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**THE TENNESSEE ALLIANCE FOR EQUITY IN EDUCATION RELEASES COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL FUNDING REPORT**

*Report details disparities in statewide education and outlines priorities for additional state funding*

**NASHVILLE, Tenn. (Jan. 19, 2022)** – [The Tennessee Alliance for Equity in Education](https://thealliancetn.org/), launched by [The Education Trust in Tennessee](https://edtrust.org/tennessee/), has released their new comprehensive report TN25: Mapping our Future Together. The report, the product of months of focus groups and research, both charts Tennessee’s history with education funding and disparities that constantly arise and recommends major policy initiatives for the state to pursue.

“Our state is at a momentous crossroads in terms of the future of education,” said Gini Pupo-Walker, state director for The Education Trust in Tennessee. “The mission of the TN25 report is to not only look back at the modern history of education in the state, but to also chart a course for a more equitable system and provide tangible proposals to create a new future for Tennessee’s students.”

As part of the March 2020 Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the United States Congress allocated over $4.5 billion in federal and state aid to be spent in full by the fall of 2024. This funding has the potential to address and begin to remedy the disparities made worse by COVID-19, and can also be truly transformational for underserved communities across the state.

The report takes feedback from students, families, educators, advocacy groups, and other regional and statewide stakeholders to address some of Tennessee’s most pressing education policy issues that were laid bare during COVID-19. It charts Tennessee’s history of public education from 1901 to the current day, compares the state’s education landscape pre- and “post”-COVID-19, and outlines five common-sense policy proposals that have the potential to reshape education in the state.

While the entire report goes into considerable detail regarding the five proposals, some of the major suggestions include:

* Ensuring fairness in education 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;
* Supporting and incentivizing educator preparation programs to recruit and prepare teachers of color, as well as targeting resources to intentionally recruit, hire, and retain a diverse educator workforce; and
* Evaluating 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.

“TN25 is the first flag in the ground for the TAEE and our 70 partners. We all believe Tennessee can be a national leader in education, but only if we take advantage of this unprecedented opportunity,” said Candy Johnson, president and CEO of the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga. “This report is an important step in equipping education advocated from around the state with the facts, figures, and policies to begin to make lasting change for generations to come.”

Due to the urgent nature of the CARES Act, where the entirety of the $4.5 billion must be spent by the fall of 2024, The Alliance is committing to an annual publication of the TN25 report to ensure the funds are being allocated in an impactful and equitable way. The Alliance has submitted the report to Commissioner Penny Schwinn, the governor’s office, and the rest of the Tennessee legislature.

“Our hope is, with the release of the TN25 Report, our legislature grasps not only the import of this generational amount of expiring funding, but also the terrific good this level of commitment can accomplish,” Pupo-Walker said. “We believe the common-sense proposals outlined in the report are achievable, are equitable, and can map a greater future for our state.”

Full access to the report can be found here.

**About the Tennessee Alliance for Equity in Education**

The Tennessee Alliance for Equity in Education is a network of allies across Tennessee who share a unifying belief that there is more to be achieved for students across the state. Powered by The Education Trust in Tennessee, the Alliance is a collaboration between students, families, educators, and communities – especially those whose needs and potential have been overlooked for too long. More information is available at [TheAllianceTN.org](https://thealliancetn.org/).

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