

Meeting Takeaways and Recommendations

Students with Disabilities and Gifted Students

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Date:	November 23, 2021	Time:	1:30 pm – 2:30 pm
Location:	Microsoft TEAMS - Click here to join the meeting		
Chair:	Brad Turner		
Members in Attendance:	Brad Turner Carol Westlake Lori Smith Stephen Smith Sandra Edwards David Martin Lynette Porter Jennifer Aprea LeAnn Simmerman Mandy Fisher Ann Thornsen Wendy Tucker Senator Bill Powers Representative Sam Whitson		

2. DIRECTIONS

Topic

Please list specific resources that you would like to see incorporated into the funding formula. (In other words, what resources do you think are most important so that the cost of those resources 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 indicate whether each resource is a:

- **Must Have:** Those resources required as a result of federal and/or state law, for safety, or similar.
- **Should Have:** Those resources that may not be mandatory but are essential to ensure the student or student group receives access to a quality education.

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- **Nice to Have:** Those resources 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 resource ideas.

MUST HAVE

- See *Initial Notes and Resource Recommendations (uncategorized)* section below
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SHOULD HAVE

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NICE TO HAVE

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LONG SHOT

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4. FINAL THOUGHTS

Initial Notes and Resource Recommendations (uncategorized)

- General feedback gathered since last session:
 - Ensure funding for gifted students
 - Increase staffing ratios overall but specifically for school psychologists; look at national guidelines vs what actually exists in districts (National guidelines for service time – option 1 is 91:1, option 2 and 3 are 58.5:1, options 4-6 are 16.5:1, options 7-10 are 8.5:1)
 - Need for increase in number of paraprofessionals/educational assistants and their pay; there is an increase in resignations due to competition in pay at other businesses; often IEPs require these supports but we have shortages
 - Adequate number of school nurses
 - Provide intellectually gifted programs and staffing at elementary grade levels
 - Ensure endorsement requirements are being met – gifted endorsed educators are available and disabilities areas are being addressed by the endorsed professionals - vision and hearing impaired specialists; recruitment strategies and training supports
 - TDOE has worked to provide additional endorsement pathways but what are the other barriers to special education endorsements – pay, workload, other? Consider pay or bonus for endorsements to support special education and gifted areas (additional pathways for endorsements is helpful but the issues is greater than just pathways)
 - Need for a TDOE gifted leader position
 - For student-based funding, it will be important that gifted Ss have IEPs or they will not be recognized for funding
- Must have
 - funding to students with dyslexia through RTI2 services
 - improve the identification process on both ends of the spectrum for twice exceptional students – tendency is to look at only the disability; training for how to look for both exceptionalities
 - Dollar amount per student is based on the need of that student; potentially higher needs are funded at higher rates
 - Teachers have a cap on number of students served (ratio of funding per student so there are fewer students per caseload)
 - Increase funds and resources for the early grades so students have a strong foundation and fewer funds are needed for the upper grades; addressing needs

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- early (grades K-3) means these students are more self sufficient and need fewer funds/supports in upper grades
- Adequate paraprofessionals for classroom support; need for increase in number of paraprofessionals/educational assistants and their rate of pay
- Gifted endorsed personal in each district, state gifted coordinator, on-going, quality training for ALL special population educators
- Funding to support students with “characteristics of dyslexia” outside of IEP so they can have access to the dyslexia-specific intervention
- Should have
 - Nurse in every school
 - Gifted endorsed coordinator in every district
 - At least 1 gifted endorsed teacher per K-8 school
 - Money targeted for gifted curriculum (not just the "enrichment" component of adopted textbooks)
 - Funding for advanced placement and honors courses as well as college credit courses
- Nice to have
 - Funding for general ed teacher training for understanding how to effectively accommodate student needs; consider microcredentialing
 - Programs to support the education of peers (traditional students and students with disabilities) to build future leaders in the disability community; safer space with and for peers (acceptance)
 - Support/training for parents
 - Gifted endorsed teacher in every school
- Long Shot:

Other feedback:

- Define appropriate and research-based dyslexia-specific interventions that districts must use
- Functionally delayed and giftedness are recognized in TN but are not recognized federally so they will not receive federal funds that other identified areas will receive. These areas should not be overlooked or underfunded as part of state funding.

Requests:

- What gifted programming is available and at what grade bands/levels across the state? How many districts do or do not have these programs in K-8?