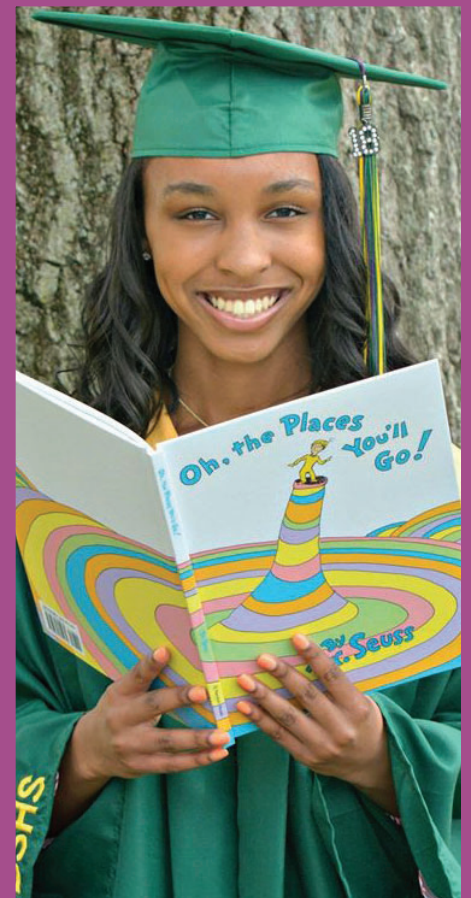


The Prichard Committee

Building a Groundswell for a Big, Bold Future

2019 Annual Report





The Prichard Committee

Building a Groundswell for a Big, Bold Future



Since 1983, the Prichard Committee has worked to study priority issues, inform the public and policy makers about best practices and engage citizens, business leaders, families, students, and other stakeholders in a shared mission to move Kentucky to the top tier of all states for education excellence and equity for all children, from their earliest years through postsecondary education.

Thanks to the efforts of the Committee and dedicated citizens, Kentucky has moved from the bottom of the national rankings in education to the middle and above. **Our ambitious goal is to move to the top tier of states within this generation.**

To accomplish this goal, we focus on **three overarching priorities** to ensure that Kentucky achieves excellence with equity in education. We are committed to ensuring equity for students of all backgrounds, especially those who have had less opportunity than their peers.

A Strong Accountability System

We demand excellence through meaningful standards and robust accountability measures from early childhood through postsecondary education. High expectations and transparency are critical components for Kentucky's educational success.

Adequate and Equitable Funding

We advocate for efficient use of resources and equitable funding that is adequate to assure excellence in education from early childhood through postsecondary.

Sustained and Expanded Citizen Engagement

We work to engage Kentucky citizens on education issues. Informed and empowered students, parents, communities, and business leaders will ensure continued progress for education across the Commonwealth.

Our Work



The Groundswell Initiative

Engaged communities are vital to increase excellence with equity in education.



Student Voice Team

Students from across the Commonwealth who work to integrate students as partners to improve Kentucky schools.



Equity Coalition

Educators and advocates united to close persistent and growing achievement gaps between student groups in Kentucky's schools.



Kentucky Collaborative for Families and Schools

Created to build and sustain engagement, support and resources for families and schools.



Strong Start KY

Kentucky's early childhood advocates united through shared goals to strengthen early care and education for Kentucky children from birth through third grade.

Building a Groundswell for a Big, Bold Future

Thirty years ago, on April 11, 1990, Governor Wallace Wilkinson signed the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) into law. Those of you who have been longtime members and partners of the Prichard Committee know that our history is grounded in this nationally unprecedented education reform act, the landmark court case that preceded it and the committee's work to engage citizens to push for better schools. With a focus on innovations, we've already begun working on building a groundwork for the next 30 years of education in Kentucky - in the spirit of KERA.

