



February 5, 2026

***Via Electronic Mail***

Kentucky General Assembly  
702 Capital Avenue  
Annex  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

***Re: Kentucky Superintendents Supporting Pre-K for All***

Dear Senators and Representatives,

As a majority of the superintendents in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, we write urging you to support the Pre-K for All initiative. It would expand Kentucky's voluntary publicly-funded preschool program, so that every Kentucky four-year-old has an opportunity at a strong start.

Our children are facing educational challenges. Fewer than half of Kentucky's kids come to kindergarten ready. We see this in our own classrooms. Children who start behind often stay behind, and it becomes harder and more expensive to help them catch up later. We know expanded Pre-K can change that trajectory. Pre-K for All would make sure every four-year-old in our Commonwealth has the foundation they need to thrive.

At the same time, we know families are struggling to pay the bills and lack of childcare is a key driver. Pre-K for All can help ease the financial burden and boost household earnings by nearly \$9,000 dollars each year for at least six years. That's \$54,000 more dollars in the pockets of our families, cycling through our local economies, creating and maintaining jobs, and growing our communities.

We are in classrooms every day, so we know – **Pre-K works**. But right now, only 14,000 of Kentucky's 54,000 four-year-olds have access to it.

We know from lived experience what numerous studies show - Pre-K improves kindergarten readiness, boosts high school graduation rates, and even raises lifetime earnings after students leave our schools. Families save thousands of dollars, and it fuels workforce participation - raising household incomes and providing more learning opportunities for kids.

Consider the data:

- **Improves Kindergarten Readiness:** Over half – 53.8% – of Kentucky's children arrive at kindergarten already behind. Pre-K for All would close this gap and make sure every Kentucky child has a strong start.
- **Expands the Workforce:** Up to 70,000 Kentuckians are unable to work because they lack childcare. Pre-K for All will let parents reenter the

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workforce and take advantage of local job opportunities in our cities and towns across Kentucky.

- **Raises Household Incomes:** A long-term study shows that families with access to Pre-K earn nearly **\$9,000 more per year** - gains that persist for years after their child completes Pre-K.
- **Delivers a 10:1 Return on Investment:** Every dollar invested in Pre-K yields ten dollars in return—from better jobs and health outcomes to reduced criminal justice costs and increased educational attainment.
- **Creates Jobs in Education:** Pre-K for All will generate demand for educators and support staff across the state, creating new careers, and helping attract talent to our towns and cities.
- **Expands Access Across Kentucky:** With 79 of Kentucky's 120 counties having little to no childcare available, this initiative will expand access, create job opportunities, give parents a choice, and lay the foundation for academic success.

As educational leaders, we can say with complete confidence Pre-K for All would be transformative, for our students, our schools, and our Commonwealth. It would help close readiness gaps before they begin, reduce the burden on K-12 intervention services, and build a stronger foundation for every learner across Kentucky.

Our students and their families cannot wait. We urge the General Assembly to make expanding Pre-K access for all Kentucky four-year-olds a top priority in the 2026 Budget Session. Together we can give every Kentucky child a great start, support working families, and invest in a stronger, more competitive Kentucky.

Thank you for your commitment to Kentucky's students and families and for your consideration of this vital initiative.

