

OUR KIDS CAN'T WAIT

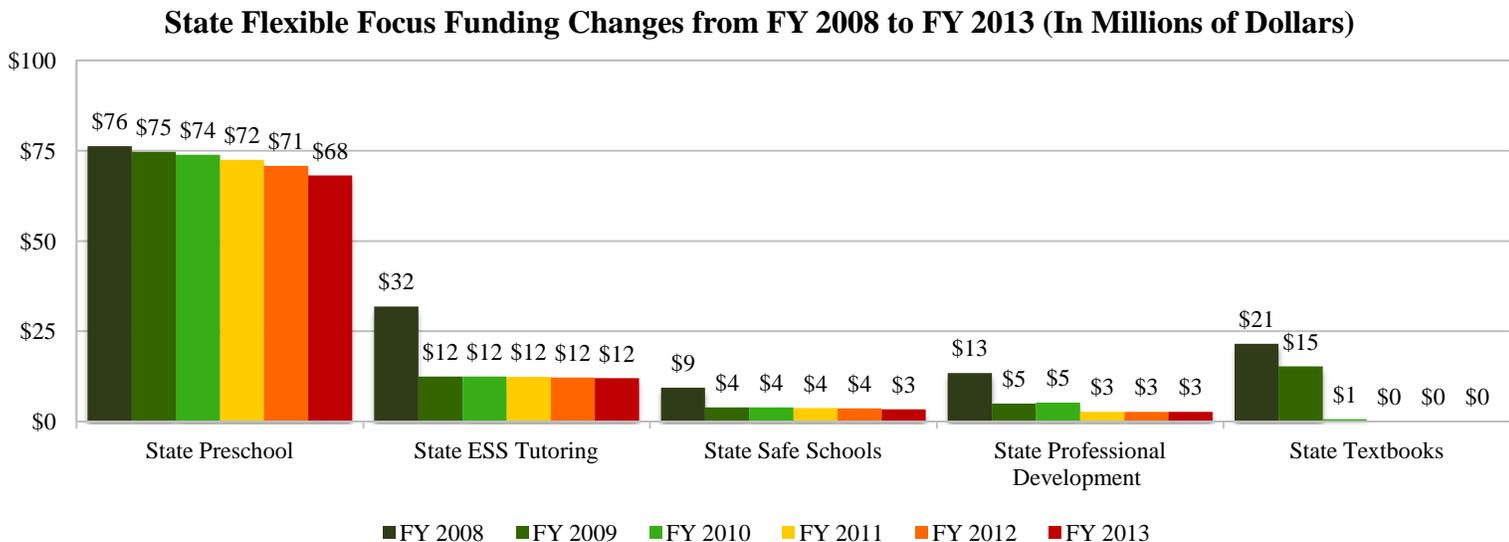
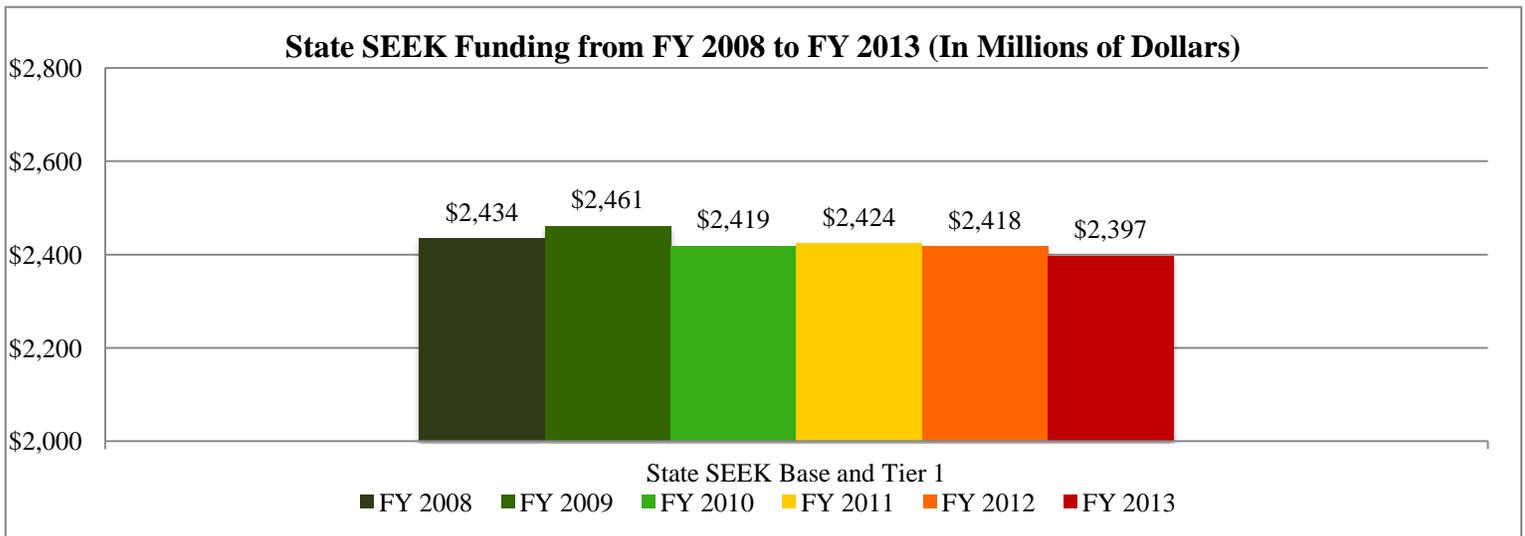
EXPECTATIONS UP, RESOURCES DOWN

