KEA News
The preeminent voice for quality public education
Volume 62 Issue 2: Fall 2026

Bullitt County Educators Building Strong Schools Through Strong Leadership



In every successful school district, there are educators who do more than teach. They serve as mentors, advocates, problem-solvers, and leaders. They dedicate themselves not only to helping students succeed but also to strengthening the profession for the colleagues who teach alongside them.

That commitment to leadership has helped make the Bullitt County Education Association (BCEA) one of Kentucky's strongest local associations.

Through a focus on relationship-building, professional negotiations, member engagement, and advocacy, BCEA leaders have spent years creating an organization that serves educators while keeping students at the center of every decision. Their work reflects a larger story that stretc across Kentucky, where local associations and KEA have worked together to improve schools, strengthen the education profession, and amplify educators' voices.

For BCEA leaders, success starts with a simple belief. Strong public schools depend on strong educators, and strong educators need a voice.

BCEA's role includes helping educators speak with a common voice while working to improve opportunities for students and strengthen public education throughout Bullitt County.

Today, that work is carried forward by leaders who understand both the daily realities of the classroom and the importance of professional advocacy.

Among them is Kim Fessel, who has helped guide BCEA's efforts as president during a period marked by successful negotiations, membership growth, and increased educator engagement. Working alongside BCEA officers, building representatives, negotiating team members, and active members across the district, Fessel has helped maintain a strong local association that focuses on improving conditions for educators while preserving a collaborative relationship with district leadership.

Those efforts matter because the challenges facing educators continue to evolve. Staffing shortages, increasing student needs, growing demands on teachers' time, and shifting expectations have created new pressures for public school employees across Kentucky. At the same time, educators remain committed to providing students with the learning experiences and support they need to succeed.

BCEA leaders recognize that supporting students begins with supporting the professionals who serve them every day.

That understanding has driven the association's work at the negotiating table.

For decades, BCEA has represented Bullitt County educators in professional negotiations with the district. Those agreements have addressed compensation, employee rights,

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Make Your Plan to Vote on or Before Tuesday, November 3!

Important actions to take leading up to Election Day:

Be an informed voter – Ensure you are an informed voter by dedicating time to research candidates for office that will appear on your ballot.

Who you elect to federal, state, and local office matters! It is important to know all the candidates running for office in your area before you go to the polls. You're an education voter, so know each candidate's position on public

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Scan the QR code to find everything you need to know about Voting times, locations, and dates.

education issues before you vote. Read your local paper, check individual candidate websites, watch debates, read interviews, and scrutinize their responses to written questions that may be published in your local media. Avoid relying solely on political ads, social media, or political mailers for information. Be a well-informed voter.

Review your voter registration – Be sure to review your voter registration at the Kentucky Secretary of State's website www.GoVote.ky.gov. This website will give you important information, including precinct information and access to polling locations.

Preview your ballot – You can also preview your ballot at www.GoVote.ky.gov. Checking out your choices before the election gives you time to do your research on the issues and the candidates.

Know your voting options – Going to the polls on Election Day, November 3, is an option, but not the only one:

- **Absentee Ballot by Mail.** If you qualify, you can vote early by mail but must request your absentee ballot by the October 20 deadline through the secure online portal established by the State Board of Elections: www.GoVote.ky.gov.
- **Excused In-Person Absentee Voting.** Voters otherwise eligible to vote on Election Day are eligible to cast an excused in-person absentee ballot during the six business days of October 21-28, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. local time, if they meet one specific requirement (find requirements here: www.GoVote.ky.gov).
- **In-Person Early Voting.** Before Election Day you can also take advantage of No Excuse Early Voting on Thursday, October 29, Friday, October 30, and Saturday, October 31. **Any registered voter can choose to vote early. No excuse required.** Polling locations and hours will vary by county. You can find your county's hours here www.GoVote.ky.gov.
- **Vote In-person on Election Day from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. local time.**

Confirm your polling location – No matter which method you choose to cast your vote – be sure to check your polling location. Polling locations may have changed from previous years; in some counties, there may be fewer polling locations than there have been previously. Be sure to know before you go.

ATTENTION
KEA MEMBERS

If you work in a different district than you did last year, please scan this QR code or visit KEA.org and click on the "UPDATE MY INFO" tab along the top menu to enter your new location.