Respectfully,

*The Undersigned Superintendents of the Commonwealth of Kentucky*

*Travis Hamby*

Superintendent Travis Hamby  
Allen County Public Schools

*Sharla Six*

Superintendent Sharla Six  
Anchorage Independent Schools

*Sheila Mitchell*

Superintendent Sheila Mitchell  
Anderson County Public Schools

*Lisa McCane*

Superintendent Lisa McCane  
Augusta Independent Schools

*Ryan Clark*

Superintendent Ryan Clark  
Bardstown Independent Schools

*Brian Crawford*

Superintendent Brian Crawford  
Bell County Public Schools

*Ryan Neaves*

Superintendent Ryan Neaves  
Berea Independent Schools

*Larry Begley*

Superintendent Larry Begley  
Bourbon County Public Schools

*William Boblett*

Superintendent William Boblett  
Boyd County Public Schools

*Mark Wade*

Superintendent Mark Wade  
Boyle County Public Schools

*Clay King*

Superintendent Clay King  
Bracken County Public Schools

*Phillip Watts*

Superintendent Phillip Watts  
Breathitt County Public Schools

*Nick Carter*

Superintendent Nick Carter  
Breckinridge County Public Schools

*Jesse Bacon*

Superintendent Jesse Bacon  
Bullitt County Public Schools

*Robert Tuck*

Superintendent Robert Tuck  
Butler County Public Schools

*Tom Radivonyk*

Superintendent Tom Radivonyk  
Carlisle County Public Schools

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*Casey Jaynes*

Superintendent Casey Jaynes  
Carroll County Public Schools

*Amanda Abell*

Superintendent Amanda Abell  
Caverna Independent Schools

*Christopher Bentzel*

Superintendent Christopher Bentzel  
Christian County Public Schools

*Dustin Howard*

Superintendent Dustin Howard  
Clark County Public Schools

*Travis Wilder*

Superintendent Travis Wilder  
Corbin Independent Schools

*Alvin Garrison*

Superintendent Alvin Garrison  
Covington Independent Schools

*Kirk Biggerstaff*

Superintendent Kirk Biggerstaff  
Cumberland County Public Schools

*Leonard Whalen*

Superintendent Leonard Whalen  
Dawson Springs Independent Schools

*Rick Wolf*

Superintendent Rick Wolf  
Dayton Independent Schools

*Brian Alexander*

Superintendent Brian Alexander  
Edmonson County Public Schools

*Dolly Fannin*

Superintendent Dolly Fannin  
Elliott County Public Schools

*Buddy Berry*

Superintendent Buddy Berry  
Eminence Independent Schools

*Demetrus Liggins*

Superintendent Demetrus Liggins  
Fayette County Public Schools

*Tonya Williams*

Superintendent Tonya Williams  
Floyd County Public Schools

*Sheri Satterly*

Superintendent Sheri Satterly  
Frankfort Independent Schools

*Mark Kopp*

Superintendent Mark Kopp  
Franklin County Public Schools

*Ellen Murphy*

Superintendent Ellen Murphy  
Fulton County Public Schools

*Terry Sullivan*

Superintendent Terry Sullivan  
Fulton Independent Schools

*Kevin Stull*

Superintendent Kevin Stull  
Garrard County Public Schools

*Todd Moody*

Superintendent Todd Moody  
Grant County Public Schools

*Matthew Madding*

Superintendent Matthew Madding  
Graves County Public Schools

*Steve Hall*

Superintendent Steve Hall  
Greenup County Public Schools

*Teresa Morgan*

Superintendent Teresa Morgan  
Hardin County Public Schools

*Brett Johnson*

Superintendent Brett Johnson  
Harlan County Public Schools

*Jennifer Parsons*

Superintendent Jennifer Parsons  
Harlan Independent Schools

*Sondra Combs*

Superintendent Sondra Combs  
Hazard Independent Schools

*Bob Lawson*

Superintendent Bob Lawson  
Henderson County Public Schools

*Jim Masters*

Superintendent Jim Masters  
Henry County Public Schools

*Renee Smith*

Superintendent Renee Smith  
Jackson County Public Schools

*Wayne Sizemore*

Superintendent Wayne Sizemore  
Jackson Independent Schools

*Brian Yearwood*

Superintendent Brian Yearwood  
Jefferson County Public Schools

*Damian Johnson*

Superintendent Damian Johnson  
Jenkins Independent Schools

*Gregory Conn*

Superintendent Gregory Conn  
Knott County Public Schools

*Adryanne Warren*

Superintendent Adryanne Warren  
LaRue County Public Schools

*Denise Griebel*

Superintendent Denise Griebel  
Laurel County Public Schools

*Denise Yonts*

