



TENNESSEE ALLIANCE FOR EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Powered by The Education Trust in Tennessee

POLICY AGENDA

Our network is a diverse set of allies from across Tennessee who share a unifying belief that we must achieve more for students across our state. We work alongside students, families, educators and communities – especially those whose needs and potential have been overlooked for too long.

The Alliance will build a network of education advocates from across Tennessee to advance meaningful solutions to longstanding gaps in opportunities and achievement for students. Through engagement, research and collective action, the Alliance works to expand excellence and equity in education from preschool through college, increase college access and completion particularly for historically underserved students, engage diverse communities dedicated to education equity, and increase political and public will to act on equity issues.

PRIORITY 1



Close Achievement and Opportunity Gaps in P-12 and Beyond

Equity Principle: Every student in Tennessee attends a school that provides equitable access to high-quality, rigorous instruction in P-12 and higher education that prepares them for the opportunities and demands of the world beyond their school doors.

Equity Actions:

- Utilize high-quality, standards-aligned instructional materials to support every student, including English learners and students with disabilities
- Conduct formative and annual summative assessments to measure student learning, and provide timely and disaggregated public reporting
- Maintain a focus on increasing access to and success in advanced coursework by equitably identifying and enrolling students in advanced courses and programs
- Increase access and success in higher education for students, particularly those from low-income families and families of color

PRIORITY 2



Address Funding and Resource Equity

Equity Principle: Every student in Tennessee attends a school that receives the necessary funding and resources based on the needs of its students, by way of a flexible and transparent funding system.

Equity Actions:

- Prioritize education budgets in 2021 by maintaining all state spending on both K-12 and higher education
- Shield the highest-need schools from any necessary cuts in resources (funding, staff and programming), including by ensuring any state budget cuts, if necessary, are done fairly and equitably
- Increase the transparency, reduce the complexity and equitably disperse allocations of the BEP formula
- Report school-level spending data in clear and accessible ways, including comparative spending data and contextual information

PRIORITY 3

Increase Educator Diversity and Quality

Equity Principle: Every student has access to skilled, well-supported teachers who reflect the state's racial and linguistic diversity and who provide engaging, culturally responsive and standards-aligned instruction

Equity Actions:

- Make educator diversity data visible and actionable to stakeholders, and set clear goals at the state and district levels to increase student access to strong and diverse educators
- Ensure all students are taught by educators who are fully prepared and supported throughout their careers
- Support and incentivize educator preparation programs to recruit and prepare teachers of color
- Target resources to intentionally recruit, hire and retain a diverse teaching workforce

PRIORITY 4

Support Students' Social-Emotional and Academic Development

Equity Principle: Every student has access to a physically safe, inclusive and emotionally supportive environment at school, with just discipline policies that minimize lost instructional time and foster positive relationships between staff and students.

Equity Actions:

- Provide additional funding for counselors, social workers and other health professionals
- Provide opportunities for student voice and leadership in decision-making
- Prohibit the use of suspensions and expulsions for minor offenses and ban the use of corporal punishment

- Invest in and build structures for integrated student supports and wraparound services
- Leverage community partnerships to meet students' most urgent social-emotional and physical and mental health needs
- Provide professional development and coaching for adults on using restorative practices, developing and cultivating asset-based and anti-racist mindsets, and developing the skills to integrate social-emotional supports into academics

PRIORITY 5

Address the Impact of COVID-19 on Student Learning and Well-being

Equity Principle: Every student will attend a school that provides meaningful opportunities for learning and instructional continuity and access, as well as mental, physical and nutritional support for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Equity Actions:

- Provide increased access to mental and physical health and nutrition services to students in need in both P-12 and higher education
- Provide additional academic support to students while maintaining access to grade-level content, such as through tutoring or one-on-one instruction
- Monitor data on student learning and participation in school, identifying trends and deploying resources to address issues that inhibit student success
- Provide timely, clear and accessible information to families about supports and opportunities
- Provide professional learning and high-quality materials to teachers to accelerate student learning to address unfinished instruction
- Expand access to reliable high-speed internet and devices in order for students to fully participate in distance learning