



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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COMMISSIONER PRAISES GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Education Commissioner Terry Holliday praised Governor Steve Beshear's proposed 2015-16 biennial budget and the Governor's commitment to reinvesting in education.

"I am proud the Governor has recognized education as a key investment for the future of Kentucky," Holliday said. "It will mean a better prepared workforce that can attract higher paying jobs and support the economic development of our state, which will benefit all Kentuckians.

"Reinvesting in education will ensure that we will not backslide and can continue to build on the progress we've made to date raising the high school graduation rate and improving the college/career-readiness of our students," Holliday said.

A reinvestment in education is necessary, the commissioner said, because of cuts in funding over the past several years. The General Assembly has allocated \$64 million less in basic Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funding at a time when the Average Daily Attendance increased by more than 10,000 students, effectively cutting per pupil spending. At a time when educators have been implementing Senate Bill 1 (2009) and raising the bar on education in our state, flexible focus funds that pay for professional development for teachers, safe schools, extended school services for students who need extra help, textbooks and preschool have been cut by nearly \$61 million, he said. Technology funding has been cut \$8 million and schools are in dire need of updated technology devices, Holliday stated.

"Our schools have done a tremendous job with what they've had," Holliday said. "The Governor's proposed budget goes a long way toward restoring the erosion in funding we've seen in recent years."

Governor Beshear recommends investing \$189 million in SEEK over the biennium, bringing per pupil spending to its highest total ever. The allocation includes pay increases for all teachers and classified school personnel (2 percent in FY15 and 1 percent in FY16).

(more)

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Gov. Beshear’s proposed education investments over the two years also include:

- \$95.4 million for textbooks, professional development, school safety and Extended School Services
- \$36 million to expand preschool services to serve 5,125 more 4-year-olds by increasing eligibility from 150 percent of the poverty level to 160 percent
- \$50 million in bonds for technology and school equipment upgrades
- \$100 million for school facilities to upgrade or replace aging K-12 school buildings through General Fund-supported bonds

“The Governor’s proposed budget is only the beginning. It is critical that the General Assembly also recognize the importance of reinvesting in education,” Holliday said. “With the future of the Commonwealth in the balance, we feel confident our lawmakers will see the wisdom in restoring education funding,” he stated.

Commissioner Holliday recognized the Governor’s budget proposal comes at a cost to other state agencies, some of which have endured a 40 percent cut in spending since 2008. That’s why he indicated it is so important that educators support efforts to expand the state’s revenue sources.

“It is critical lawmakers explore expanded gaming as well as tax reform,” Holliday said. “Otherwise, with a finite number of dollars to go around, the result will mean curtailed services to the citizens of our state.”

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