

**Statement by Sharron K. Oxendine
President, Kentucky Education Association
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My name is Sharron Oxendine. I'm a math teacher on leave from George Rogers Clark High School. I am also president of the Kentucky Education Association. 42,000 educators all across Kentucky belong to KEA and I am honored today to speak for them.

New state and federal laws have brought dramatic changes to our profession, increasing the expectations for our students and for us, their teachers. Equally challenging is our own desire to make sure that each child reaches their full potential.

Our students' ability to meet the increased expectations we all have for them depends on us, their teachers. We are seeing our students' needs increase at the same time overall state funding is declining.

As with any profession facing dramatic changes, we need high-quality, relevant continuing education, an important building block of student learning. Unfortunately, at the same time expectations have increased, the resources the state devotes to our professional growth have dramatically shrunk. Just four years ago, the state invested \$25 per student in professional development. Today that number is a mere \$4, an 84% reduction.

I hear the outcome of this funding decrease every day as I talk with my colleagues. We are being asked to give more of our own limited time to learn about the state's new standards, new assessment, new technology, and new teaching methods. In some cases, we are being left to our own devices to figure out how to cope with the dramatic changes facing us and our students. At the very time we need more support, teachers are being given less.

KEA, as a member of KEAT, calls on the General Assembly to adequately fund teachers' professional development.