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence emerged from the vision of Edward F. Prichard and his desire to improve the quality of Kentucky education as a "path to a larger life" for more Kentuckians. The Committee grew out of a state appointed council to improve higher education and reorganized in 1983 as a citizens' group committed to championing the cause of better schools, led by founding executive director Bob Sexton.

During those early years, Bob drew upon the power of citizens from across the state to create a constant drum beat about the need to improve education and expand access to it, at all levels - from early childhood to college. The core of his strategies included organizing parents, business leaders, the media and community members. We still proudly use his methodology today - 10 years after his passing.

In March 2019, we launched the Groundswell Initiative for engagement in public education, supported with a five-year, \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The initiative, which is now one of our five core areas of work, will give families and communities the knowledge and training they need to become academic advocates for the benefit of all students and the schools they attend. It also will provide technical assistance and training to schools and community-based organizations in effective family engagement policies, programs, resources and activities. The overarching goal of the initiative is to build support for better academic outcomes through family and community engagement.

In June, we also took the pulse of Kentucky's citizens by conducting a Mason-Dixon Poll on education. The poll showed that voters strongly recognize the need for continuing education after high school. More than 70

percent said they believe some level of postsecondary education is necessary for a good-paying job. Asked about the quality of education in the state, 80 percent of the respondents said quality had declined or stayed about the same over the past few years while only 14 percent said quality had improved. Poll questions about early childhood care and education found a majority of Kentuckians to be in favor (74 percent) of increasing state funding to help more low-income, working parents have access to quality childcare and preschool.

Despite these voter voices, state investment in education - from early childhood to college - has declined since the days of KERA's enactment. That's why we launched our Big Bold Ask campaign in September. We created a plan for strategic investments of \$1 billion in additional funding by 2026 to address critical needs in education.

We were beginning to gain some measure of momentum by the close of 2019 with the Big Bold Ask foremost in our minds as we headed into the 2020 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, a biennial budget session. Unfortunately, the statewide impact of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a one-year continuation budget, based on \$115 million less revenue in fiscal year 2021 than originally forecast.

Concerns remained even before the pandemic about the lack of new revenue to sustain the scale of investments necessary to ensure education excellence. These concerns are now amplified as school closures persist and tax revenue declines due to a global recession.

Prior to the pandemic, we'd been observing signs of decline in Kentucky's education progress that had moved us from the bottom to the middle of national rankings since 1990. As early as 2015, lags in NAEP and K-PREP scores and widening achievement gaps told us that the time to re-engage Kentucky's citizens in yet another battle for education excellence was drawing close.

Now, as we enter this unknown territory caused by COVID-19, our mission is now more urgent than ever. Inequities abound in education access for our most vulnerable students, with or without a pandemic. With it, however, the situation is indeed dire. Citizens must unite, putting politics aside, to promote equity and innovation for all students as we navigate this new normal. We hope that you will help us in this critically important work of building Kentucky's big, bold future.



Wynn Radford
Chairman



Brigitte Blom Ramsey
President & CEO



The Prichard Committee

Building a Groundswell for a Big, Bold Future

2019: A LOOK BACK

The Launch of the Groundswell Initiative

A statewide campaign to engage families and communities in effective and sustainable efforts to improve schools and student achievement was launched in March 2019. The Groundswell Initiative for engagement in public education will give families and communities the knowledge and training they need to become academic advocates for the benefit of all students and the schools they attend. It will also provide technical assistance and training to schools and community-based organizations in effective family engagement policies, programs, resources and activities.

Community Profiles lead to opportunities for change

In 2019 we updated our Community Profiles for all 172 Kentucky school districts to share data about how students in each community are progressing along their educational path. During our 2019 Parent Summit, we provided training on how these profiles can be used to create conversations and improve schools across the state. Structured community conversations provide the opportunity for participants to discuss and weigh in on issues that matter to you and your community. The process can result in greater clarity about the issues at hand and potential solutions to seemingly intractable problems.



