



## Stop the Bullying, Raise the Pay

A note from Andy and Jacqueline —

Public education is the single best way to build a better, brighter future for Kentuckians. But our teachers are under attack by this current administration. Instead of treating our educators like the professionals they are, Matt Bevin has insulted, attacked and attempted to illegally cut their pensions.

We must do better by the men and women on the frontlines of educating our kids.

Right now, we're faced with a critical shortage of teachers.<sup>1</sup> And no wonder; not only are teachers underpaid, they are being belittled by this governor and a key piece of their financial security—their retirement—continues to be on the chopping block.

Under-paying teachers has resulted in overcrowded classrooms and leads to additional strain on the teachers who increase their workload to fill the gaps.

That's why as part of the Beshear/Coleman Kitchen Table Agenda, we will increase teacher pay. Not only is this the right thing to do for the people who work so hard to equip our kids with the skills they need to succeed, it will also help attract new educators to the Commonwealth and ensure veteran teachers are able to stay in communities where we need them.

Kentucky's teachers and school staff are overworked and underpaid. Far too many Kentucky teachers are working a second job to make ends meet.<sup>2</sup> And despite ranking in the bottom half of the United States for teacher pay,<sup>3</sup> Kentucky teachers on average spend over \$400 out of their own pockets for school supplies.<sup>4</sup> But instead of valuing their work, Matt Bevin bullies teachers, undermines public education, and tries to illegally cut teachers' pensions—even though public school teachers cannot receive Social Security benefits.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [“Critical shortage: Kentucky working to find, recruit thousands of teachers,”](#) WKYT, 7/25/19.

<sup>2</sup> [“About one-in-six U.S. teachers work second jobs – and not just in the summer,”](#) Pew Research, 7/1/19.

<sup>3</sup> [“Which States Have the Highest and Lowest Teacher Salaries?,”](#) Education Week, 4/30/19.

<sup>4</sup> [“It's the beginning of the school year and teachers are once again opening up their wallets to buy school supplies,”](#) Economic Policy Institute, 8/22/19.

<sup>5</sup> [“In Kentucky's pension fight, teachers want to remind you: They don't get Social Security.”](#) Louisville Courier Journal, 3/20/18.



In Kentucky, we all know a public school teacher. They're our friends, family, and neighbors. So when Matt Bevin says teachers have a "thug mentality,"<sup>6</sup> calls them "selfish and short-sighted,"<sup>7</sup> and blames them for the sexual abuse of a child,<sup>8</sup> it's personal and we all feel the sting.

A Beshear/Coleman administration will be a welcome contrast—we'll stop the bullying and give our teachers the pay raise they deserve, which will lift up all of our communities.

It's not just the right thing to do—it's a requirement to secure Kentucky's future.

Thanks,

Andy and Jacqueline

### Policy Priorities to "Stop the Bullying, Raise the Pay"

**Increase Teacher Pay:** The first step in attracting quality teachers is ensuring that they are paid a competitive salary. However, Kentucky teacher salaries are generally lower today than they were ten years ago, according to data that accounts for inflation.<sup>9</sup> Kentucky should give public school teachers an immediate \$2,000 across-the-board pay raise. Similar policies have been passed in a bipartisan way in Mississippi,<sup>10</sup> Louisiana,<sup>11</sup> and Oklahoma<sup>12</sup> in the past year. In order to support a real future for public education, Kentucky should convene a group of educators and education stakeholders to determine a plan to create a new pay system that ensures no starting teacher salary is below \$40,000 by 2022 and also ensure public school support staff are paid a living wage. Altogether, these policies will make Kentucky more competitive for retaining and

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<sup>6</sup> ["Bevin renews spat with Kentucky teachers, saying pension opponents have a 'thug mentality,'" Louisville Courier Journal, 3/21/18.](#)

<sup>7</sup> ["Gov. Matt Bevin calls teachers 'selfish and short-sighted' for protesting pension bill," Louisville Courier Journal, 3/14/18.](#)

<sup>8</sup> ["Bevin: Children were sexually assaulted and tried drugs because teachers were protesting," Louisville Courier Journal, 4/13/18.](#)

<sup>9</sup> ["State Budget Cuts to Education Hurt Kentucky's Classrooms and Kids," Kentucky Center for Economic Policy, 1/18.](#)

<sup>10</sup> ["Lawmakers Approve \\$1,500 Pay Raise for Mississippi Teachers," Associated Press, 3/28/19.](#)

<sup>11</sup> ["Louisiana teachers will get pay raise after bill wins final passage," WAFB, 6/3/19.](#)

<sup>12</sup> ["Bill to give Oklahoma teachers a \\$1,200 pay raise passes Senate committee," KFOR, 4/11/19.](#)



recruiting teachers, and boost the overall quality of our public education system — which will reap benefits for generations.

**Student Loan Forgiveness:** Teachers are public servants and we should reward Kentuckians who commit their lives to helping educate our next generation. Kentucky should pursue policies that ensure educators who commit to stay and teach in Kentucky for a certain number of years will be eligible for student loan forgiveness when they fulfill their commitment. This will help Kentucky retain and recruit new teachers. That’s good for Kentucky’s kids, public education system and overall economy.

**Promote Continuing Education:** Just like any other profession, it’s essential that teachers stay up-to-date on the latest resources needed to excel in their work. For many educators, that also means earning more money that they can use to raise their families and put directly into their communities. Right now, many teachers pay out-of-pocket for continuing education programs and board certifications. Our administration will prioritize policies to incentivize these continuing education programs that enable our teachers to stay on the cutting edge of education and earn a higher salary. As an example, Kentucky should focus on creating more opportunities for teachers to pursue a National Board Certification,<sup>13</sup> which leads to a \$2,000 annual stipend.<sup>14</sup>

**Working With—Not Against—Teachers:** A Beshear/Coleman administration will listen to teachers and make sure they always have a seat at the table. Our current governor has made a habit of bullying teachers. Matt Bevin has completely decimated the working relationship that must exist between state government and public servants. A top priority of a Beshear/Coleman administration will be repairing the damage done to the public trust by this governor. That approach of valuing public education is why Andy Beshear selected Jacqueline Coleman, an active educator and former assistant public school principal in rural Kentucky, as his running mate. A Beshear/Coleman administration will select a new commissioner for the Kentucky Board of Education and appoint new board members who have real education experience and support public education. Andy and Jacqueline will also immediately stop the threats to fine educators who show up at the Capitol to make their voices heard.<sup>15</sup> Educators work too hard — and their work is too important — to not have an administration that respects their work and treats them with the decency and dignity they deserve.

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<sup>13</sup> [“National Board Certification,”](#) Kentucky Department of Education.

<sup>14</sup> [“State Financial Incentives for National Board Certification,”](#) National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

<sup>15</sup> [“Bevin Administration says 1,074 Kentucky teachers violated labor laws with ‘sick outs,’”](#) Lexington Herald-Leader, 8/16/19.