



# KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION 2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Knox County Board of Education has identified the following legislative priorities for 2022:

## LOCAL CONTROL

Local boards of education are best equipped and informed to make decisions regarding the needs and challenges of their local schools. The Knox County Board of Education urges State legislative bodies and regulatory agencies to seek input from local boards and to determine the full impact on local school systems before taking action on proposed legislation, regulations, and guidelines related to education.

## FUNDING FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Increased investment in public education is crucial to the future of Tennessee. State-mandated programs and requirements must, without exception, be accompanied by 100% state funding for all direct and indirect costs.

The Knox County Board of Education urges the General Assembly to amend the funding formula to include:

- **Full Funding for RTI<sup>2</sup>** positions within school districts.
- **Funding for School Nurses, Counselors, Social Workers, and Mental Health Professionals:**
  - **School Nurses:** 1 nurse per 750 students<sup>1</sup>  
*Current BEP = 1 per 3,000 students*
  - **Guidance Counselors:** 1 counselor per 250 students<sup>2</sup>  
*Current BEP = 1 per 500 elementary; 1 per 350 secondary*
  - **Social Workers:** 1 social worker per 250 students<sup>3</sup>  
*Current BEP = 1 per 2,000 students*
  - **Mental Health Professionals:** Additional funding for mental health supports
- **TANF Funds:** Allow LEAs to use TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) for recurring costs related to positions that support social services.
- **Funding for Teacher Salaries:** Funding must equal the number of teachers each school is required to employ to meet student-teacher ratios. District-level ratios are inadequate to meet these requirements.
- **Funding for School Security:** Fully fund a School Security Officer (SSO) in every school.

### Funding Levels:

Any new funding formula should ensure that districts receive no less than they would have received under the BEP formula.

## **TEACHER EVALUATION**

The Knox County Board of Education embraces evaluations as a critical professional development and instructional improvement tool. The Board urges the General Assembly and State Board to develop guidelines and criteria for teacher evaluation models using local educator input and multiple measures that adequately represent performance and course content. The Board further urges the General Assembly to allow the use of benchmark assessments as a component in teacher evaluations.

## **STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

The Knox County Board of Education urges the General Assembly to provide incentives for individuals to enter the teaching profession:

- Fund PRAXIS tests for teacher candidates and for those adding endorsements in high-need areas.
- Increase licensure flexibility, especially for experienced teachers from other states
- Processes, procedures, reporting, and burdensome data collection requirements should be streamlined and simplified (or eliminated, when possible) to allow more time for teaching and learning.

## **ACADEMIC AND RETENTION DECISIONS**

The Knox County Board of Education urges the General Assembly to allow districts to make retention decisions for 3rd grade students based on district data which demonstrates an understanding of ELA. Districts must continue to have flexibility to adopt instructional and supplemental materials in partnership with teachers and with families.

1. Recommendation of BEP Review Committee, the National Association of Nurses, the American Association of Pediatrics and the CDC.
2. Recommendation of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA).
3. Recommendation of the National Association of Social Workers and the School Social Work Association of America.