Name of Request:	KETS Funding
Strategic Plan Impacted:	Improve Student Opportunities/ Improve Educator Access to High Quality Resources
Additional Amount:	**$29,200,000.00** FY25: $14,600,000.00 FY26: $14,600,000.00

Explanation:
There has been a very large influx of recent, one-time federal CV-19 relief funds that will go towards education technology needs in the K-12 environment over the next two school years. These additional, one-time federal CV-19 funds have led to the largest amount of education technology funds available to address education technology needs in districts in the 30-year history of the Kentucky Education Technology System (KETS) funds. These additional one-time funds over the next two years help address previous and sustained funding shortfalls as well as implementing new needed technology enabled services. All of that is wonderful news, in the short term. However, these federal CV-19 relief funds are very temporary in nature and, therefore, planning must occur now on how to maintain and sustain these education technology enabled products and services after the federal CV-19 relief funding has been expended and/or expires at the beginning of SY2024-2025.

Below are the most recent seven years of grand totals of all the funding sources available to KDE, districts and schools identified to obtain KY K-12 EdTech products and services both prior to the CV-19 pandemic in March 2020 and since March 2020. Prior to all the temporary CV-19 federal relief funds, KY K-12 EdTech had been regularly underfunded between $100M - $140M per year. KY K-12 districts will return to that significant underfunding of $100M - $140M of EdTech in SY2024-2025 and thus will quickly experience the negative impacts of that underfunding unless something is done in the OET and KETS budget to address that large funding shortfall prior to SY2024-2025.

School Year	Total	Note
SY22-23	$502.7M	Includes $27.7M of last round of temporary federal Emergency Connectivity Funds (ECF)
SY21-22	$405.4M	Includes $48.7M in first rounds of temporary federal Emergency Connectivity Funds (ECF)
SY20-21	$330.7M	
SY19-20	$288.3M	Includes $20.8M jump of student & staff computer purchases from March 2020 to June 2020
SY18-19	$265.6M	
SY17-18	$228.7M	
SY16-17	$215.5M	

Since 2010, the Kentucky Education Technology System (KETS) allocation, approved by the legislature through their budget language, has been steadily reduced from $19.5M to $15.4M. Although KETS was identified as one of KBE's top additional budget priorities in the 2020-2022 KDE Biennial Budget Request and submitted to the Governor for consideration during the 2020 legislative session, additional funding was not included by the General Assembly in the enacted 2020-2021 nor the 2021-2022 Executive Branch Budgets mainly due to the Covid situation. In the 2022 legislative session, the additional budget request for KETS was not identified as a top

five priority by the KBE and was not funded in the 2022 session. We are happy for CTE, transportation, kindergarten and KSB/KSD receiving significant new legislative funding after being a top five priority of the KBE in the 2021 and 2022 legislative sessions.

Going forward, we strongly advocate for KETS to be one of the KBE's top five funding priorities identified in the upcoming 2024-2026 KDE Biennial Request. Without addressing this funding shortfall, it is effectively acknowledging that the KETS program will not be provisioned with the resources necessary to sustain reliable, capable and quality education technology services for all Kentucky K-12 beginning in SY 2024-2025.

K-12 is "the" pioneer and "the" national leader in most aspects of education technology. KY K-12 is "the" national leader in cloud-based computing using 20 times more Internet bandwidth than the rest of KY state government and local county governments combined. These past three school years have put an unprecedented load on all our systems and major services, yet we thrived and did so while continuing to implement new projects, upgrade services and provide connectivity and availability with 99.98% uptime. The previous and most recent budget cuts have also impacted the state's K-12 Internet funds during a time over the past 24 months where there has been a 247% increase in internet usage by our students and teachers.

The requested additional funds are needed to address the current level of district Internet utilization for instructional purposes which will then be sent back out to districts as a KETS Offer of Assistance utilizing the resulting Federal E-Rate refunds received for these K-12 Internet Connectivity services. This is a 3 for 1 bang for the buck. If we don't receive these funds, KDE will have no choice but to limit connectivity and the Internet access volume to levels below current utilization levels thus slowing the network response times, rendering on-line applications, systems and tools useless and unreliable. KY K-12 continues to support school districts' education plans and digital readiness through an ever-expanding number and assortment of technologies, software applications including digital instructional resources used in the classroom and for distance learning, Internet use for instructional purposes, with over 1 million computers in the hands of students and staff. The education centric KY K-12 Internet access enhances the learning experience of all students by connecting them to rich instructional tools and content available on-line in a secure, robust and reliable digital learning environment. It provides teachers and administrators access to information and tools to be effective teachers, leaders, and decision makers. However, we will not only no longer be a national leader but will quickly start tumbling toward the very bottom if we don't appropriately fund KY K-12 education technology beginning in school year 2024-2025 with the following budgetary allocation requests**:**