Ensuring a meaningful high school diploma

Last year as the Kentucky Board of Education moved to change high school graduation requirements, the Prichard Committee provided feedback and legislative testimony on the requirements, finding them lacking in their promise to significantly increase student outcomes and to provide a more meaningful diploma that truly prepares all students to compete in the economy of the future. Although the regulation ultimately passed, many of the requirements in the regulation, including a provision that would have called for students to take reading and math assessments before graduation, were ultimately nixed by the passage of Senate Bill 158 in the 2020 session of the Kentucky General Assembly.

Voter polls show education is a top priority

In both February and August we issued our polling results on key education questions that were conducted as a part of the Mason-Dixon Kentucky Poll. The results clearly indicate that jobs and K-12 education were top priorities for Kentucky voters during the 2019 gubernatorial election cycle. Yet, the lowest priority was postsecondary education, with only 6 percent of voters identifying the issue as a top priority in February. There is a critical need for Kentuckians to have education beyond high school to meet the demands of the modern workplace.

Report highlights education Bright Spots

Kentucky schools and districts that are educational bright spots were identified in a report that The Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) at the University of Kentucky developed with support from and in partnership with the Prichard Committee. The analysis identified 12 school districts as bright spots: Barbourville Independent, Fleming County, Grayson County, Hazard Independent, Hickman County, Jenkins Independent, Monroe County, Paintsville Independent, Pineville Independent, Robertson County, Somerset Independent and Woodford County. These schools were highlighted with stories on our blog throughout the year.



The state of education in Kentucky

The goal of the Prichard Committee is to move Kentucky the top tier of states in education outcomes within this generation. If we are to accomplish that, we have much work to do. Kentucky's rise in national rankings hit a plateau in 2015, and we've begun to show signs of decline since then. Our steadfast commitment to this goal must include increased state investments – in early childhood through postsecondary. However, during the global recession brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, funds will remain scarce and innovations must be made to ensure educational excellence despite revenue shortfalls. In fact, it's more important than ever that Kentucky's education system become the best it can be to realize our goals for a big, bold future.

Early Childhood Education

Kentucky's young children and their families benefit from high-quality early learning that keeps each and every child on a path toward proficiency in reading and mathematics by the end of the third grade. It is imperative to increase the number of infants, toddlers and preschool children from low-income families enrolled in high-quality childcare and public preschool through policies, practices and funding that sustain quality early learning environments.

28,678



Kentucky kids are supported by the Childcare Assistance Program

Reduced income barriers to participation in high-quality programs richly support the learning development of young children.

2,442



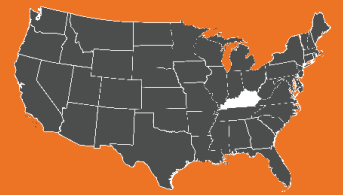
Regulated Childcare Providers

The number has declined from 2013 when it was 4460. Support for child care is insufficient to provide quality, full-day care to enough working families, causing high impacts on the current & future workforce.



74%

Kentucky voters support or strongly support increases in state funding for quality childcare and preschool.



