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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Biennial Budget Compromise Reached Some Restoration of Education Funding but Adequacy & Equity Still Compromised

State lawmakers reached a compromise today on the budget for the next two years. While we recognize the need for compromise, it is clear more progress must be made to stem the erosion of Kentucky's commitment to education and increase the investments necessary to advance our progress.

As we continue to analyze the details of the budget, the apparent increase in the base SEEK funding, restoration of transportation funding for schools to current levels, as well as funding school employee health insurance are positive steps. **However, cuts to preschool services and other supports for teaching and learning, like professional development and instructional materials, will create barriers to student success.** For postsecondary, increases for state need-based financial aid programs are also constructive, **but they are sorely tempered by the continued disinvestment in Kentucky's colleges and universities at a time when heightened accountability through performance-based funding is just being implemented.**

We have hit a plateau in education progress. While the Prichard Committee takes pride in Kentucky's national rankings of 8th in fourth grade reading and 9th 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:

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

Based on our statewide assessments, only 56 percent of Kentucky's 3rd 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. And, unacceptable achievement gaps persist – from early childhood through postsecondary.

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 hope that this budget will represent a new beginning in the effort to increase investment in all areas of education. New and sustainable revenue will be required and we urge the General Assembly to follow through on the call for **additional comprehensive tax reform** that results in a structurally sound budget with the revenue necessary to further deepen our investment in Kentucky's people.

For detailed analysis of the budget as it has moved through the legislative process please visit the [Prichard Blog](#). An analysis of this final budget as passed by the House and Senate is forthcoming.

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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.