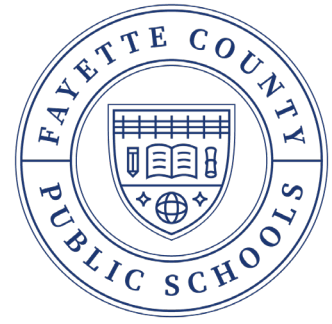


2024 | Legislative Agenda

State and Federal Policy Priorities



Kentucky Priorities



Budget

FCPS supports increased education funding overall, but especially in the areas specified for school safety (including mental health supports), all-day Kindergarten, increased access to pre-school, and additional funds in the SEEK Formula base.

Rationale:

Competing issues and limited funds are sure to plague the state just as it does our school district. As the needs of our citizens grow, FCPS has raised more than \$58 million in local revenue in the FY23 school year through three building fund nickels and just under \$250 million in board-approved increases to local property tax since passage of the last state budget session.

Our community has been gracious in supporting our students, but the proportion of state funds to the district has decreased from approximately 55% of our budget in the FY21 school year to approximately 30% today. That 25% gap has required us to put additional burden on local taxpayers just to continue services at the basic level required for us to give students what they need to succeed.

Further, giving our youngest kids the best possible start to their educational career is the best return on investment, as backed by a plethora of studies and growing data sets. We urge lawmakers subject to the short-term whims of the political atmosphere to consider making strategic investments in our youngest learners for long-term benefit.

FCPS recognizes that teacher salary raises are important. To that end, the board has established a minimum starting salary of \$50,000 with benefits. Still, those dollars continue to come from local revenue, because increases to the SEEK formula don't give as much per student to FCPS students as it does to students in rural areas.

School Choice

FCPS opposes any legislation that would put a Constitutional Amendment in front of voters that would divert public dollars to private schools.

FCPS supports legislation that would increase transparency for taxpayers by requiring home school students and private school students to participate in state accountability testing.

Rationale:

Our leadership has said time and time again that we are not afraid of competition as long as we are all playing by the same rules. As public schools are still struggling to make ends meet, diverting already-limited funds to private schools is not an economically sound decision for the Commonwealth. Further, without any accountability, taxpayers will be in the dark on whether their investments in private schools are improving the state's educational outcomes.

A Constitutional Amendment to this effect would be a distraction while the education profession is in crisis. Young people are not entering the pipeline in numbers needed to currently staff our schools even ahead of the expected retirements estimated by the Kentucky Teachers Retirement System. Pushing for efforts that could harm public schools will distract from the critical task at hand of ensuring public schools are successful, safe, staffed by quality professionals, and held accountable to the public.

Student Supports

FCPS urges the legislature to develop a Poverty Reduction Task Force with representation from school officials, health officials, and other appropriate partners aimed at addressing the root causes of poverty plaguing Kentucky families.

FCPS supports shifting the burden of family supports from schools to larger community resources and partners in order to better focus on student learning.

FCPS supports legislation to improve the FAIR Team process by increasing collaboration between the district and the courts and addressing underlying community-level issues fueling the need for FAIR Teams.

Rationale:

Most lawmakers we have talked to recognize that the burden on schools and teachers has grown exponentially year by year. Still, the schoolhouse is often where society's greatest issues manifest, but the mantra that "schools cannot do it alone," is more relevant than ever.

