

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION related to the access of exceptional students to
2 educational opportunities.

3 WHEREAS, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, "upon the subject of education, not
4 presuming to dictate any plan or system respecting it, I can only say that I view it as the
5 most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in" and in the words of the
6 United States Supreme Court, "education is a right that must be made available to all on
7 equal terms"; and

8 WHEREAS, Kentucky public schools identified 106,159 exceptional children and
9 youth for special education programs and services during the 2018-2019 school year; and

10 WHEREAS, each of these 106,159 exceptional students has the right to access the
11 full range of educational opportunities offered to all other Kentucky students; and

12 WHEREAS, the educational opportunities available to all students include but are
13 not limited to academic experiences such as enrichment and accelerated classes,
14 internships, field trips, vocational and industry training programs, and also
15 extracurricular, club, and athletic experiences, yet students with disabilities participate at
16 much lower rates than do their peers in such opportunities; and

17 WHEREAS, educational laws and policies sometimes fail to address or consider the
18 needs of these exceptional students, thus impeding exceptional students' access to the full
19 range of educational opportunities available to their peers;

20 NOW, THEREFORE,

21 ***Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the***
22 ***Commonwealth of Kentucky, the Senate concurring therein:***

23 ➔Section 1. It is the opinion of the General Assembly that all exceptional
24 students, as defined by KRS 157.200, should be given the opportunity to participate in the
25 full range of educational programs offered to their peers and that all such programs be
26 offered on the equal terms to the exceptional students.

27 ➔Section 2. It is the opinion of the General Assembly that intentional, thorough

1 consideration for the needs of all students, including exceptional students as defined by
2 KRS 157.200, should be given when crafting or administrating educational laws and
3 policies.

4 ➔Section 3. The Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky State
5 Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children Council are strongly encouraged to leverage
6 their knowledge and expertise to provide guidance to the General Assembly and
7 Kentucky Board of Education to better inform these bodies on the impact of educational
8 law and policy on exceptional children and students and to ensure full inclusion of
9 exceptional children in all programs and opportunities.

10 ➔Section 4. This resolution will henceforth be referred to as "the Students First
11 Resolution" to reflect the intent of the General Assembly that exceptional students shall
12 not be defined by their differences but shall instead be united with their peers and
13 recognized as students first and foremost.