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**Progress Report and Preliminary Recommendations**

Executive Summary

The teacher shortage in Kentucky is real, it had been recognized even before the pandemic, and it is getting worse. In the fall of 2022, the Kentucky Association of School Administrators began leading an effort to develop recommendations for various stakeholders including the Kentucky General Assembly, Kentucky public school districts, and other state agencies to address this shortage. Executive Director Dr. Rhonda Caldwell recruited experts and policymakers from the fields of k-12 and post-secondary education, business and industry, labor, and government to serve on the Coalition to Sustain the Education Profession.

This Progress Report and Preliminary Recommendations was presented to the Coalition’s Steering Committee on December 15, 2022, to gather feedback on those recommendations and to begin charting a course toward helping to solve one of the most challenging problems facing Kentucky and one that can have serious detrimental effects on our state’s social and economic health for decades to come.

The Coalition is composed of a Steering Committee to guide the overall work in three focus areas including Teacher Retention (keeping the teachers we have), Teacher Recruitment (attracting new teachers), and Marketing (publicizing the efforts of the other two areas and promoting the profession as a whole). Supporting these focus areas are nine task forces composed of 125 volunteers from across Kentucky, 30 of whom are current practicing classroom teachers.

The report that follows recommends six distinct strategies to begin addressing the shortage of high-quality classroom educators:

**Strategy 1: Comprehensive study of the state of Kentucky Education** to be promptly completed to provide in-depth and actionable data regarding teacher compensation and benefits; teacher working conditions; perceptions of the teaching profession among teachers, high school seniors and the community; challenges regarding student behavior an attendance; and revenue and fiscal equity issues among Kentucky school districts.

**Strategy 2: Address teacher certification and qualification issues that impede teacher recruitment** including teacher testing requirement, certification reciprocity between states, clarity of alternative certification pathways, and clear definition of professional and personal behaviors of licensed educators.

**Strategy 3: Financial incentives to aid in statewide recruiting and retention efforts** that can used to both retain current teachers and attract new teachers including scholarships, loan forgiveness, a program modeled on the Kentucky National Guard, hiring bonuses, retention bonuses, and graduate school tuition incentives.

**Strategy 4: Legislative mandate to bring together data, programs, and processes across disparate agencies and organizations to create a single “Be A Kentucky Teacher” portal for teacher preparation, recruitment, and application** that will include recruiting resources; interest inventories; traditional and alternative pathways’ information about responsibilities, working conditions, and pay; financial assistance programs; information on Kentucky schools and districts; retirement benefits scenarios; and a single state-wide application systems integrated with district human resource and financial software.

**Strategy 5: Mandate that every school district implement a teacher recruitment and induction system and provide non-competitive grant funding to support the effort** comprised of a Teaching & Learning dual credit pathway in every Kentucky High School, comprehensive mentoring for new teachers, and a Tenure Review Committee to ensure that teachers meet high standards of performance and undergo career guidance prior to receiving tenure.

**Strategy 6: Develop a marketing plan to communicate to all Kentucky audiences the impact and importance of Kentucky educators and public education** including an expansion of GoTeachKY to every Kentucky school district; a series of professionally produced television, radio, and social media advertisements highlighting the importance of public education and how teachers help children realize their potential, and benefit the state’s economy and social stability; and the development of a toolkit to assist schools and district in their own marketing efforts.

Following the meeting, KASA staff will gather feedback from the members of the Steering Committee and develop an action plan for the upcoming year. The various task forces will continue meeting as needed throughout 2023 to assist with implementation of the action plan and to make further recommendations based on emerging data.