

*Tennessee Opens Conversation:*

# STUDENT-FOCUSED INVESTMENT STRATEGY for K-12 Public Schools

**TN** Department of  
Education



**Tennessee is a leader in education and economic and workforce development—making Tennessee the best place to live and work.**

Governor Lee and Education Commissioner Penny Schwinn are exploring the future of investing in public education and a new strategy for student-based funding in Tennessee through a robust statewide conversation and public engagement process.

Student-focused investment strategies will help ensure all students have the supports they need in schools to accelerate their learning and achievement, and improve their readiness for success after high school graduation.

**Tennessee will explore a student-focused K-12 public school investment strategy that meets the following criteria:**



Prioritizes students  
over systems



Incentivizes student  
outcomes



Reflects Tennesseans'  
values



Empowers parents  
to engage in their  
child's education



Creates flexible funding  
to prepare students for  
postsecondary success



Ensures all students, *regardless  
of location or learning needs,*  
are served at a high-level

## *How to Get Involved*

Students, families, educators, district and school leaders, higher education partners, elected officials, business leaders, education stakeholders and members of the public will be engaged throughout these conversations in the coming months through a central steering committee, 18 subcommittees, public survey opportunity, local meetings and more.

Visit [tn.gov/education/tnedufunding](https://tn.gov/education/tnedufunding) to learn more and for ways to get involved.  
E-mail [tnedu.funding@tn.gov](mailto:tnedu.funding@tn.gov) with questions.

# Tennessee Funding Review Committees

The state's engagement includes a central steering committee composed of statewide policymakers and 18 subcommittees, in addition to a committee of national experts, regional meetings of county commissioners and school board members.

## Funding Review Steering Committee

Governor **Bill Lee**  
Commissioner **Penny Schwinn**  
Tennessee Department of Education  
Commissioner **Butch Eley**  
Tennessee Department of Finance  
and Administration  
Senate Majority Leader  
**Jack Johnson**

House Majority Leader  
**William Lamberth**  
Senate Speaker Pro Tempore  
**Ferrell Haile**  
Interim Senate Education Chairman  
**Jon Lundberg**  
House Education Administration  
Chairman **Mark White**

House Education Instruction  
Chairlady **Debra Moody**  
House Education Administration  
K-12 Chairman **Kirk Haston**  
Senate Finance, Ways, and  
Means Chairman **Bo Watson**  
House Finance, Ways, and  
Means Chairlady **Patsy Hazlewood**

## Funding Review Subcommittees

### Student Engagement Subcommittee

Chair: **Elizabeth Brown**, State President,  
Future Business Leaders of America – Tennessee;  
Senior, Coffee County High School

### Students with Disabilities and Gifted Students Subcommittee

Chair: **Commissioner Brad Turner**, Tennessee Department  
of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

### English Learner Subcommittee

Chair: **Raul Lopez**, Executive Director,  
Latinos for Tennessee

### Economically Disadvantaged and Highly Mobile Students Subcommittee

Chair: **Victor Evans**, Executive Director, TennesseeCAN

### Parent Choice and Voice Subcommittee

Chair: **Dr. Derwin Sisnett**, Commissioner,  
Tennessee Public Charter School Commission

### Teacher Advisory Subcommittee

Chair: **Morgan Rankin**, 2021-22 Teacher of the Year,  
Johnson City Schools

### Principal Advisory Subcommittee

Chair: **Farrah Griffith**, Principal, White County Schools

### School System Personnel Subcommittee

Chair: **Dr. Steve Starnes**, Director of Schools,  
Greenville City Schools

### School System Leadership Subcommittee

Chair: **Dr. Danny Weeks**, Director of Schools,  
Dickson County Schools

### Rural and Small District Subcommittee

Chair: **Janet Ayers**, President, Ayers Foundation

### Suburban Districts, Municipals, and Fast-Growing Communities Subcommittee

Chair: **Dr. Ted Horrell**, Director of Schools,  
Lakeland School System

### Urban District Subcommittee

Chair: **Cato Johnson**, Chief of Staff and Senior  
Vice President of Public Policy/Regulatory Affairs,  
Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare

### Higher Education and Post-Secondary Readiness Subcommittee

Chair: **Dr. Youlanda Jones**, President, Tennessee Colleges  
of Applied Technology- Covington, Ripley Newbern

### Post-Secondary Readiness and the Business Community Subcommittee

Chair: **Randy Boyd**, President,  
University of Tennessee System

### Chambers of Commerce and Industry Subcommittee

Chair: **Dr. Jared Bigham**, Senior Advisor on Workforce  
& Rural Initiatives, Tennessee Chamber of Commerce

### Education Foundations Subcommittee

Chair: **Dr. Dan Challener**, President, Public Education  
Foundation

### Regional Collectives and Advocacy Subcommittee

Co-Chairs: **Scott Niswonger**, Chairman and Founder,  
Niswonger Foundation, and **Dr. Nancy Dishner**,  
President and CEO, Niswonger Foundation

### Fiscal Responsibility Subcommittee

Chair: **Justin Owen**, President & Chief Executive Officer,  
Beacon Center of Tennessee