

# Meeting Takeaways and Recommendations

## Rural and Small Districts Subcommittee

### 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Date:</b>	January 6, 2022	<b>Time:</b>	11:30 am CST – 12:30 pm CST
<b>Location:</b>	Microsoft TEAMS – Name, Address, City, State, Zip		
<b>Chair:</b>	Chair: Janet Ayers Vice Chair: Shawn Kimble		
<b>Members in Attendance:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Janet Ayers</b></li><li>• <b>Allen Pratt</b></li><li>• Charlie Hatcher</li><li>• <b>Jerry Boyd</b></li><li>• <b>Mike Garren</b></li><li>• <b>Kristy Brown</b></li><li>• Shawn Kimble</li><li>• <b>Norma Gerrell</b></li><li>• <b>Eddie Pruett</b></li><li>• <b>William Curtis</b></li><li>• <b>John Stevens</b></li><li>• Ron Gant</li><li>• <b>Lillian Hartgrove</b></li></ul>		

*\*Member names in bold indicate those present for this meeting.*

### 2. DIRECTIONS

Topic

# Tennessee Funding Review Engagement

Please list specific supports and services that you would like to see incorporated into the funding formula for each category. (In other words, what supports and services do you think are most important so that the cost of those supports and services can be included. It does not mean a district MUST spend money in a certain way, only that they would be funded to do so). Please prioritize each item as a:

- **Must Have:** Those supports and services required as a result of federal and/or state law, for safety, or similar.
- **Should Have:** Those supports and services that may not be mandatory but are essential to ensure the student or student group receives access to a quality education.
- **Nice to Have:** Those supports and services that are not mandatory and not essential, but (1) may provide a clear and added benefit to students and (2) have a clear return on the investment related to student achievement and future success.
- **Long Shot:** All other supports and services ideas.

## Subcommittee Supports and Services Prioritization

SUBCOMMITTEE FEEDBACK AND REFLECTIONS	
<b>BASE</b>	<p>The base should be high enough to result in an overall increase for all districts and students with greater needs should be implemented. Needs that apply to all students should be included in base funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional recurring per pupil state funding should put Tennessee at or above the national average for financially supporting education.</li> </ul> <p>Overall, there needs to be more clarity on local contribution expectations and state approach on fiscal capacity. Administrators' ability to predict the level of funding anticipated for the school year and community transparency over calculations are critical.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Local fiscal capacity longstanding issues should be addressed simultaneously as a new funding formula is developed. Improvements to fiscal capacity calculations should work hand in hand with this time the state has allocated to increase outcomes.</b></li> <li>• Calculate local fiscal capacity at the district level, not the county. Districts within a county can have varying levels of wealth, so the current calculation model should be changed. Almost all districts spend more than the BEP requires.</li> <li>• Tennessee should move to an absolute fiscal capacity model. This is where the state would set minimum expectations on percentage of local resources devoted to education and uses state resources to cover the</li> </ul>

remaining need – this is used in nearly half the country already and most southern states and can clarify local effort expectations.

- Local fiscal capacity should be calculated by a single measure. Having 2 measures is a rare practice across the country and adds complexity to an already complex formula.

There should be an increase in expenditure transparency. The public must know at the district and school level how resources are spent with a focus on accessibility of data and insights on how spending leads to student opportunities. (Examples: teacher quality and college and career preparation)

There should be a time-bound hold harmless funding amount to help districts transition to the new formula. The hold harmless money should be separated in addition to new recurring money.

#### STAFFING:

- Principal and Asst. Principals (base salaries reflective of role requirements and extra duties)
- Add – social workers to list
- School-based Supports / Wrap-around Services
- College advisors

#### TEACHER RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

Resources like

1. Teachers – academic, CTE, EL, substitutes, PE, art/music, librarians, interventionists
2. Special teachers, assistants, supervisors
3. Principals, assistant principals
4. Counselors, nurses, social workers, psychologists – all at national average
5. Technology coordinators and equipment
6. Non-instructional equipment, textbooks, instructional materials, assessments
7. Transportation
8. Central office personnel – superintendent, supervisors, finance, secretary
9. Capital outlay
10. Alternative schools
11. Maintenance operations
12. Custodians

