

CHAPTER 49**(SJR 98)**

A JOINT RESOLUTION relating to state administrative bodies.

WHEREAS, public universities and community colleges serve as economic development incubators for the cities and regions in which they are located, both by the faculty and staff jobs the colleges provide and the business innovations that can spring from collaborations in the academic environment; and

WHEREAS, Kentucky's postsecondary governance structure currently includes the Council on Postsecondary Education as the systemwide coordinating agency charged with developing and implementing a strategic agenda and a system of public accountability for evaluating the performance and effectiveness of the state's postsecondary system. Kentucky's universities are governed by individual boards and a governing board oversees the Kentucky Community and Technical College system and local advisory boards are affiliated with the individual campuses; and

WHEREAS, as the Commonwealth has, through the years, located regional universities throughout the state charged by the General Assembly with providing a seamless, integrated system of postsecondary education strategically planned to enhance economic development and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the community and technical colleges is to work cooperatively with postsecondary institutions throughout the Commonwealth to align program and training programs necessary to develop a workforce with the skills to meet the needs of new and existing industries and improve employability of citizens; and

WHEREAS, the southeastern region of Kentucky is conspicuously without a public, residential, four-year university, hindering its ability to make the same economic progress as other regions of the state; and

WHEREAS, the southeastern region of Kentucky is being forced to pursue new economic development and workforce strategies due to the decline in the coal industry; and

WHEREAS, the Council on Postsecondary Education is statutorily charged with the responsibility to review proposals for the establishment of new four-year colleges; and

WHEREAS, the Council on Postsecondary Education is statutorily charged with the responsibility of eliminating or changing existing academic programs to provide consistency and alignment with institutional missions and the state's strategic implementation plan as well as avoiding duplication of programs;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. The Council on Postsecondary Education shall conduct a thorough study of:

(1) The structure of higher education governance in the Commonwealth, including the current condition and projected needs of the state over the next 20 years in terms of postsecondary education attainment, workforce, and economic needs. The analysis shall consider: population and demographic trends; economic and workforce conditions and needs; state of college preparation; extent of postsecondary access, completion, and affordability; student learning options; and education finance. The study shall include recommendations on changes needed to the state's postsecondary governance structure that would be essential to meet identified needs and ensure the best delivery of postsecondary educational services to students;

(2) The impact and feasibility of establishing a regional, residential, four-year public university in southeastern Kentucky. The study shall include a comprehensive review of the prospect of:

(a) Establishing a new regional, residential, four-year public university in southeastern Kentucky and the impact that would have on the existing regional universities in the Commonwealth;

(b) Establishing a residential campus in southeastern Kentucky that is a satellite campus of an existing regional public university; and

(c) The Commonwealth acquiring an existing, private university in southeastern Kentucky to serve the region as a new regional, residential, four-year public university, as an alternative to establishing an entirely new four-year university; and

(3) The feasibility and programmatic and fiscal impacts of having the Kentucky Community and Technical College System continue to be responsible for technical education programs but transferring responsibility for

traditional academic subjects to the regional universities. The study shall include a comprehensive review of how this transition might impact each regional university and the potential implications on any proposal for establishing a four-year university in southeastern Kentucky identified in subsection (2) of this section and the potential impact on prospective Kentucky Community and Technical College System students statewide.

➔Section 2. The President of the Council on Postsecondary Education shall report the comprehensive study required by Section 1 of this Joint Resolution with findings and recommendations to the Legislative Research Commission to be distributed to the relevant subject matter committees, including but not limited to the Interim Joint Committee on Economic Development and Workforce Investment and the Interim Joint Committee on Education by December 1, 2023.

➔Section 3. The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky hereby approves Phase 1 of the State Fair Board's comprehensive statewide proposal for improving properties dated November 29, 2022, and submitted to the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations and Revenue. The Office of State Budget Director is authorized to release the \$180,000,000 in capital construction funds for use by the State Fair Board in fiscal year 2024 as appropriated by 2022 Ky. Acts ch. 199 and amended by 2022 Ky. Acts ch. 239.

Signed by Governor March 22, 2023.