

Happy December Sisters in DKG!!

Imagine—you are reading a really good book and you come to the next chapter and all sudden, the story takes you down a different path that brings new changes to the storyline that you had become hooked on. Well, as we make the turn in the year to prepare for the new year, we will also find ourselves preparing for possible changes in the world of education that could be once our nation moves beyond Inauguration Day on January 20th.

Just as I have mentioned before about Project 2025, which is a plan that was written in 2022 as a road map for the next conservative president to reform policies to a conservative mindset. However, President-Elect Trump has not endorsed Project 2025, but he has come up with an Agenda 47. So, now that there will be a change in Washington D.C., in January, what does that really mean for education?

How are they similar and how do they contrast?

- In regards to LGBTQ+, both plans call for protections for members of this community to be scaled back.
- Agenda 47 calls for revoking gender-affirming care policies
- President-Elect Trump will ask Congress to pass a bill that formally recognizes only two genders—male and female as assigned at birth.
- The biggest similarity between the two is that both call for the end of the Department of Education. President-Elect Trump has a plan to send the decisions regarding education to the state level. The states will be able to run education as their state sees fit.
- Both policies call for an end to the critical race theory and gender ideology.
- School choice—President-Elect Trump is in favor of parents having more choice in where their child attends school. Now that Congress will be controlled by the same party as the President-Elect, the possibility of new tax credits and incentives for those wishing for school choice. This will be something to watch out for since the election last week saw the voters in several states reject the increase of school vouchers.

In other Education news—-----

Teacher shortages:

Special education is seeing a great shortage of teachers and has caught the attention of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights as they begin an investigation into the issue and the response from the federal government. For the 2023-2024 school year, 70% of the schools in the country reported special education teacher vacancies. The problem that has come to light is the ability to keep teachers in the profession. There seems to be trouble keeping teachers beyond the first five years in the profession.

The outlook of teacher vacancies throughout the other areas of teaching is just as severe except that the average length of time in the classroom is only two years as opposed to the five years of special education teachers. The question that comes to mind as I research the issues with teacher shortage is—why are so many parents and advice givers guiding high school students to choose a career that is not in teaching? Is it because of the pay that a teacher receives? Is it because of the testing scores linked to teacher retention? What could some of the

other reasons be? I can think a few more based on my experience in teaching as I am sure that you can think of some based on your experience.

So, does this mean that we as DKG members, need to find ways to better support new teachers or students in college who are seeking a degree in teaching? I can see the need for this, but just how to implement such a program, is the question.

School Bus Driver Shortage

In addition to the issue of shortage of teachers for our students, the education world is also experiencing a shortage of school bus drivers. This ends up being an inconvenience to parents who must scramble to find a way to get their children to school after a no-show bus. In the schools we are seeing this lead to greater amounts of absenteeism of students. This of course leads to greater gaps in the education of the students as they are expected to do double time learning to catch up from what they missed. The teachers in the classroom also must find ways to catch these students up without sacrificing the other students who have not experienced the bus issues. House Resolution 9733 was introduced on September 24th of this year by Kentucky Representative Morgan McGarvey as a bill introduced to address the shortage of school bus drivers. Unfortunately, when you read this bill, it really does nothing to help with the shortage.

Just in case you are keeping track of the bills introduced regarding education in Washington D.C., we are up to 708 bills introduced during this session of Congress.

As a final note:

Please note that the words in this newsletter are meant to provide information and I hope that none of the words come across with my personal feelings in the political world. Thank you and enjoy.