Kentucky's goal is for all students to graduate from high school and be ready for college and careers.

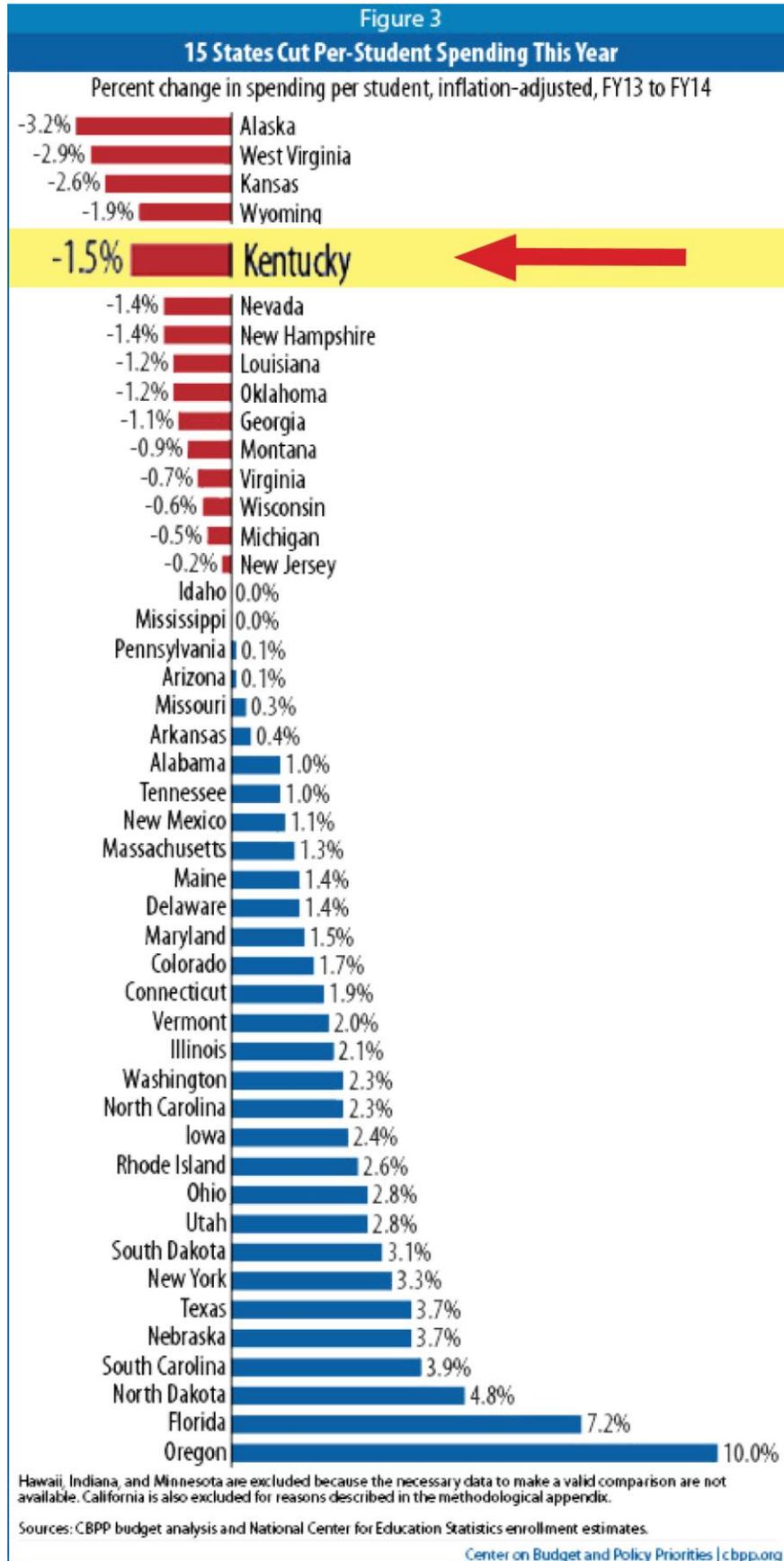
As a state, we have committed to these much higher standards, but state funding has declined in program after program that supports our students' learning.

