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FEATURED

Teachers wanted

KDE providing options for those interested in education field

By Bobbie Hayse Messenger-Inquirer Aug 25, 2019

Photo by Greg Eans, Messenger-Inquirer.com | geans@messenger-inquirer.com Sutton Elementary School assistant principal Carrie Wedding reads the book “We Don’t Eat Our Classmates” by Ryan T. Higgins to kindergarten and first grade students in teacher Mary Booth’s classroom, Wednesday.

Greg Eans

Opting to change careers well into her work in the nonprofit field was the best thing that Carrie Wedding said she has ever done.

Wedding, who worked for 10 years with Court Appointed Special Advocates and then for a cancer advocacy group, decided at 32 years old that it was time for a change. She had been hearing for many years that 60% of children who suffer from abuse and neglect also go to schools with an individualized education program, or IEPs, which are used with children who have special needs.

Wedding knew she wanted to work more with kids, so she decided to take an alternative route and go back to school. She received her master's degree in special education for kindergarten through 12th grade from Western Kentucky University.

"I don't remember what the alternative pathway was called, but I just went ahead with that second master's degree and was able to receive all my certifications for teaching," she said.

This is Wedding's 11th year with Owensboro Public Schools. She taught in the classroom for seven years before receiving her Rank 1 in administration, working in curriculum, and eventually settling at Sutton Elementary School where she is now the assistant principal.

"For me, I felt like I have been called to do this work, and that has been the best career decision that I could have ever made because every day I have an opportunity to honestly change kids' lives, and to serve other people," Wedding said. "Honestly, that's what I've ever wanted to do is to serve other people."

Wedding is a prime example of what the Kentucky Department of Education hopes to foster in others looking for to pursue a second, or perhaps a third career. In an effort to combat an ongoing nationwide issue of teacher shortages, KDE recently unveiled the Go Teach KY website, and opened up applications for its program offering renewable loan forgiveness to those interested in educating the commonwealth's youngest minds.

The Go Teach KY website, goteachky.com, is a resource for individuals who are either interested in teaching right out of high school or looking for a career change. It provides information on the various avenues to earning a teaching certification, including using previous work experience or a local district training program as pathways into the field.

During an August Kentucky Board of Education meeting, Kentucky Commissioner of Education Wayne Lewis said that between 2008 and 2017, there was a 27% decrease in people completing teaching programs in the U.S., with Kentucky seeing a 36% decrease in that amount of time. He said this trend "is creating a crisis."

"As school begins a new year, districts are still clamoring to fill positions," Lewis added. "If one child starts school without a qualified teacher in the classroom, it's one child too many. Unfortunately, for another school year, this will be the case for many Kentucky students."

He urged Kentucky citizens to consider education as a second, or even a third career.

"You can positively impact the lives of children and families now and for generations to come," he said. "You can inspire Kentucky's next generation of scientists, health care professionals, educators, attorneys and more."

As part of the Go Teach KY initiative, KDE is also accepting applications for its Kentucky Academy for Equity in Teaching renewable loan forgiveness program, which was unrolled earlier this year in an effort to recruit a diverse population of teachers-to-be.

