student learning and the systemic essential needed in public education to support meaningful student learning and growth.
Provide all school employees with adequate information and support to implement.
14. Providing assistance to priority schools that builds capacity at the school; provides advisory assistance; requires meaningful involvement of school staff, students, and parents; preserves due process; includes significant support and professional development; provides adequate compensation for additional work and time; and is differentiated to the needs of the school, students, and staff.



15. Ensuring that all students learn, and public education employees work in a safe school environment, ***establishing guidelines for ethical use of force by law enforcement on campus and school transportation home.***
16. Providing sustainable, adequate funding for the hiring and retention of school resource officers, mental health professionals, substitutes, and health care professionals including, but not limited to, nurses and/or nurse practitioners.
17. Including a caseload cap on the number of preschool students with disabilities being served by any individual preschool teacher.
18. Including a caseload cap on the number of students being served by an individual school counselor and/or mental health professional.
19. Providing every student and school employee with personal, reliable, technology supported by a state infrastructure which guarantees integral internet access.
20. Ensuring all students receive efficient and ethical special education referral and implementation services; reducing the redundancies of all special education process documentation via automation and simplification; and advocating support for collaboration of general and special education teachers.
21. Advocating for the freedom to design inclusive curriculum, instruction and assessment innovation that addresses the struggles and triumphs of all marginalized peoples as movements and individuals throughout history in the United States and the rest of the world.
22. Ensuring local, state, and federal policies eliminate institutional racism and injustices in schools and communities. Advocating for the civil and economic rights of our members, students, and communities, especially those who have historically and are currently facing marginalization for their identities.
23. Supporting culturally responsive pedagogy, curricula, diversity and inclusion training, and bias (implicit and explicit) training in education.
24. Providing a focus on human trafficking training for all school employees.
25. Providing and supporting trauma informed and other qualified mental health professionals as well as educators who are trauma informed to better assist students and educators with social emotional needs.
26. Implementing restorative practices at the school and district level which seek to improve school climate, foster healthier relationships between educators and students, decrease disciplinary disparities, engage students and families, and support social-emotional learning.



27. Ensuring that all legislation involving students and the criminal justice system focuses on restorative justice practices and effective, research-based interventions as opposed to increasing incarceration.
28. Providing ELL educators sufficient **funding**, training and professional development opportunities to improve professional skill.
29. Preserving the ability of local school boards to levy compensating and four percent tax rates without the threat of recall and maintain the current standards for the recallable nickel tax and other school taxes subject to recall.
30. Advocating for legislation that bolsters the preparation, recruitment, professional growth, support, and retention of certified educators throughout their careers. ~~with intentional focus on under-represented populations, to secure and strengthen the education profession in Kentucky for the benefit of our students and the future of our commonwealth.~~ (C21 covers)

C. Advocate for strong professions by:

1. Securing a minimum of three days of personal leave annually, with unused days converting to sick leave.
2. Providing financial assistance and professional support for all teachers pursuing rank change or National Board Certification.
3. ***Ensuring all school boards are elected by the community they serve and restoring the rights for Restoring school employees' to participate in those elections.*** ~~rights to participate in all levels of school board elections. Securing collective bargaining for all school employees and a process by which each local board of education may confer exclusive representation to the association with the largest number of members in the district.~~
4. ***Securing collective bargaining for all school employees and a process by which each local board of education may confer exclusive representation to the association with the largest number of members in the district***
5. Opposing any measure that limits or removes due process for educators engaged in the disciplinary process and add a meaningful due process procedure, with just cause for classified school employees in dismissal proceedings.
6. Prohibiting the Education Professional Standards Board from acting against a teacher when criminal charges that form the basis for a complaint to the agency are dismissed or the teacher is acquitted after a trial.
7. Maintaining the Education Professional Standards Board as an impartial and independent agency removed from the influence of the Commissioner of Education and/or Governor.



8. Ensuring teacher contract time and student instructional time are measured by the same standard.
9. Prohibiting abuse of teacher time and requiring that teachers receive compensation for additional work that they perform, including extending the school term, extra-curricular activities, and work required to meet state mandates.
10. Establishing professional leave for all school employees to attend state level education related meetings, school related legal proceedings, and KEA professional meetings.
11. Opposing any form of pay based on student performance.
12. **Restoring the authority of SBDM.** ~~Adding an additional teacher and a classified employee to SBDM councils.~~
13. Providing area technology center employees with the same rights in decision making as local school district teachers.
14. Prohibiting the practice of unnecessary annual non-renewal of limited contract employees and assure recall rights for all non-renewed employees.
15. Providing for a statewide reduction in student teaching fees for pre-service teachers and for financial compensation for all future educators in student teacher internships.
16. Requiring the superintendent or designated evaluator to consult with the members of the school council before completing the principal's growth plan or evaluation.
17. ~~Opposing state and local~~ **Repeal** so-called Right to Work legislation and ordinances and require a reasonable prevailing wage for government contracts that is not less than the statewide minimum wage.
18. Ensuring all students have a safe learning environment by supporting school campuses as gun-free zones including crisis aversion and rights retentions measures for students and staff.
19. Opposing school employees (excluding certified peace officers) serving a dual role as educators and school safety personnel with weapons during school days and/or at school sponsored activities.
20. Clearly defining and admonishing nepotism in Kentucky public school hiring practices.
21. Supporting the evaluation of ESPs according to established criteria and providing feedback, training, and professional development opportunities that support continuous improvement in performance.
22. Advocating for racial diversity in the teaching profession by supporting our Commonwealth's HBCU teacher preparation program, greater minority participation in teacher preparation programs throughout the Commonwealth, and other state-wide minority educator recruitment efforts.



D. Advocate for adequate school employee compensation, sufficient retirement benefits and affordable health insurance for public school employees and their dependents by:

1. Developing a compressed minimum state teacher's salary schedule with a required local contribution and equity between teachers and administrators on an index beginning at \$50,000 per year.
2. Providing a living wage and a compressed salary schedule for all classified school employees that supports the costs of basic needs and is indexed to inflation.
3. Increasing the minimum wage.
4. Fully fund a defined benefit in all public pension plans ***and reinstating the \$41,000 threshold of state nontaxable pension income.***
5. Fully funding the annual cost of living allowance (COLA) for all retired school employees and maintaining the fiscal integrity of the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) of Kentucky and the Kentucky Retirement System (KRS).
6. Maintaining the nomination, election, and governing practices of the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) Board of Trustees and opposing any changes to the composition of the Board of Trustees that would diminish KEA member voice on the board.
7. Preventing reduction in school employee annual compensation.
8. Providing quality, affordable health insurance for public school employees, retirees, and their dependents and spouses regardless of their age.
9. Opposing all forms of privatization/outsourcing of ESP job classifications designed to reduce employee benefits, a practice that puts student safety at risk and undermines the continuity, quality, and cost-effectiveness of services.