KEA NEWS
Volume 62, Issue 2
Fall 2026

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Periodical postage paid at Williamsport, PA. ***KEA News*** is published two 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

Who Has Failed Kentucky's Educators?

By Joel Wolford, KEA President



Kentucky teachers have lost roughly 20-25% of their purchasing power since 2008. Many classified school employees earn wages that leave them struggling to make ends meet. The result is predictable. Educators are leaving the profession, fewer young people are choosing careers in education, and many veteran educators are discouraging their own children from entering the field.

Why has this happened?

Inflation is part of the answer, but the larger issue is that educator pay has failed to keep pace with the cost of living. Years ago, the General Assembly routinely funded and mandated raises for public school employees. That is no longer the case.

Today, legislators send funding to local districts but generally leave salary decisions to local boards. At the same time, some education groups have opposed state-mandated raises, arguing that local districts should make those decisions. Legislators point to districts. Districts point to inadequate funding. Educators are caught in the middle.

School districts do face real challenges. They must invest in buildings, technology, transportation, safety, and programs. Those investments matter.

But we must remember these basic truths:

A new school building cannot build a relationship with a child. A computer cannot recognize when a student is struggling emotionally. A scoreboard cannot teach a child to read. A central office initiative cannot replace an experienced educator in a classroom.

The most important investment any school system makes is in the people who serve students every day. Educator compensation is not simply another budget item. It is an investment in the workforce that makes learning possible.

So who is responsible for ensuring competitive salaries for Kentucky educators?

The honest answer is that responsibility is shared.

The General Assembly has a responsibility to provide sufficient funding to make competitive compensation possible. School boards have a responsibility to make educator pay a genuine budget priority. Superintendents have a responsibility to advocate for their employees and present budgets that reflect the value of the workforce. Educators have a responsibility to hold all of them accountable. No one should get a free pass.

It has become common to hear legislators say, "We don't hire them, we don't fire them, they are not our employees, they don't work for us." Technically, that is true. Educators do not work for the General Assembly. They work for Kentucky.

They teach Kentucky's children, prepare Kentucky's future workforce, strengthen local communities, and support the state's economy. The question is not who signs their paycheck. The question is whether Kentucky's leaders are willing to make the investments necessary to attract and retain the professionals our public schools need.

Legislators cannot blame districts. Districts cannot blame Frankfort. Both have responsibilities, and both must be held accountable.

If educators are not a priority, then what is?

If you want to organize for better pay in your district, contact your KEA UniServ Director. Together, we can advocate for the investments Kentucky educators deserve.

Building the Bench for KEA's Future

By Jessica Hiler



Strong locals don't happen by accident, they grow when members are invited, supported and connected. Every thriving local has members who know how to bring people together, listen closely and solve problems. Some hold elected office, but many do not, at least not yet. They're the Building Reps who welcome new educators, the members who speak up at a school board meeting or the members who attend an event hosted by their local and bring other members along with them.

Leadership begins with 1-on-1 conversations. Newsletters, social media, and meetings matter, but they cannot replace a member asking, "What is affecting your work right now?", listening to the answer and then acting. Effective leadership helps members see the union as a place where they can act on the issues that matter to them and have support along the way.

Locals and leaders can't grow if a small handful of people do all the work, this is not sustainable for the local or the leader. Sharing leadership roles doesn't mean that you are giving up responsibility, instead you are multiplying your capacity and increasing your ability to act. Leaders will grow and locals will thrive when members have ownership in decisions and do the work.

Building the bench means recognizing leaders in our union are everywhere. It is our responsibility to notice their potential, invite them to do the work and give them room and support to grow. I challenge each of you to look around in your local, identify a member that has leadership potential and invite them into the work while at the same time asking yourself how I can support my local and make it stronger for years to come.

Be Part of KEA's Highest Governing Body

Your Voice. Your Ideas. Your Association.

Every year, KEA members from across the Commonwealth come together to guide the future of our Association and strengthen our collective voice for public education. The **155th KEA Delegate Assembly** will be held **April 1-2, 2027, at the Marriott Louisville East Hotel in Louisville**, bringing together elected delegates from local associations to make important decisions on behalf of Kentucky educators.

As KEA's highest governing body, the Delegate Assembly is where members shape policy, elect leaders, debate new ideas, and chart the course for the year ahead. If you've been elected by your local association to serve as a delegate, you'll play an important role in representing your colleagues and helping lead KEA forward.