Superintendent Denise Yonts  
Letcher County Public Schools

*Dan Costellow*

Superintendent Dan Costellow  
Logan County Public Schools

*Jason Steffen*

Superintendent Jason Steffen  
Ludlow Independent Schools

*Chris Meadows*

Superintendent Chris Meadows  
Magoffin County Public Schools

*Bill Thorpe*

Superintendent Bill Thorpe  
Marshall County Public Schools

*Larry James*

Superintendent Larry James  
Martin County Public Schools

*Tommy Burrough*

Superintendent Tommy Burrough  
McLean County Public Schools

*Joshua Kincaid*

Superintendent Joshua Kincaid  
Menifee County Public Schools

*Amy Thompson*

Superintendent Amy Thompson  
Monroe County Public Schools

*Contessa Orr*

Superintendent Contessa Orr  
Muhlenberg County Public Schools

*Wes Bradley*

Superintendent Wes Bradley  
Nelson County Public Schools

*Matt Atkins*

Superintendent Matt Atkins  
Newport Independent Schools

*Doug Bechanan*

Superintendent Doug Bechanan  
Nicholas County Public Schools

*Claudette Herald*

Superintendent Claudette Herald  
Oldham County Public Schools

*Wendy Duvall*

Superintendent Wendy Duvall  
Owensboro Independent Schools

*Gary Cornett*

Superintendent Gary Cornett  
Owsley County Public Schools

*Donald Shively*

Superintendent Donald Shively  
Paducah Independent Schools

*Stephen McCauley*

Superintendent Stephen McCauley  
Paris Independent Schools

*Kent Campbell*

Superintendent Kent Campbell  
Perry County Public Schools

*Freddie Bowling*

Superintendent Freddie Bowling  
Pike County Public Schools

*Russell Thompson*

Superintendent Russell Thompson  
Pineville Independent Schools

*Sarah Wasson*

Superintendent Sarah Wasson  
Powell County Public Schools

*Patrick Richardson*

Superintendent Patrick Richardson  
Pulaski County Public Schools

*Larry Coldiron*

Superintendent Larry Coldiron  
Raceland-Worthington Independent Schools

*Sanford Holbrook*

Superintendent Sanford Holbrook  
Robertson County Public Schools

*Carrie Ballinger*

Superintendent Carrie Ballinger  
Rockcastle County Public Schools

*Michael Rowe*

Superintendent Michael Rowe  
Rowan County Public Schools

*Michael Ford*

Superintendent Michael Ford  
Russell County Public Schools

*Sean Horne*

Superintendent Sean Horne  
Russell Independent Schools

*Billy Parker*

Superintendent Billy Parker  
Scott County Public Schools

*William Foster*

Superintendent William Foster  
Spencer County Public Schools

*Terra Hancock*

Superintendent Terra Hancock  
Union County Public Schools

*Matthew Baker*

Superintendent Matthew Baker  
Walton-Verona Independent Schools

*Rob Clayton*

Superintendent Rob Clayton  
Warren County Public Schools

*Robin Cochran*

Superintendent Robin Cochran  
Washington County Public Schools

*John Siler*

Superintendent John Siler  
Whitley County Public Schools

*John Slone*

Superintendent John Slone  
Williamstown Independent Schools

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*Kenny Bell*

Superintendent Kenny Bell  
Wolfe County Public Schools

*Lori Jones*

Superintendent Lori Jones  
Woodford County Public Schools

Attachments: Letter from Bath County Public Schools Superintendent Michael Melton  
Letter from Caverna Independent Schools Superintendent Amanda Abell





# BATHCOUNTYSCHOOLS

February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026

Dear Members of the Kentucky General Assembly,

As Superintendent of the Bath County Schools I am in support of Pre-K for all from an educational, philosophical, and theoretical stance. The research data supports without question the importance and the impact that Pre-K has on a student's kindergarten readiness. The Commonwealth has offered publicly funded preschool for more than 30 years, currently serving qualifying students with disabilities and those who qualify economically. This roughly is estimated at about 14,500 students of our 54,000 four-year olds in the state or roughly 27% of four-year olds. So, as I mentioned previously I am in support of the Pre-K initiative from the educational, philosophical, and theoretical stances.