Teachers and Staff

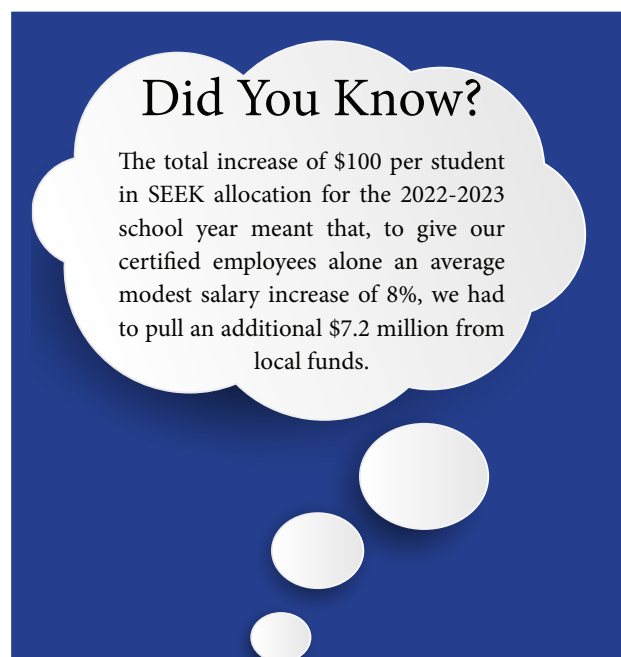
FCPS supports legislation funding a statewide marketing plan showcasing the benefits of being a teacher and improving the public image and perspective of the education profession.

FCPS supports red tape reduction that would reduce the amount of regulation and paperwork required of all educators to allow greater focus on instruction and individual learning needs.

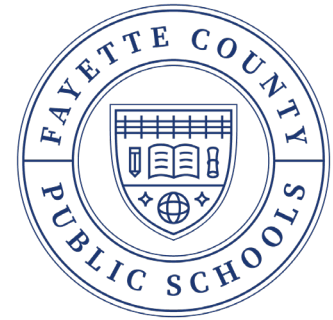
FCPS supports legislation enacting a student loan forgiveness program for educators who stay in the profession for a defined number of years.

Rationale:

Studies and surveys from across the nation say that teachers are overwhelmed with increasing paperwork and requirements that are inhibiting their ability to "just teach." Further, young people are deterred from entering the profession at all because of the teacher wage gap, the term that describes the growing disparity between teachers and comparable college graduates. Recent data covering nearly 20 years of tracking this gap show that today's disparity, where teachers are earning almost 75 cents on the dollar compared to college graduates with the same level of training in other fields. Reducing teacher burden and incentivizing teachers to enter the pipeline through the prospect of loan forgiveness could help alleviate that disparity while education leaders work to increase teacher salary funds.



Federal Priorities



Career and Technical Education

FCPS supports increased funding under the Carl D. Perkins Act to support increased career and technical opportunities to Fayette County students.

Special Populations

FCPS urges Congress to fulfill the commitment it made when passing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by fully funding the federal share (40%) of special education costs.

FCPS supports full and ongoing funding of the Title I, Part A grant within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and do not believe these funds should be restricted to competitive grants or used to support any form of portable vouchers.

FCPS supports federal funding and support for English learners, including full funding to provide local districts the tools and resources to ensure English learners meet the requirements established by Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

FCPS supports federal funding to support states and local school districts in providing universal early childhood education, universal kindergarten, and expanded wraparound services.

Technology and Infrastructure

FCPS supports continued and sufficient funding for educational technology and internet connectivity (E-Rate) to reduce the digital divide, modernizing the list of eligible services, and streamline processes for application and distribution of funds to eligible districts. FCPS supports the investment of federal infrastructure dollars to modernize public school facilities and equipment.

Student Safety and Success

FCPS supports common sense legislation to address the scourge of gun violence in our communities, which has claimed the lives of too many children in Fayette County and the Commonwealth.

Workforce and Educator Pipelines

FCPS supports expanded funding for and attention to marketing and implementing Registered Apprenticeships for students of all abilities.

FCPS supports efforts at the federal level to expand access to affordable college and higher education for future educators and staff. This includes improvements to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program that would streamline and simplify the application process and support future and current educators facing student loan debt.

FCPS supports legislative efforts to improve retirement security for school employees in the Commonwealth of Kentucky who are not currently eligible to receive previously earned Social Security benefits, either from prior employment or spousal survivor benefits. This includes, but is not limited to, support for repealing the Windfall Elimination Provision/Government Pension Offset (WEP/GPO).