Electing Statewide Leadership

Delegates to the 2027 Delegate Assembly will elect the NEA State Director and KEA Ethnic Minority Director at Large (Seat 2), for three-year terms beginning July 1, 2027, and ending June 30, 2030.

Active KEA members who are interested in serving in this important leadership role are encouraged to run. Candidates must be active members in good standing and have maintained membership for at least two consecutive years immediately preceding the election.

Candidates may submit their declaration form through the Members section of KEA.org.

Nomination deadline: January 15, 2027, at 5 p.m. ET

Help Shape the Future of KEA

One of the most important responsibilities of the Delegate Assembly is considering changes to the Association's governing documents and policy positions.

Propose a Constitutional Amendment

Members who wish to recommend changes to the KEA Constitution may submit proposed amendments to the KEA Compliance/Constitution Committee. Proposals should include the suggested language, sponsoring member names, and a brief explanation of the purpose of the amendment.

Submission deadline: January 15, 2027, at 5 p.m. ET

Influence KEA's Legislative Agenda

Have ideas about the issues KEA should champion in Frankfort? Members can propose amendments to the KEA Legislative Program, which serves as the foundation for the Association's advocacy efforts.

Proposed changes for the 2027-28 Legislative Program must be submitted through the online form available in the Members section of KEA.org.

Submission deadline: January 15, 2027, at 5 p.m. ET

Submit New Business Items

Delegate Assembly participants may also introduce New Business Items for consideration by the assembly.

To be considered during the 2027 Delegate Assembly, New Business Items must be submitted online through the Members section of KEA.org.

Deadline: Noon ET on April 1, 2027, one hour before the Delegate Assembly convenes.

Local Delegate Election Results Due November 30

KEA local associations should remember that **delegate election results for the 2027 Delegate Assembly must be submitted to KEA by November 30, 2026**.

Democracy in Action

The Delegate Assembly is one of the many ways KEA members turn their ideas into action. Whether you're serving as a delegate, running for leadership, proposing a constitutional amendment, or helping shape the Association's legislative priorities, your participation strengthens our union and helps ensure Kentucky educators remain at the center of every decision.

KEA is strongest when members are engaged. We encourage every local association to participate fully and help make the 155th Delegate Assembly a success.

The Search Begins for KEA's 2027 Teacher of the Year

Every school has an educator who leaves a lasting impact. They inspire students to reach their potential, support their coworkers, and help create a school culture where everyone feels valued. Help KEA recognize a teacher who embodies that dedication by nominating a colleague for the 2027 KEA Teacher of the Year.

This distinguished honor recognizes an educator who demonstrates excellence in teaching, advocacy for public education, commitment to diversity and inclusion, community involvement, and leadership within the profession. More than an award, it is a celebration of the educators who make a difference every day in the lives of students, schools, and communities.

The recipient will receive a $1,000 prize, a commemorative award, and earn the distinction of serving as Kentucky's nominee for the 2028 Horace Mann-NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence.

Nominations open November 1, 2026, and each KEA local affiliate may submit one nomination through the online portal at KEA.org. The deadline for nominations is January 31, 2027, at 5 p.m. ET. The recipient will be selected by the KEA Executive Committee along with previous Kentucky Teachers of the Year.

If there is an educator in your school whose commitment, leadership, and passion stand out, now is the time to recognize their contributions. Nominate them for the 2027 KEA Teacher of the Year and help celebrate the outstanding work happening in Kentucky's public schools every day.

Honor an Outstanding Education Support Professional

Behind every successful public school is a dedicated team of Education Support Professionals who help students learn, grow, and thrive. From bus drivers and paraeducators to custodians, food service workers, clerical staff, and other support professionals, ESPs play an essential role in creating safe, welcoming, and effective learning environments. Help KEA recognize one of these outstanding professionals by nominating them for the 2027 KEA Education Support Professional of the Year Award.

This prestigious honor recognizes a KEA member whose accomplishments reflect the invaluable contributions ESPs make to students, schools, communities, and public education. The recipient will receive a $1,000 cash award, a commemorative award, and will automatically become Kentucky's nominee for the 2028 National Education Association ESP of the Year Award.

