



TENNESSEE ALLIANCE FOR  
**EQUITY IN  
EDUCATION**  
Powered by The Education Trust in Tennessee

# 2022 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, including Latino and Black students, students from low-income backgrounds, English learners, students with disabilities, and students in rural schools.

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, 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:

- Promote high-quality, standards-aligned instructional materials to support every student
- Increase access to and success in advanced coursework by equitably identifying, enrolling, and supporting students in advanced courses and programs
- Increase access, affordability, and success in higher education for students
- Increase consistent access to high-quality, affordable, and universal preschool education

## 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:

- Increase the level of funding through the state funding formula
- Adopt a simplified, student-weighted funding formula that is guided by students' different levels of need with weights robust enough to support student needs
- Ensure fairness by providing funding to districts with low property wealth to make up the difference between what the district needs and can contribute based on fiscal capacity
- Ensure that dollars are used well to improve student learning outcomes while providing flexibility to allow districts to respond to their local needs and context
- Report school-level and district-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 and leaders who reflect the state's racial and linguistic diversity of their students.

#### Equity Actions:

- Increase students' access to educators who are fully prepared and supported throughout their career through professional development and other means
- Support and incentivize educator preparation programs to recruit and prepare teachers of color
- Target resources to intentionally recruit, hire, and retain a diverse educator workforce
- Report educator diversity data in accessible and actionable ways



### 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. Additionally, schools and districts have 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
- Increase 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
- Provide professional development and materials for adults on using trauma-responsive and 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 mental health support for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Equity Actions:

- Evaluate ESSER Plans to ensure that districts use evidence-based practices, allocate resources based on student need, and have a clear monitoring plan to ensure that dollars are well spent
- Expand access to mental health services to students in need
- Provide professional learning and high-quality materials to teachers to accelerate student learning and address unfinished instruction
- Incentivize districts to implement additional academic support to students while maintaining access to grade-level content, such as through high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring
- Monitor data on student learning and participation in school, identifying trends and deploying resources to address issues that inhibit student success