



March 15, 2021

Dear Honorable Members,

Kentucky is set to receive 2.4 billion in Coronavirus Recovery which can be used 4 ways (respond to public health emergencies, essential worker pay up to \$13 per hour, provide government services, make investments in water, sewer, and broadband). The Kentucky Academy of Science is in line with Kentuckians for Science Education (KSE) and believes that education is one of the most important investments we make as a state. With the one-time federal stimulus, we have a unique opportunity to allocate resources in a way that helps the state get back on track following a virus that has been devastating to the state's health and economy.

The Kentucky Academy of Science fully supports the points raised by KSE in their letter about the budget, with the additional recommendation that making a deposit of \$134 million into the rainy day fund this year (and an additional \$609 million next year) during a historic global pandemic would hurt families and communities across the commonwealth. Instead, we strongly suggest directing funds at this time to the points included in the letter below, specifically to education and to the sciences.

Additionally, there is widespread recognition of the need for funding for infrastructure and this is exactly what American Rescue Plan funds are intended to do, with \$185 million provided for capital projects. The 2019 Report Card for America's Infrastructure rated Kentucky with a C- , so there is clearly a need for improvement in this area (<https://infrastructurereportcard.org/state-item/kentucky/>).

We support the Governor's budget which proposed \$50 million for broadband internet, \$220 million for small businesses and non-profits, \$2.5 million for libraries, \$314,000 to

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Commission on Human Rights, \$375,500 to Commission on Women, and \$7 million for Kentucky's social worker budget.

From the Kentuckians for Science Education:

"KSE requests that the General Assembly and the Governor's Office work together to fully fund education budgets as much as feasibly possible (instead of depositing in the Rainy Day Fund), including, but not limited to:

- SEEK funding, preferably at \$4,040 per student
- Textbooks
- Preschools
- Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program
- Modest raises for teachers and staff
- Work-Ready Program
- Libraries
- Broadband
- We appreciate the 2% increase in funding to higher education, but request it not be tied to performance, as this negatively impacts some struggling schools.
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) recruitment at all levels.

We understand that this is all happening very fast, but also understand the importance of investing in education and education resources. More specifically, we understand the importance of investing in science education, and that good science education leads to a better labor workforce, which will help attract employers to Kentucky. I am confident we all share the goal of moving Kentucky up in the educational ranking. We believe the items laid out here will help achieve that goal."

Thank you for reading this. As always, Kentucky Academy of Science is available as a resource for legislators in Kentucky.



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