To be eligible, nominees must be current KEA members and have maintained membership for at least three years as of December 31, 2026.

Nominations open November 1, 2026. The deadline for submissions is January 31, 2027, at 5 p.m. ET. Additional information, eligibility requirements, nomination materials, and submission instructions are available at KEA.org.

If you know an ESP whose dedication, professionalism, and commitment make a difference every day, take the opportunity to recognize their impact by submitting a nomination for the 2027 KEA ESP of the Year Award.

Art Contest Celebrates the Educators Who Make a Difference

Encourage Students to Honor Their School Heroes & Win $200

Just like last year's winners, every student can point to someone at school who has made a lasting impact on their life.

It might be the teacher who inspired confidence, the counselor who offered guidance during a difficult time, the instructional assistant who provided encouragement, or the bus driver who started each day with a warm welcome. These are the people who help students succeed, not only academically, but personally. They are Kentucky's Difference Makers.

The KEA Difference Makers Student Art Contest gives students across the Commonwealth an opportunity to recognize those special educators through the power of creativity. Open to students from preschool through high school, the contest invites young artists to create original artwork celebrating an educator who has made a meaningful difference in their life.

Students may enter in one of four grade divisions: Preschool through Grade 2; Grades 3-5; Grades 6-8; Grades 9-12

Whether through drawing, painting, mixed media, or another artistic approach, students are encouraged to share their stories and express their appreciation in a personal and meaningful way.

Four students will be selected as contest winners and earn $200 for their work and $200 for the educator featured in the artwork.

For KEA members, the contest offers a unique opportunity to see their impact reflected through the eyes of the students they serve every day. Few recognitions are as meaningful as knowing a student chose to honor you as someone who changed their life.

How to Participate

Artwork must be an original creation and no larger than 8.5 x 11 inches. Entries must be received at KEA Headquarters in Frankfort by 5 p.m. ET on January 31, 2027, and must include a completed entry form.

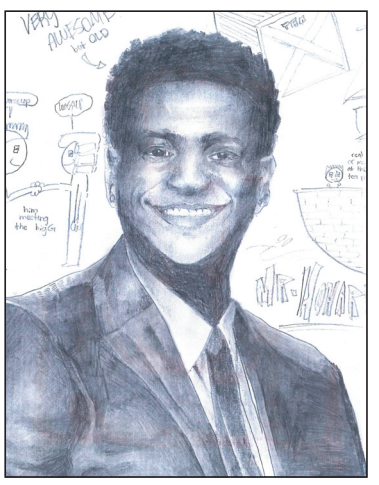
Contest rules, entry forms, and additional details are available at KEA.org.



P-2 Winner
Dawson Dedman



3-5 Winner
Ariella Harris



6-8 Winner
Lily Jones



9-12 Winner
Hailey Williams



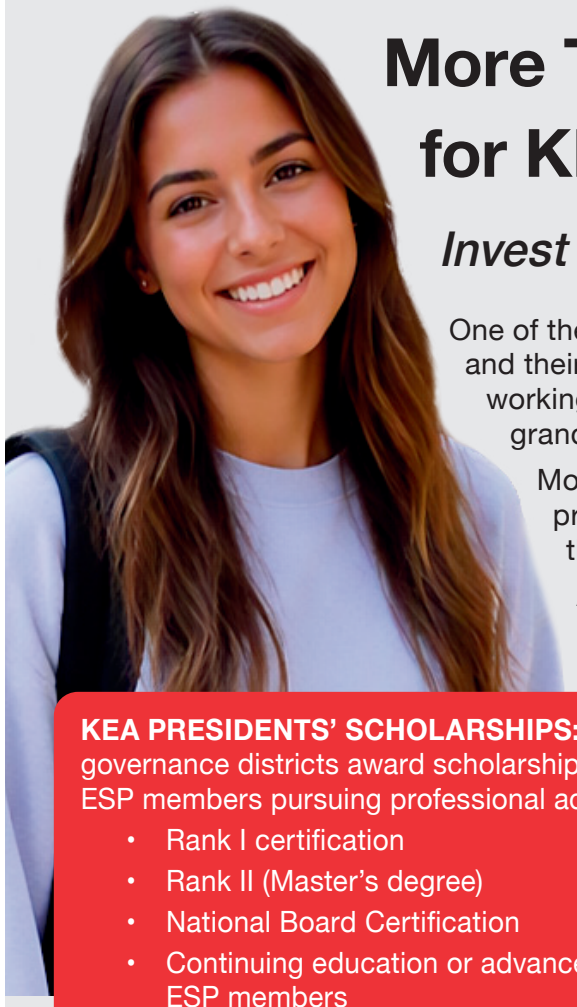
It's easy to access this member-only benefit!