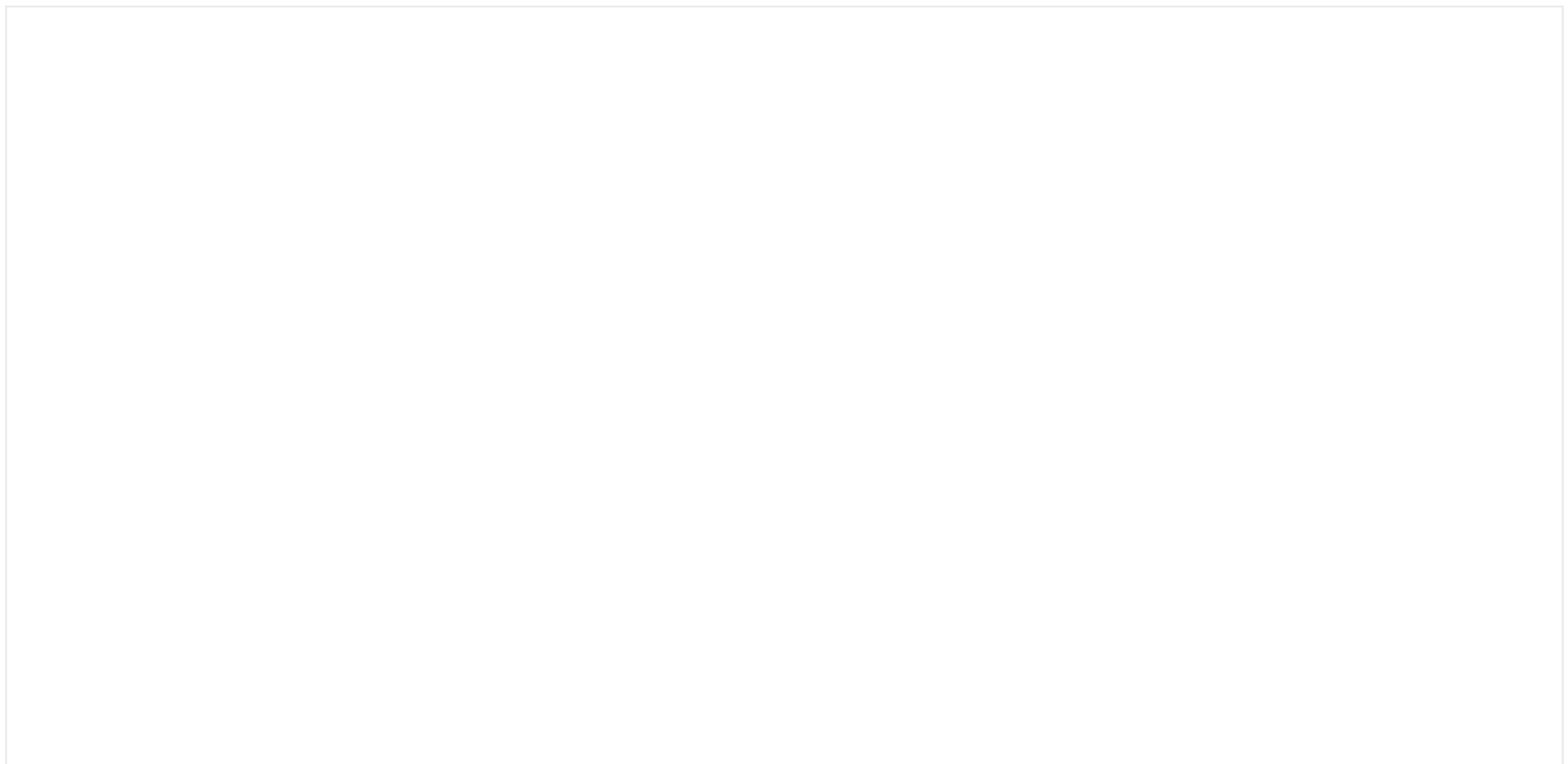
The KAET program is for undergraduate students currently in education programs, and students who are in the beginning certification processes of their master's of education preparation programs. Per its requirements and eligibility, the program is meant to target diverse groups of individuals headed into the teaching profession.

In fact, those who apply must meet at least one of the following criteria: be a member of an underrepresented ethnic minority group; demonstrate financial need through receipt of Pell Grants or Perkins Loans; be a graduate of Kentucky School for the Blind or Kentucky School for the Deaf; be a former migratory agricultural worker or the child of a migratory agricultural worker, or current or former English Learner; be a first-generation college student; or be a U.S. military veteran.

For more information about the Go Teach KY campaign and for all requirement information to be eligible for the KAET program, visit the KDE website at education.ky.gov.

Bobbie Hayse, bhayse@messenger-inquirer.com, 270-691-7315.