National Rankings

PRESCHOOL
ENROLLMENT
41

4TH GRADE
READING
17

4TH GRADE
MATH
29

HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION
7

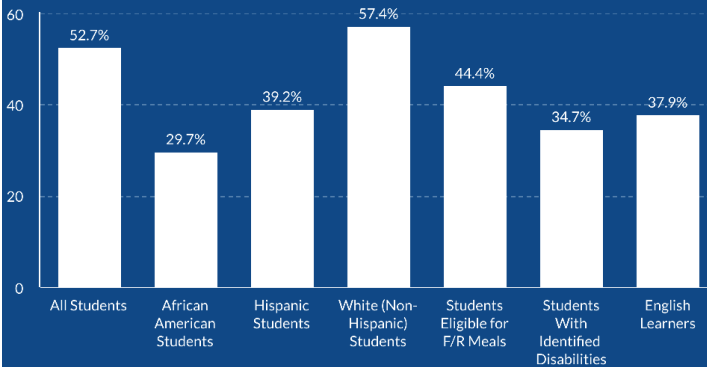
K-12 PER-PUPIL
FUNDING
38

COLLEGE
PER-PUPIL FUNDING
30

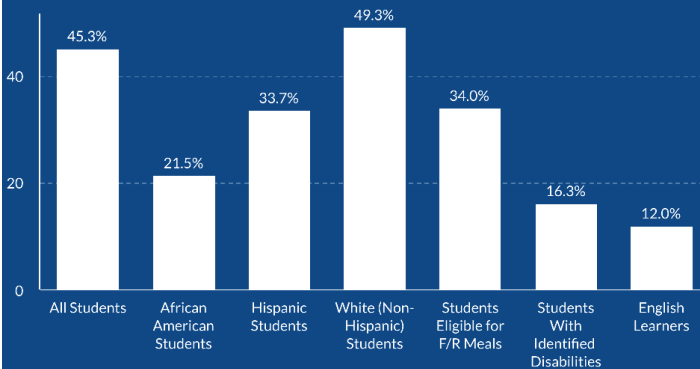
K-12 Education

If Kentucky is going to improve its education outcomes, we must reduce funding gaps between districts with more and less property wealth and support practices that raise results for all learners and especially for historically underserved student groups.

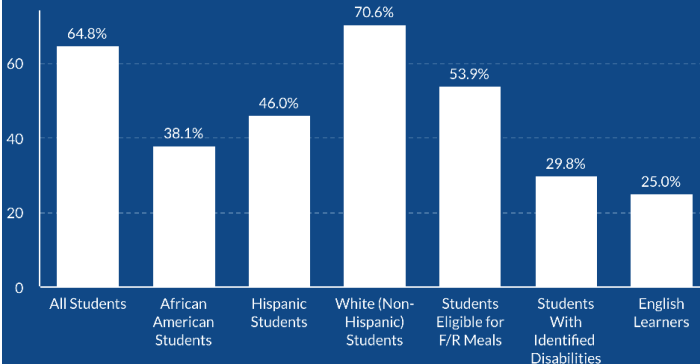
Elementary Students Scoring Proficient & Distinguished on K-PREP Reading Assessments



Middle School Students Scoring Proficient & Distinguished on K-PREP Math Assessments



Transition Readiness (High school to college/career)



Higher Education

To meet Kentucky's education attainment goal of 60% by 2030, we must support investments in strengthening higher education institutions across the state. We must also continue to make progress toward attainment goals for historically underserved groups and enhanced access to higher education for students with financial need. Our public universities have increased their bachelor program graduation rates, but not at the pace needed to meet 2021 targets for all students, low-income students, or underrepresented minority students.

51.7% In-state College-Going Rate



Kentucky's in-state college-going rate is steadily declining. Since 2015, the rate has fallen to 51.7% from 54% for recent high school graduates.

Non-Traditional Student Enrollment

Our public universities are enrolling fewer non-traditional adult students. Enrollment of adults 25 and older has **decreased 17% since the fall of 2015.**



19,011 | 37,128

Degrees awarded in 2019

19,011 Bachelor's degrees were awarded at Kentucky public colleges & universities in 2019. 37,128 Associate's degrees were awarded from the Kentucky Community & Technical College System.



46.9%

Kentucky residents, age 25-64, with a postsecondary degree or credential

This is why we are building a big, bold future.

But we can't do it without your support. Donate today at prichardcommittee.org.

