

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## ***Nashville Public Education Foundation Applauds Governor's Student-Centered Funding Formula***

***New Formula Would Funnel More Dollars to Students Who Need them the Most; Questions Remain about What the Plan's Emphasis on Accountability Would Mean for Nashville***

**NASHVILLE, TENN. – February 24, 2022** – The long-awaited announcement of a new student-based funding formula in the state of Tennessee is being applauded by the [Nashville Public Education Foundation \(NPEF\)](#) for its focus on students' needs and its transparent and simplified structure.

Tennessee Governor Bill Lee and Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) Commissioner Penny Schwinn shared proposed legislation for the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement formula (TISA) today.

"The Governor pledged to put students first with his new proposal and we believe he has done that," said **Katie Cour, President and CEO of the Nashville Public Education Foundation**. "The new formula provides additional funding for economically disadvantaged students as well as students with unique learning needs, neither of which were adequately addressed under the former funding formula."

Though overall, NPEF is encouraged by the Governor's plan, a few aspects of the formula deserve greater clarity for Nashvillians in particular. Specifically, it is unclear how much additional weight English Learners will receive under the new plan. Nashville is home to the state's largest EL population and research shows that these students need a substantially larger investment to support their success.

Under the proposal, districts with low-performing schools could face corrective actions that have not yet been detailed. While NPEF supports accountability structures that reinforce student and school success, the new plan moves some accountability decisions from the TDOE to an ad hoc legislative committee. NPEF will be monitoring the effectiveness of this accountability shift.

"The new formula is significantly more transparent than the complex and onerous BEP," said **Cour**. "While we applaud this transparency, we are uncertain how the plan's shift in accountability will play out. We will continue to monitor any potential impacts of changes to accountability on Nashville's governance structure."

NPEF has consistently advocated for an overhaul of the state’s education funding formula and stressed the needs for 1) significantly increasing the percent of GDP that Tennessee invests in K-12 education; 2) making any increase permanent and recurring; 3) ensuring any new formula specifically addresses fiscal capacity of Tennessee municipalities; 4) designing a student-based funding formula that allocates funding based on the needs of individual students; and 5) establishing clear transparency around policy governance and decision making. NPEF proudly served as a contributing member of the [Education Foundations Subcommittee](#) for the TDOE-led funding review process.

Seeking to engage Nashvillians with essential data to make informed demands and decisions, last year NPEF released an informational Policy Brief outlining the complexities, challenges, inadequacies, and consequences of Tennessee’s current Basic Education Program (BEP) funding formula for schools. Titled “[Funding Our Schools: How Tennessee’s Funding Formula Fails to Meet the Needs of Nashville’s Students](#),” the brief encouraged Tennessee to fully adopt the recommendations of its own BEP Review Committee and called on the community to advocate for increased funding for the state’s schools.

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**About the Nashville Public Education Foundation**

The Nashville Public Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization that works to remove the barriers to educational experiences by highlighting success, serving as a critical friend to Metro Nashville Public Schools, convening stakeholders, and advocating for change so all students can thrive in school. More information is available at [nashvillepef.org](http://nashvillepef.org).

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