Video and Slideshows



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KSP jail incident

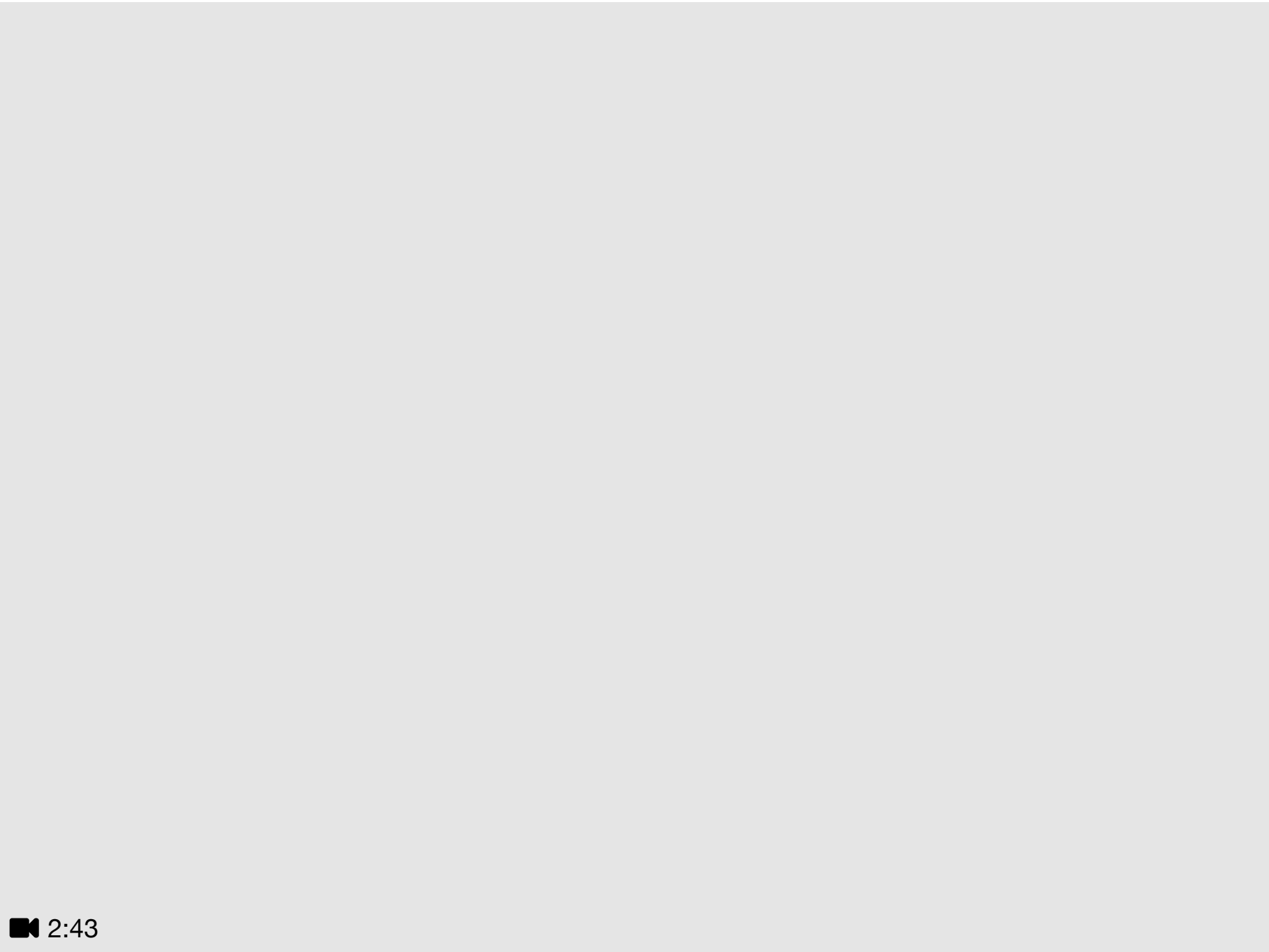
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OPD lip sync challenge



 +2

County fair in full swing



2:43

A look inside Brescia University's Moore Center

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