STEP 1:
Register at neamb.com/register

STEP 2:
Follow the QR code and complete the simple steps to assign your beneficiary

Get Started Today!

nea Member Benefits



More Than $50,000 in Scholarships Available for KEA Members and Their Families

Invest in Your Future. Invest in the Future of Education.

One of the many benefits of KEA membership is access to scholarship opportunities that help educators and their families achieve their educational goals. Whether you're pursuing advanced certification, working toward a graduate degree, preparing to enter the teaching profession, or helping a child or grandchild reach their dreams, KEA is proud to support your journey.

More than **$50,000 in scholarships** will be awarded in 2027 through several KEA-sponsored programs designed to recognize achievement, encourage professional growth, and strengthen the future of public education in Kentucky.

Applications open November 1, 2026, and must be submitted by 5 p.m. ET on January 31, 2027. Applications will be available online at KEA.org.

KEA PRESIDENTS' SCHOLARSHIPS: Each year, KEA's 12 governance districts award scholarships to active certified and ESP members pursuing professional advancement through:

- Rank I certification
- Rank II (Master's degree)
- National Board Certification
- Continuing education or advanced certification for ESP members

Up to **$1,000 per award** is available, with as much as **$48,000 awarded statewide**. District scholarship committees review applications and select recipients based on local criteria.

REPRESENTATIVE PAUL MASON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP: This scholarship honors the legacy of Kentucky Representative Paul Mason and his commitment to helping others.

Available to active or retired KEA ESP members and their children or grandchildren, the scholarship provides **at least one $500 award** annually. Recipients are selected by the Kentucky Education Support Professionals Association (KESPA) Board of Directors.

MARVIN DODSON-CARL PERKINS SCHOLARSHIPS: Designed for KEA Aspiring Educator members enrolled in Kentucky teacher preparation programs, these scholarships help support the next generation of educators.

Awards range from **$500 to $1,000**, with **$5,000** awarded annually through the selection process overseen by the KEA MOVE Committee.

MARNEL MOORMAN SCHOLARSHIP: Named in honor of KEA's first African American president, this scholarship supports students pursuing a degree in education and a future in Kentucky's classrooms.
Open to high school seniors and college students seeking their first post-secondary degree, the scholarship considers financial need, academic achievement, and commitment to the education profession. Recipients are selected by the KEA Diversity Committee.
Award amount: $1,000

KEA-RETIRED TOM DENTON SCHOLARSHIP:

This scholarship supports college juniors, seniors, and Master of Arts in Teaching candidates preparing to enter the classroom.

Preference is given to KEA Aspiring Educators who demonstrate academic achievement, financial need, a commitment to teaching in Kentucky, and a family connection to KEA Active or Retired members. Scholarship awards range from **$800 to $1,000 annually**.

DON'T LEAVE SCHOLARSHIP DOLLARS ON THE TABLE

KEA members work hard every day to create opportunities for Kentucky students. These scholarships are one way your Association invests in you and your family in return.

If you or a family member plan to continue your education next year, take advantage of this valuable member benefit and apply.

Applications are available November 1, 2026, through January 31, 2027, at KEA.org.

Your membership opens doors. Make sure you take advantage of every opportunity available to you.

Represent Kentucky Educators on the National Stage

Step Forward. Lead Forward. Run for NEA Representative Assembly Delegate.

Every day, Kentucky educators advocate for their students, their colleagues, and the future of public education. The NEA Representative Assembly (RA) is where those voices come together to shape the direction of our union nationwide.

The **2027 NEA Representative Assembly**, the largest democratic gathering of educators in the world, will be held **June 30 through July 7 in Indianapolis, Indiana**. More than 8,000 educators from across the country will meet to elect national leaders, approve the NEA budget, and set priorities that guide the Association's work on behalf of students and educators.

If you're an **Active KEA member**, you can nominate yourself to run for one of KEA's statewide delegate positions and help ensure Kentucky educators have a voice in decisions that affect public education across the nation.