After many discussions with other superintendents and school leadership in districts of my comparable size, we are of the mind that we support Universal Pre-K but there will have to be major issues addressed in order for districts to implement. These are the non-negotiables:

- *Facility Needs:* There will have to be adequate funding to address the facility space challenges. As it stands now, our district does not have the space to accommodate the increase in student population to serve and educate that increased number of students. There would have to be increased support for innovative public-private partnerships but also to be aware that in districts in rural areas there may be limited private partners.
- *Workforce Capacity:* There will have to be a pool of qualified early childhood educators and support staff to fill the needs and we will have to have adequate funding for salaries and benefits to effectively compensate these professionals.
- *Operations and Long-Term Sustainability:* There will have to be long-term guaranteed funding streams to sustain expanded preschool programs, maintaining facilities, expanding facilities, and services. There will also have to be additional funding for transportation because additional bus drivers, vehicles, and monitors will have to be employed in order to maximize safety and be compliant legally.
- *Phasing:* Pre-K for all will have to be a phased approach with a tremendous amount of support and guidance to strategically make it an effective program addition rather than a cumbersome mandate.

We all agree that we need to do what is best for our students and their families and universal Pre-K is important for the future success of our students and the Commonwealth. With that acknowledgement, it will have to be fully funded for facility expansion, facility maintenance, availability of qualified teachers and staff, the funding of additional personnel to provide the support services, and be strategically, phased in over a period of years allowing districts time to implement. That means revenue streams will have to be available to many districts years in advance of the first universal Pre-K students coming into buildings.



# BATHCOUNTYSCHOOLS

The Bath County Schools are willing to partner with the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the Kentucky Department of Education to implement preschool expansion if the plan is funded and reasonable.

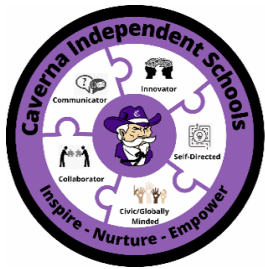
Thank you for your continued emphasis and commitment to the students and families of Kentucky.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Michael C. Melton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Dr. Michael C. Melton  
Superintendent

michael.melton@bath.kyschools.us  
606-216-1893 Cell

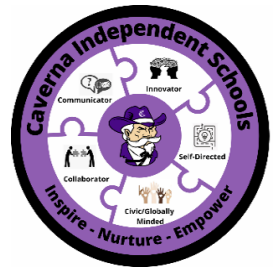


**Caverna Independent School District**  
**1102 North Dixie Hwy.**  
**Cave City, Kentucky 42127**

Phone (270) 773-2530

Fax (270) 773-2524

***Amanda G. Abell, Ed.S. - Superintendent***



Dear Senators and Representatives,

I am writing to express strong support for the Preschool for All initiative and to urge your consideration of its long-term benefits for Kentucky's students, families, and communities.

Expanding access to preschool has been a long-standing priority of Kentucky superintendents across decades and administrations. This support reflects a shared, nonpartisan commitment to improving educational outcomes and promoting the wellbeing of Kentucky's children.

School readiness is foundational to success. When students begin kindergarten prepared, confident, and ready to learn, they are far more likely to thrive throughout their K–12 experience and beyond. High-quality, voluntary preschool opportunities strengthen early learning, improve long-term outcomes, and serve as a powerful tool for raising student achievement statewide.

We support expanding voluntary preschool access for four-year-olds through a responsible, phased-in approach. This allows districts to build capacity deliberately while maintaining quality and fiscal responsibility.

Local flexibility is essential. Kentucky's diverse communities require solutions that reflect local needs, including public-private partnerships and community-based approaches that leverage existing resources.

For successful implementation, legislation must address three key factors: adequate facility space, a strong early childhood workforce, and sustainable, long-term operational funding.

Support for preschool expansion does not replace other core education priorities, including modernizing the accountability system, strengthening the educator workforce pipeline, and securing budget policies that invest in long-term student and workforce success. Rather, early learning complements and strengthens these efforts.

Ultimately, this initiative is about what is best for Kentucky — providing opportunity early, supporting families, and preparing a stronger, more competitive workforce for the future. I respectfully urge your support for the Preschool for All initiative.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to public education.

Sincerely,

Amanda Abell  
Superintendent  
Caverna Independent School District