



**Mission:**

*To work collaboratively on policies and practices in and around schools that promote equity and improve the physical, social and emotional health and well-being of children, youth and families.*

**Steering Committee:**

Advocacy Action Network  
Aetna Better Health of Kentucky  
Alliance for a Healthier Generation  
American Academy of Pediatrics-  
Kentucky Chapter  
American Heart Association  
Bounce Coalition  
Cairn Guidance Inc.  
Cumberland Family Medical Center, Inc.  
Dept. Behavioral Health, Dev.&  
Intellectual Disabilities  
Development and Growth Strategies,  
LLC  
Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky  
Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education  
Network - Bluegrass  
Gordon Food service  
Humana  
Kentucky Association of School  
Administrators  
Kentucky Council on Problem Gambling  
Kentucky Department for Medicaid  
Services  
Kentucky Department for Public Health  
Kentucky Department of Education  
Kentucky Health Departments  
Association  
Kentucky Nurses Association  
Kentucky Primary Care Association  
Kentucky Public Health Association  
Kentucky Voices for Health  
Kentucky Youth Advocates  
KY Parent Teacher Association  
Prichard Committee for Academic  
Excellence  
Seven Counties Services  
Spalding University  
St. Elizabeth  
UnitedHealthcare  
University of Kentucky  
University of Louisville

August 10, 2021

Sen. Max Wise and Rep. James Tipton  
School Funding Task Force Co-Chairs

Sen. David Givens, Sen. Reginald Thomas, Sen. Mike Wilson, Rep. Kim Banta,  
Rep. Tina Bojanowski, Rep. DJ Johnson  
School Funding Task Force Members

Dear School Funding Task Force Co-Chairs and Members,

The Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Children is a statewide, multiagency collaboration committed to improving the health of our children and youth in their school settings. We seek to advance policies, programs and practices that reach children and youth at school, where they spend a large portion of their lives and at a time when there are critical changes in their brains and bodies.

As leaders in the Kentucky General Assembly charged with the responsibility of assessing the current and future funding needs of Kentucky's schools, you know the importance and foundational nature of financial investments in education. You also know that there are a multitude of sometimes competing requests for additional funding for our schools and students, all with their own benefits.

While funding full-day Kindergarten for one year and spending federal dollars to address schools' pandemic-related needs will make a meaningful difference in the short-term, there are long-term, foundational needs that are not being met. Kentucky must take action now to invest adequately in core funding for schools.

We request that the School Funding Task Force recommendations you make to your Kentucky General Assembly colleagues accomplish these three goals:

- **Make full-day Kindergarten funding permanent.**  
(The current budget allocation for one year of full-day Kindergarten statewide is a good start, but for it to really make a difference, it needs to be funded annually.)
- **Restore the state's portion of the SEEK base per-pupil amount to at least where it was in 2008 in real dollars.**  
(The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities report showing core, inflation-adjusted per-student funding for K-12 education ranked Kentucky 4<sup>th</sup> worst in the nation with a 13% cut between 2008 and 2019.)
- **Fully fund school transportation costs.**  
(KRS 157.370 requires full funding of school transportation costs, which has not been done since 2004; school transportation costs are currently funded at 55% of the statutorily-required amount.)



Our funding requests are rooted in the notion that schools must have a strong and predictable financial foundation at their core. They are based on historic trends in school funding, research around the critical importance of early education in children's lives and the elements that give all school districts the greatest amount of sustainable and reliable financial support. As schools are able to predict and receive funding to meet their costs, they will be able to look toward initiating local efforts for strategic priorities.

Our coalition recently developed a set of core, foundational funding priorities which underpin specific policy recommendations that we feel will significantly improve the health, education and well-being of Kentucky's students. With a strong funding foundation, districts may look to support priorities in areas ranging from health education, nutrition and physical activity to mental and physical health services and improving the social and emotional climate in their schools. We have attached a brief explanation of these priorities to this letter.

We would be happy to meet with you or to make a brief presentation at one of your upcoming Task Force meetings to provide additional information.

We greatly appreciate your commitment to the health of Kentucky's students and to the schools that serve them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Chandler". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ben Chandler  
Chair, Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Children  
President and CEO, Foundation for Healthy Kentucky