Members elected as statewide delegates receive a **KEA stipend to help offset travel expenses** related to attending the Representative Assembly.

Why Become a Delegate?

Serving as an RA delegate is a unique opportunity to:

- Represent the voices and experiences of Kentucky educators on a national platform
- Help shape NEA policy and priorities on issues that matter to educators and students
- Build relationships with fellow leaders and activists across the country
- Gain valuable leadership experience and bring new ideas back to Kentucky
- Play a direct role in the democratic process that guides our union's future

How to Run

Nominations Open: November 1, 2026

Nomination Deadline: 5 p.m. ET, January 15, 2027

Submit the online nomination form through the Members section of **KEA.org**.

Candidates may submit biographical information for the ballot. Please note that only the first 25 words will be published, and KEA reserves the right to edit submissions for length. An optional photo may also be included.

Election Information

Voting Period: March 1-31, 2027

Voting Method: Online at KEA.org

Election results will be announced during the **2027 KEA Delegate Assembly**.

This is for Active Members only. Retired and Aspiring Educator members will elect their RA delegates in separate elections.

Bullitt County Educators Building Strong Schools Through Strong Leadership

Continued from page 1.

professional responsibilities, working conditions, professional development, grievance procedures, leave provisions, safety concerns, and educator involvement in decisions that affect schools and classrooms.

Recent successes demonstrate the practical impact of that work.

Members of BCEA's negotiating team secured compensation for educators who use their planning periods to cover classes when substitute teachers are unavailable. They also negotiated an increase in the district's hourly stipend rate from $30 to $40 for additional work such as training conducted outside regular contract hours. Those improvements provided meaningful recognition for educators' time and expertise while addressing issues members identified as priorities.



Behind those achievements stands a group of educators who understand the importance of involvement.

Among them is Melissa Hopkins, BCEA's vice president and a third-grade teacher who has spent her entire career serving students in Bullitt County.

Hopkins' path into association leadership mirrors the journey of many active local leaders throughout Kentucky. She began as a building representative and became more involved after seeing firsthand how educators working together through their association could solve problems and elevate concerns. Her experience on BCEA's negotiations team deepened that commitment and helped reinforce the connection between advocacy and student success.

Today, she helps maintain relationships with school board members, communicates with building representatives, shares information with members, and works to ensure educators remain informed and engaged. She is also part of a leadership team focused on making BCEA visible throughout the district and strengthening connections among educators, families, and the broader community.

Those efforts have contributed to something every local association strives for: growth.

That growth does not happen by accident. One of BCEA's greatest strengths is its network of building representatives who serve as the vital link between educators, local association leadership, and KEA. Building representatives help keep members informed about district issues, association initiatives, professional opportunities, and legislative developments that affect public education. They also bring questions, concerns, and ideas from educators back to local leaders, helping ensure that members have a voice in decision-making. Their work helps build a culture of engagement, leadership, and solidarity that strengthens the association and ultimately benefits students.

According to Hopkins, BCEA has experienced significant membership gains through intentional outreach efforts that include visiting schools, participating in new teacher orientations, and connecting educators with the benefits of association membership. The growth reflects a reality that educators across Kentucky increasingly recognize. When educators work together, they are often better positioned to advocate for themselves, their students, and their schools.

That message aligns closely with KEA's story.

Throughout its history, KEA has achieved important victories by uniting educators around common goals. Historical victories include efforts to strengthen retirement security, protect due process rights, improve health benefits, support class-size protections, strengthen professional development opportunities, advance the SEEK funding formula, establish Family Resource and Youth Services Centers, and support stronger protections for classified employees. More recently, KEA has successfully defended educator pensions, protected public school funding, supported the successful legal challenge to House Bill 563, advocated for paid maternity leave expansions, and played a leading role in defeating Constitutional Amendment 2.

While those statewide accomplishments are significant, their true impact is often felt through local associations.

When KEA successfully advocates in Frankfort, educators in Bullitt County benefit. When public school funding is protected, Bullitt County students benefit. When BCEA leaders negotiate improvements, recruit new members, or represent educator concerns to local decision-makers, those efforts strengthen schools throughout the district. The relationship works because state and local advocacy reinforce one another.

That partnership has always been one of organized education's greatest strengths.