1. Increase the KETS annual allocation to $30M per year to (a) counteract the effects of inflation to KETS since 1992, (b) to restore the significant cuts (i.e., $5M+) of over the past 11 years to the basic KY K-12 edtech funding and (c) to address the rapid annual increase/replacement in the numbers (e.g., districts going to 1 to 1 computers), types of tech devices (e.g., HVAC using the Internet, phones over the Internet, school safety devices that use the Internet) and services (e.g., KY K-12 Internet bandwidth service) being used by over 750,000 KY K-12 students & adults for instructional, communication, physical safety, cybersafety and cybersecurity purposes. This also includes $1.5M to KETS to pay for KDE's portion of the KY K-12 School Information System (KSIS) used by all 171 KY K-12 school districts. When the legislature provided the funding to implement KSIS in 2006, they unfortunately did not provide the funding for the annual costs and we have been limping along since then using e-rate rebates to pay for that $1.5M that you're never sure you'll get it or when you'll get it. It's like counting on your

income tax returns each year to pay for your mortgage payment or monthly rent. So rather than KDE having to use $1.5M from the e-rate rebates to pay for that annual KSIS costs, OET can instead send that $1.5M in e-rate rebates to districts and have a stable funding source in KETS to pay for that annual KSIS cost. It is very unrealistic to maintain basic high-quality technology enabled services for schools and districts without raising the KETS baseline to at least $30M per year.

2. Restore full funding of $800,000 for the Computer Science/Information Technology (CS/IT) Academy for school districts beginning in SY 2023-2024. The Computer Science/Information Technology (CS/IT) Academy is a joint venture of OET & CTE with the aim of supporting rigorous computer science teacher professional learning in addition to teacher and student course support in the demonstration of Computer Science standards and industry certification exam vouchers in ALL computer science courses and pathways. The Kentucky K-12 Computer Science and IT Academy program prepares educators and students for industry-recognized certifications. By creating more opportunities for computer science learning for Kentucky students, we will reach, keep and engage more students in learning, create a pool of more qualified people to fill existing job openings and stimulate suppressed economic regions of our state by developing a high-tech skilled workforce. Computer science and coding utilize critical thinking and problem-solving talents that benefit all career paths.

Help properly address the people side of edtech in districts so there are the right number of technicians, digital learning coaches and other basic edtech leadership responsibilities in districts (data accuracy, cybersecurity/cybersafety/cyberprivacy, strategic planning, emerging technology) that help ensure school technology is kept reliable for students and teachers, is maximized in instruction, is cybersecure/cybersafe and is of high quality (e.g., data). Over the past five years, there is an alarming trend of the invested EdTech services and devices dramatically out-pacing that of district EdTech staff such as digital learning coaches, technicians, education technology leadership, cybersecurity and data quality personnel.

These EdTech staffing positions:
• Keep EdTech systems and services running reliably, safe and secure
• Build district capacity by showing teachers how to maximize the use of the digital tools in their instruction
• Drive EdTech instructional alignment and integration in a fiscally responsible and strategically sound manner ensuring usage, adoption, and impact of digital tools and applications invested in
• Ensure data quality is at a high level of accuracy

These resources are critical in providing educators, school leaders and administrators with appropriate professional learning, devices, content and methods to use technology effectively in the classroom from administering computer-based assessments to blended learning strategies.

Exacerbating this situation, is the expansion of tech responsibilities that the shrinking amount of district EdTech staff have (e.g., security cameras that use the Internet, voice systems that use the Internet, heating and air conditioning systems that use the Internet, etc.). To address the current depleted levels of core district EdTech staff, $4.6 million of

the requested additional funds will be sent to districts as a KETS Offer of Assistance that districts will match with local funds dollar for dollar.

Increasing KETS funding by $14.6 million, $10.5 million above the SY92-SY09 level of $19.5 million, will increase KETS Offers of Assistance providing KY K-12 districts the ability to maximize their KY K-12 education technology environment by responding to the areas of greatest growth and needs of Internet consumption, technology integration and technology reliability.