It's time to invest in our children, providing the vital financial assistance required to meet our bold new goals.

The graphs below show the key reductions in funding over the last six years.



Kentucky is also losing ground compared to other states as we move out of the recession. As shown in this chart from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, most states have increased funding for the current school year. Kentucky is one of the few states that decreased state support for 2013-14, putting us in a weaker position to compete for future jobs and growth. (Source: www.cbpp.org)





OUR MESSAGE

A four-year-old cannot attend a public preschool like her older brother did. Her parents earn too much now to qualify and don't have the money to send her to a quality program.

A special needs student struggles in classes because he lost his teacher assistant due to budget cuts.

Students struggle with slow computers and internet access because there are no funds to replace them or increase bandwidth.

A high school student cannot take the math and science classes needed to meet his career goals because his school no longer offers those classes.

High school students cannot meet career-ready requirements because their school eliminated their automotive classes.

All these students suffer the impact of reductions in the state's funding for their learning. Even without this support, Kentucky expects them to learn more than we have ever expected of any previous generation of students. The General Assembly took an important step in 2009 by mandating higher standards for our students, better student testing, and better ways of reporting student learning.

At the same time we demand more from our students, their needs are growing. More students live in poverty and need extra support to succeed. Over the last six years, the state's financial support for our children has not kept up with those demands. Funding has also not kept up with increased costs of everything from food to fuel to personnel.

State funding for specific programs has been drastically cut. It has been eliminated for textbooks and other learning materials. At the time when teachers need the most help to upgrade their skills to meet the increased demands, state funding for their professional development has been reduced by two-thirds.

Other sources of funding for our students have also been declining. Federal funding is shrinking. To make up for the decline in revenue, some local districts have resorted to increasing property taxes. However, this results in funding inequity between wealthy versus poor districts, a situation which was deemed unconstitutional and led to the Kentucky Education Reform Act.

The good news for Kentuckians is that our schools are a great investment. Our students score at the national average in 4th grade mathematics and above the national average in 4th and 8th grade reading and science. *Education Week* now rates Kentucky's schools in the top ten nationally.

Education Week also gives Kentucky its lowest grade – an "F" – in only one category. That category is funding. Our students and schools cannot maintain these levels of learning without additional state funding.

Over the last six years, the state funding for many of the programs that support our students' learning has declined precipitously. We cannot expect students to learn without textbooks and other learning materials, without preschool, and without extra help to catch up. Their teachers cannot help them when funding for their own learning has evaporated.

The members of the Kentucky Education Action Team (KEAT) call on the leaders of the Commonwealth to commit additional state revenue for our students. KEAT's priorities for funding mirror those of the Kentucky

Board of Education and Kentucky Department of Education:

- Restore funding for the basic school funding formula to 2008-09 levels.
- Restore support for textbooks, preschool, safe schools programs, teachers' professional development, and tutoring to 2007-08 levels.
- Provide funding for technology to increase capacity and speed so students can connect to the instructional tools they need.

KEAT represents close to 155,000 Kentuckians in every community of the state. We pledge assistance in building a groundswell of support among Kentuckians to commit these funds to our students.

As a possibility for generating revenue for our students, KEAT supports the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Tax Reform. We also support putting gaming on the ballot to let Kentucky voters decide.

The members of the Kentucky Education Action Team look forward to working with members of the General Assembly, the Governor, and other supporters of our students to assure their future and that of the Commonwealth.

The needs of our students, schools and state are urgent. The time to act is now. Our kids can't wait.



*Pictured Left to Right: Wilson Sears, David Baird, Ronda Harmon, Wayne Young, Mary Ann Blankenship, Bob Wagoner, Stu Silberman, Eddie Squires
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Wayne Young, Executive Director
KY Association of School
Administrators
Representing 3,000+ members
wayne@kasa.org
502-875-3411

Ronda Harmon, Executive Director
KY Association of School Councils
Representing 4,665 members
rharmon@kasc.net
859-238-2188

Wilson Sears, Executive Director
KY Association of School
Superintendents
Representing 170 members
wsearskass@gmail.com
606-875-1771

Mary Ann Blankenship, Executive
Director
KY Education Association
Representing 42,000 members
mary.blankenship@kea.org
502-875-2889

Eddie Squires, President
KY Parent Teacher Association
Representing 73,196 members
esquires.kypta@yahoo.com
502-226-6607

Bob Wagoner, Executive Director
KY Retired Teachers Association
Representing 29,000 members
bvwagoner@aol.com
502-231-5802

David Baird, Executive Director
KY School Boards Association
Representing 867 members
david.baird@ksba.org
502-695-4630

Stu Silberman, Executive Director
Prichard Committee
Representing 1,900 members/GCIPL Fellows
stu.silberman@prichardcommittee.org
859-229-8040