Statewide advocacy creates opportunities and protections. Local leaders transform those opportunities into meaningful improvements for educators and students. Whether the issue involves professional rights, compensation, working conditions, or public education policy, progress is often achieved when educators organize and work collectively toward solutions.

For BCEA, the work extends beyond contracts and policy discussions.

Association leaders understand that creating a strong local organization means developing future leaders. It means encouraging members to become building representatives, serve on committees, participate in professional negotiations, attend board meetings, and engage in advocacy efforts that improve public education. It means helping educators recognize that leadership is not limited to elected officers. Every educator who speaks up for students, mentors a colleague, helps solve a workplace challenge, or participates in association activities contributes to a stronger profession.

The result is a local association that continues to grow while maintaining a focus on its core purpose.

BCEA's leaders have helped build an organization that negotiates effectively, recruits actively, develops emerging leaders, and maintains productive relationships with the district. Their work demonstrates how local associations can create positive outcomes for educators without losing sight of what matters most: student success.

Progress happens when educators organize.

The story of BCEA is ultimately a story about educators who have chosen to lead. It is the story of people like Kim Fessel, Melissa Hopkins, and countless BCEA members who devote themselves to students while also working to strengthen the profession. It is the story of educators who understand that serving children sometimes means serving colleagues, advocating for schools, negotiating improvements, recruiting new members, and helping others find their voice.

Most importantly, it is a story about what happens when educators refuse to work in isolation.

By standing together through BCEA and KEA, Bullitt County educators continue a tradition that stretches across generations of Kentucky educators who have understood a simple truth: stronger educators build stronger schools, and stronger schools create better opportunities for every student.



Check out KEA Apparel and branded items at KEAstore.com or scan the QR code.

KEA News

The preeminent voice for quality public education

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Kentucky Education Association
KEA.org
Volume 62 Issue 2: Fall 2026

KEA News

KEA Members Inspire a Love of Reading Across Kentucky

Read Across America Grants Help Bring Books, Learning, and Opportunity to Local Communities



When KEA members see a need, they step up. That's exactly what's happening in communities across Kentucky through the **KEA Read Across America Grant Program**, where educators, aspiring educators, and retired members are creating meaningful opportunities for children to discover the joy of reading.

This year, KEA awarded **$4,000 in Read Across America grants** to eight local associations, Aspiring Educator chapters, and retiree groups. Each recipient received a $500 grant to support creative literacy projects designed to engage students, families, and communities in a shared love of reading.

From eastern Kentucky's mountain communities to river towns in the west, KEA members are helping children build lifelong connections with books and learning. Projects include family literacy events, classroom and community reading initiatives, and efforts to place high-quality, diverse books into the hands of young readers.

First launched by the National Education Association in 1998, Read Across America has grown into the nation's largest celebration of reading and literacy. The program encourages year-round engagement with books that help students see themselves reflected in stories while also introducing them to new perspectives, cultures, and experiences.

KEA's Membership, Organizing, Visibility & Engagement (MOVE) Committee selected this year's grant recipients based on their innovative ideas and commitment to promoting literacy. Their projects demonstrate how a modest investment can make a lasting difference in a child's educational journey.

More importantly, these efforts highlight something KEA members know well: reading is about more than words on a page. Reading builds confidence, sparks curiosity, expands opportunities, and empowers students to imagine new possibilities for themselves and their futures.

Bring Your Literacy Ideas to Life

Does your local association have an idea for a literacy project that could make a difference in your community?

Start planning now.

KEA will once again offer Read Across America grants next year, providing another opportunity for members to turn great ideas into meaningful experiences for Kentucky students and families.

Together, KEA members are helping create stronger readers, stronger learners, and stronger communities. One book, one student, and one literacy project at a time.

2027 Read Across America KEA Grant Award Winners

Campbellsville University Aspiring Educators, $500
Hardin County Education Association, $500
Jefferson County Teachers Association-Retired, $500
Kentucky Wesleyan Aspiring Educators, $500
Mayfield Education Association, $500
Middle Cumberland Retired Education Association, $500
Murray State Aspiring Educators, $500
Russell County Education Association, $500
Scott County Education Association, $500
Taylor County Education Association, $500

Periodical Mail-Time Sensitive

Address service requested

Kentucky Education Association
401 Capital Avenue
Frankfort, KY 40601

KEA.org