Our Donors

\$50,000+

Alliance for Early Success
James Graham Brown Foundation
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
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Pathway 2 Tomorrow
United Way of Greater Cincinnati
U.S. Department of Education

\$25,000+

The Education Trust
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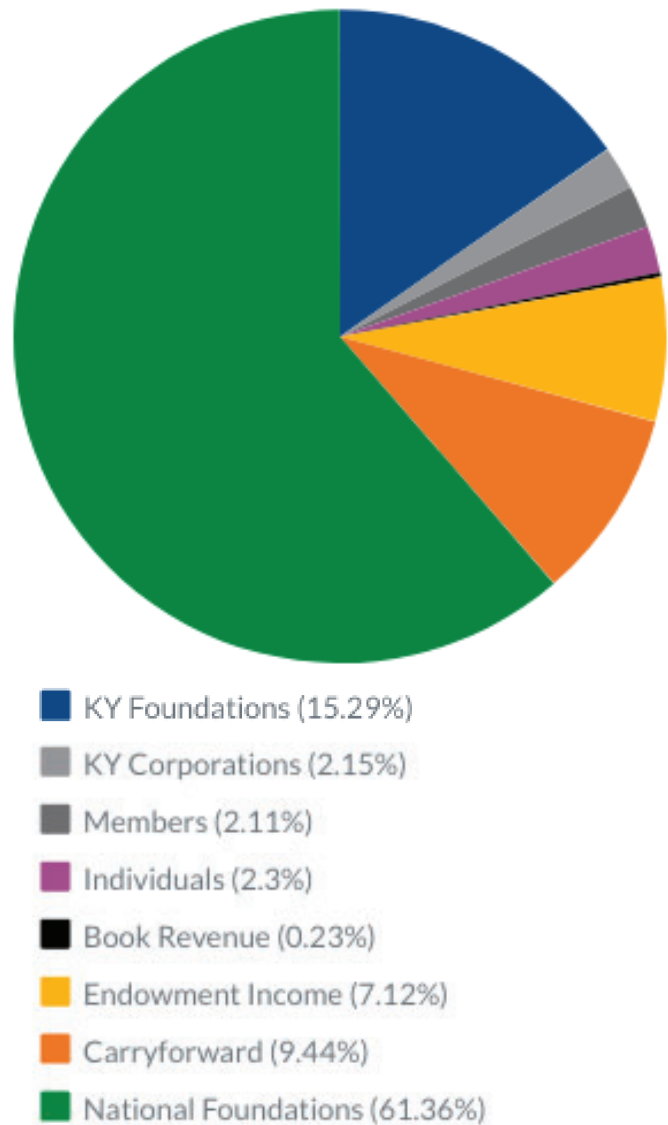
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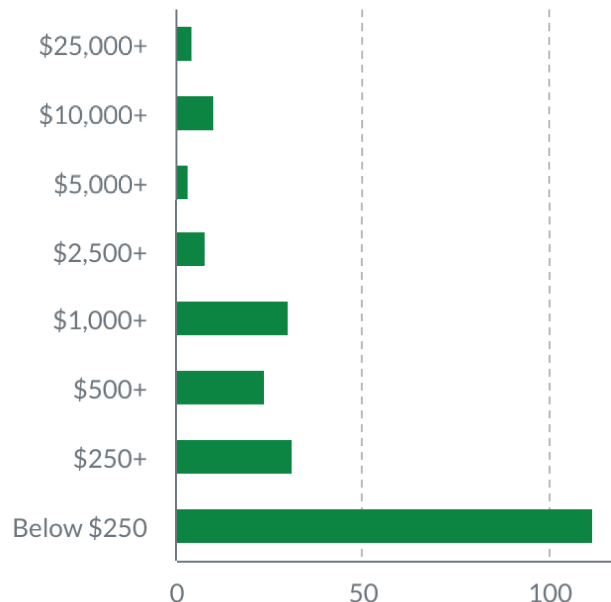
Up to \$250

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Friesen, Jane & Arthur Graham,
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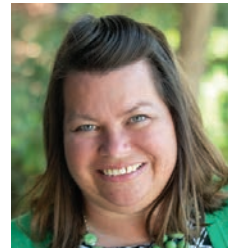
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The Prichard Committee

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INNOVATIONS *in* EDUCATION

for a Big, Bold Future

**Mondays
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Hosted by
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