AN ACT relating to the establishment of the Kentucky Early Entry Initiative pilot program and declaring an emergency.

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

SECTION 1. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 161 IS CREATED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Early career teacher" means a Kentucky public school teacher with zero to three (3) years of experience teaching grades one (1) through three (3) in the areas of English, reading, language arts, or mathematics; and

(b) "National board" means the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

(2) The General Assembly does hereby establish the Kentucky Early Entry Initiative pilot program to begin with the 2022-2023 school year and continue until the end of the 2024-2025 school year. The pilot program shall be administered by the Kentucky Department of Education to:

(a) Give Kentucky public school teachers the opportunity to begin the process of certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards within their first three (3) years in the classroom and to achieve certification early in their careers;

(b) Create awareness of national board certification specifically among early career teachers, teachers of color, and teachers in high-need schools and rural schools through awareness campaigns;

(c) Increase the number of teachers earning national board certification in the state; and

(d) Embed national board certification as an assumed and achievable part of the professional pathway for all teachers.

(3) The Kentucky Early Entry Initiative pilot program shall pursue a comprehensive
set of objectives that shall include:

(a) Founding and implementing a system that supports expanded candidate eligibility;

(b) Developing and launching awareness campaigns targeting early career teachers and the educational professionals who provide them support or supervision;

(c) Reinforcing structures that ensure early career teachers have the resources and assistance they need to realistically pursue and achieve national board certification;

(d) Establishing and conducting a robust research and learning agenda to ensure that the pilot program results in useful data to inform Kentucky education leaders on the benefits, challenges, and impact of investing in early career teachers' national board certifications; and

(e) Contributing to long-term state goals with measurable results in:

1. Increased numbers of national board certification candidates;

2. Improved teacher retention;

3. Increased diversity and numbers of teachers of color;

4. Improved student learning outcomes in reading and mathematics due to better early support programs for early career teachers;

5. Increased diversity of teachers with national board certification due to growing the pool of candidates; and

6. Increased numbers of teachers with national board certification.

(4) The Kentucky Early Entry Initiative shall be structured and grown over the three (3) year pilot program. The Kentucky Department of Education shall appoint a statewide national board coordinator to direct the pilot program and to coordinate with local national board coordinators and national board facilitators.
coordinator, in partnership with the national board, shall:

(a) Before the start of the 2022-2023 school year:

1. Implement the foundational systems and awareness campaigns to recruit a first cohort of one hundred (100) early career teachers in a manner that promotes a broad geographic and racial representation of the state; and

2. Develop resources for postsecondary institutions and educator preparation programs to promote national board certification;

(b) Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year:

1. Oversee the first cohort of teachers throughout the year as they begin professional learning, engage with the national board standards and resources, and reflect on their practice, culminating in the completion of the national board's Components 2 and 3;

2. Recruit a second cohort of two hundred (200) early career teachers in a manner that promotes a broad geographic and racial representation of the state;

3. Introduce resources to postsecondary institutions and educator preparation programs; and

4. Conduct ongoing implementation evaluation;

(c) Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year:

1. Continue the professional learning and candidacy of the first cohort of teachers as they develop and submit the national board's Component 4 and the Component 1 assessment;

2. Oversee the second cohort of teachers throughout the year as they begin professional learning, engage with the national board standards and resources, and reflect on their practice, culminating in the completion of the national board's Components 2 and 3;
3. Promote and encourage the ongoing use of resources by postsecondary institutions and educator preparation programs; and

4. Conduct ongoing implementation evaluation; and

(d) Beginning with the 2024-2025 school year:

1. Continue the professional learning and candidacy of the second cohort of teachers as they develop and submit the national board's Component 4 and the Component 1 assessment;

2. Promote and encourage the ongoing use of resources by postsecondary institutions and educator preparation programs;

3. Conduct summative research and evaluation; and

4. Submit a report to the Legislative Research Commission by December 1, 2025, that includes:

   a. An evaluation of the implementation of the pilot components;

   b. An evaluation of the impact of the pilot program on objectives identified in subsection (3)(e) of this section; and

   c. A plan for nationwide dissemination of the project results.

Section 2. Section 1 of this Act shall be known and may be cited as the Kentucky Early Career Teachers Act.

Section 3. Whereas schools across the state need access to highly qualified education professionals and additional resources for retaining early career teachers, an emergency is declared to exist, and this Act takes effect upon its passage and approval by the Governor or upon its otherwise becoming a law.