



March 7, 2023

Kentucky State Capitol
700 Capitol Avenue
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Members of the Kentucky General Assembly:

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence appreciates your concern regarding education outcomes for Kentucky students. Your leadership makes all the difference in ensuring that all Kentucky students are put on the path to a larger life with education at the core. Recent investments in early literacy, Kentucky's state university system, and full day kindergarten access illustrate your resolute commitment to returning Kentucky to a place where education outcomes are improving. We applaud your commitment!

While your efforts have put Kentucky on the path to a brighter tomorrow, more action is needed to reverse Kentucky's downward slide in educational outcomes. In just the last decade Kentucky has fallen to:

- 29th in the nation fourth-grade reading — a fall from 22nd in 2019 and a high of 8th in the nation in 2015,
- 28th in the nation in eighth-grade reading — a drop from 25th in 2019 and a peak at 12th in 2011,
- 34th in the nation in fourth-grade math — a fall from 30th in 2019 and 21st in 2015,
- and 41st in the nation in eighth-grade math — down from 36th in 2019 after reaching 33rd in the nation in 2011.

There are actions the General Assembly can take in the remaining days of the 2023 legislative session to improve the quality of education in Kentucky. The Prichard Committee urges passage of the following bills to address current education needs across the Commonwealth:

- [Senate Bill 156](#), An act relating to a statewide reading research center, sponsored by Senate Education Chairman Stephen West (R-27).

Senate Bill 156 compliments reforms enacted in the 2022 Kentucky Read to Succeed Act by ensuring all Kentucky children are provided with quality reading instruction through the establishment of a statewide reading research center.

- [Senate Bill 70](#), An act relating to relating to a pilot program for performance-based professional development, sponsored by Senate President Pro Tempore David Givens (R-09).

Senate Bill 70 strengthens the quality of teaching in the Commonwealth by permitting local teachers the ability to develop and implement performance-based professional development projects. Projects are designed to produce measurable outcomes of positive impact on student performance.

- [House Bill 319](#), An act relating to teacher shortages, sponsored by House Education Chairman James Tipton (R-53).

House Bill 319 requires exit surveys from school personnel leaving employment thereby providing metrics useful in studying teacher retention, establishes a teacher mobility compact to aide in the recruitment of out-of-state educators, and provides additional steps in retaining and recruiting quality educators.

- [Senate Joint Resolution 98](#), A resolution directing the Council on Postsecondary Education to study the placement and services provided by public universities and community and technical colleges in the Commonwealth, sponsored by Senate President Robert Stivers (R-25).

Senate Joint Resolution 98 calls for a study of higher education needs including the placement of technical education services and the growth of Kentucky's state university system.

The Prichard Committee stands ready to assist you in ensuring that Kentucky reemerges as a leader in national rankings in education. We feel confident that final passage of Senate Bill 156, Senate Bill 70, House Bill 319, and Senate Joint Resolution 98 will continue to move Kentucky in the right direction.

Thank you for your commitment to making Kentucky a leader in education outcomes. Kentucky will continue to make progress in this critical goal until all students are put on the path to a Big Bold Future.

Sincerely,



Brigitte Blom
President & CEO
The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence

Building a Groundswell for a Big, Bold Future

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