



# PRICHARD COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

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March 1, 2018

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Statement by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence On Passage of the House Biennial Budget**

We are pleased to see the commitment by the House of Representatives to make strides stemming the erosion of education funding in the face of significant budget challenges.

Increasing the base SEEK funding, restoring transportation funding for schools to current levels, as well as funding school employee health insurance and safe schools initiatives are positive steps. The modest increases for postsecondary institutions and financial aid are also constructive. However, we remain concerned by declining investment in other critical programs that support teaching and learning.

The Governor's budget proposal was sobering, highlighting the fact that **new revenue** is necessary to ensure Kentucky's investment in education provides the return we know it must. Without continued progress in education Kentucky's quality of life and economic growth will suffer.

We have hit a plateau in education progress. While the Prichard Committee takes pride in Kentucky's national rankings of 8<sup>th</sup> in fourth grade reading and ninth in fourth grade science on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), we do not yet have results like that in mathematics nor in higher grades. We have also seen declining rankings in the last decade on some important indicators, so that Kentucky now ranks:

- 40<sup>th</sup> in preschool participation – down from 24<sup>th</sup>
- 39<sup>th</sup> in eighth grade math – down from 34<sup>th</sup>
- 25<sup>th</sup> in teacher salaries – down from 22<sup>nd</sup>
- 27<sup>th</sup> in per-pupil finding for higher education – down from 12<sup>th</sup>

Based on our statewide assessments, only 56 percent of Kentucky's 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are proficient in reading and only 51 percent in mathematics. Only 66 percent of Kentucky's high school graduates are college

and career ready. Further, we lag the nation in postsecondary attainment and in receipt of STEM postsecondary degrees.

It's time to build on our past success and increase our progress for the future. A commitment to innovation, persistence AND adequate and equitable funding for education will be key to meeting the ambitious goals set recently by the Kentucky Department of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education.

We are not investing in a vacuum. Other states are increasing their investment from early childhood through postsecondary, recognizing human capital as the primary economic engine of a state and the imperative to support a seamless web of educational opportunities necessary for success in school, career and life.

We are encouraged that the House delivered a budget that restores funding in many areas of education, and we urge the General Assembly to follow through on a call for tax reform that results in revenue necessary to further deepen our investment in Kentucky's people.

For detailed analysis of the budget as it moves through the legislative process please visit the [Prichard Blog](#)

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*The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence is an independent statewide advocacy organization dedicated to the improvement of education for all Kentuckians.*