# Tennessee Funding Review Engagement

<b>WEIGHT</b>	<p>Weight strengths should be included in the state funding formula and meeting or exceeding national benchmarks. Overall, student-based school funding formulas are the most common model. Tennessee is one of the few states whose current funding formula is primarily resource-based.</p> <p>Tennessee should A) Adopt the student-weighted funding formula and B) address the local fiscal capacity approach concerns to account for community ability to support education listed in the above section.</p> <p>This subcommittee recommends the following 6 weights to be included in the new funding formula:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sparsity weight for rural and small school districts <b>(must-have)</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Student needs by geography should be considered in sparse population areas as it pertains to the number of schools needed and transportation costs. This would benefit schools and districts that may not be categorized as rural but would still be in need of these resources.</li><li>- Sparsity is a more common weight, present in 34 states' funding formulas currently, reflecting the number of students per square mile.</li><li>- <b>Unique rural needs such as funding for high-quality teacher recruitment and retention, more competitive teacher salaries, rural wraparound and mental health services (especially in response to COVID), improved internet access, transportation needs, and expanding leadership capacity should be addressed through this sparsity weight.</b></li><li>- Currently, rural schools struggle with inadequate funding for all essential personnel (teachers, administrators, nurses, social workers, SROs, support staff, psychologists and librarians). This would be supported by a sparsity weight.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- This is especially critical to support teacher evaluations!</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>• Economically disadvantaged weight (ED) <b>(must-have)</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Additional wraparound services such as medical programs and mental health resources are needed for students who lack adequate care</li></ul></li><li>• Concentrated poverty (CP) weight <b>(must-have)</b></li></ul>

# Tennessee Funding Review Engagement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- While rural schools have unique operational challenges, these get compounded when economically disadvantaged students are a significant share of your population.</li> <li>• Special Education weight (SPED)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This should be done reflecting the tiers of special needs. The special education weight includes gifted students.</li> <li>- This reflects individual student needs and the cost of educating every student.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• English Language Learners weight (ELL)</li> <li>• Charter enrollment weight</li> </ul>
<p><b>DIRECT FUNDING</b></p>	<p>Direct funding should be shared via additional dollars or an increased investment in base funding and weighted funding.</p> <p>The following should be included in additional dollars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand career and technical education (CTE) funding             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This would include additional funding for staff, transportation, equipment, building more industry and business partnerships, etc.</li> <li>- Additional dollars to support Dual Enrollment (DE) programs and expand participation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Direct funding for students to take and retake the ACT should be included.</li> <li>• Direct funding to provide school safety plans and personnel should be included.</li> <li>• Fund districts to employ data analysts to increase funding transparency and provide training and professional development for this need. Data needs would include data collection, reporting, and transparency.</li> <li>• Fund smaller class sizes – this is especially important for high needs students and schools who are in need of most support.</li> <li>• Additional funds for capital projects, maintenance, facilities and infrastructure needs, and regular technology updates.</li> <li>• Provide flexible funding for schools to invest in meaningful after school programs, STEM camps, internships that will increase college and career readiness, civics education, fine arts programs, and sustainability of innovative programs and tools for rural schools.</li> <li>• High-dosage learning loss tutoring should expand to all grades K-12.</li> <li>• To further support personnel needs, direct dollars toward offering additional benefits for staff are essential. This can include offering childcare, tuition reimbursements, low-interest home loans, and other benefits to attract candidates to the profession.</li> </ul>

# Tennessee Funding Review Engagement

	<p>QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMING (PK-3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space/facilities</li> <li>• Staffing</li> <li>• Transportation</li> </ul> <p>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>SUSTAINABILITY OF INNOVATIVE MODELS THAT HAVE BEEN PUT IN PLACE (i.e., workforce development in middle school, employability skills, ...)</p> <p>HDLR Tutoring – expand to all grades K-12</p> <p>I.T. Personnel / Specialists (high rate of pay reflective of industry rates)</p>
<b>OUTCOMES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes-based funding should be awarded in alignment with ensuring that Tennessee students are college and career ready.</li> <li>• Add the Ready Graduate Outcome as a key performance indicator, measuring college and career readiness.</li> <li>• Outcomes-based funding should also equitably reward growth and incentivize improving outcomes for historically underserved student groups and closing achievement gaps, so to not exacerbate existing differences in resources between communities who have more and less. This should be a bonus, not base.</li> <li>• Open to outcomes BUT additional for historically low performing/underserved students.</li> </ul>

## Subcommittee Policy Reflections and Feedback

Policy Idea	Subcommittee Feedback
Policy	
Policy	
Policy	
Policy	
Policy	