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## Legislators: Adequate Funding Needed

By [Stu Silberman](#) on March 18, 2014 9:04 AM |

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Members of the Kentucky General Assembly, thank you for your service to the Commonwealth and its citizens. I am grateful for your decision to serve and lead. I really need to ask for your help. You are undoubtedly in a difficult financial dilemma as you try to determine Kentucky's annual budget. While I realize the difficulty of the budget situation, I have come to the realization that you do not have any way of knowing the realities that previous funding cuts to education have made in my classroom.

First grade has changed a lot since you and I were in a classroom. The days of Dick and Jane basal readers have passed. I have the responsibility to teach 24 students, and sometimes more, to read. First grade students are required to read 67 words per minute in fiction as well as non-fiction texts by the end of first grade. We expect our children to be equipped and prepared to be college- and career-ready to compete in a global society. Despite the responsibility I have for those 24 students, I am given 11 reading textbooks to use with them. This is a tragedy. Children learn to read by holding a book in their hands, tracking print, looking at pictures and more. My children must have the tools they need to read in order to learn to think critically and to become accomplished readers and writers.

Standards require my students to be able to research and utilize technology, yet I have three desktop computers for 24 students to share.

We can accept no further cuts to education for our children and grandchildren.

Kentucky has made phenomenal strides in education. Kentucky's progress has been so astounding that we were recently featured in a *Newsweek* magazine article. Kentucky's teachers have stepped up to the plate. I have done and continue to do everything in my power to improve the quality of my teaching: I voluntarily became a National Board Certified teacher in 2012, attend double to triple my yearly required in-service hours that I am not compensated for, and attend [Kentucky Education Association](#) (KEA) and [National Education Association](#) (NEA) conventions to collaborate.

As a Kentucky Hope Street Teacher Fellow and KEA member, I have had the opportunity to interact with teachers throughout our great Commonwealth. All echo the same sentiments as the teachers in my district. We

are exhausted from being asked to continually do more with less. I am not alone in working 60-80 hours a week.

My colleagues and I go above and beyond every day of our teaching career. Despite our hard work, each year new cuts are made, more work and anxiety is added. You have the power to remedy this situation. It is imperative that you not cut educational funding, but rather restore it to previous levels.

We must have funding for our students, textbooks, money to attend in-service trainings to learn new strategies and to keep abreast of new technology. Please invest in the education of our students, as they are the future of the Commonwealth.