

EDUCATION ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Minutes

October 18, 2022

Call to Order and Roll Call

A meeting of the Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee was held on Tuesday, October 18, 2022, at 3:00 p.m., in Room 131 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Brandon Reed, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Brandon Reed, Co-Chair; Senator Mike Wilson; Representatives Tina Bojanowski and Steve Riley.

Guests: Allison M. Stevens, Research Analyst, Office of Education Accountability (OEA); Sabrina J. Cummins, Research Analyst, OEA; and Dr. Bart Liguori, Research Division Manager, OEA.

LRC Staff: Lauren Busch, Legislative Analyst, and Maurya Allen, Committee Assistant.

Approval of Minutes – June 7, 2022

Due to lack of quorum, approval of minutes was tabled until the next meeting of the subcommittee.

OEA Report: A Review of School Funding Adequacy Studies

Present to review their research were Allison M. Stevens, Research Analyst, Office of Education Accountability (OEA); Sabrina J. Cummins, Research Analyst, OEA; and Dr. Bart Liguori, Research Division Manager, OEA.

Ms. Cummins presented the major conclusions of the OEA report, saying it was difficult to determine the cost of an adequate education in Kentucky based on the definition. Adequacy studies have limitations because education is never adequately funded, there are no prototypical schools, each state has different funding models, and many rely on insufficient research and assumptions. In a 2014 study, researchers suggested an additional \$2.44 billion was necessary for adequacy, but federal funds were omitted from that study. Inclusion of federal funds would reduce that recommendation to \$1.88 billion. According to *The Adequacy and Fairness of State School Finance* publication, Kentucky compares

favorably to the national average, but still requires an additional \$4,000 per pupil to adequately fund the highest poverty districts.

Data for the report came from several sources including national literature and adequacy studies, the National Education Association, the National Center for Education Statistics, the US Census Bureau, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores, EdBuild Model Policies for State Education Funding. All study sources supported the conclusion that significant additional funding is necessary to reach adequacy.

Ms. Cummins gave an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the professional judgement model and the evidence-based model used in the funding adequacy studies evaluated for the report. Ms. Stevens reviewed funding adequacy and fairness in Kentucky compared to the nation based on statistics from the Education Law Center and the report “The Adequacy and Fairness of State School Finance” (2019). Kentucky was compared to similar states in the categories of spending and performance on NAEP reading and math tests. This illustrated that the spending on education was not directly correlated to better test performance.

OEA staff concerns were discussed, including problems with the current per pupil funding system, lack of supporting evidence in some adequacy studies, and cost comparison concerns. Evidence-based models were specifically found to be problematic for addressing the funding for at-risk students because it would not be possible to guarantee that increased funding would directly support the additional needs of at-risk students. Study authors also admitted that there is no evidence to support the recommendation that increased funding for initiatives such as the gifted and talented program would improve student outcomes.

Ms. Cummins gave an overview of the changes to school funding in Tennessee, Vermont, and Nevada based on their own review of school funding adequacy. She also gave an overview of the EdBuild model policies which recommends a per pupil funding model, such as the model used in Kentucky, and has three tiers of model policy ratings. She concluded the presentation by reiterating the major conclusions of the OEA report. The full report is available online on the committee webpage and as an LRC publication on the LRC website.

In response to questions from Representative Bojanowski, Ms. Cummins said there were no recommendations from OEA at this time, the report was a review of adequacy studies. Representative Bojanowski said that her recommendations are to fund all-day kindergarten, universal preschool, school transportation, and switch from reliance on average daily attendance in the SEEK formula to average daily membership. She stressed the importance of designing equitable and adequate funding structures and putting the funding there to support those models.

Responding to questions from Senator Wilson, Ms. Cummins said teacher pensions were included in Kentucky based studies as well as those from some other states.

Adoption of the report was tabled until next meeting due to lack of quorum. Chair Reed also asked members to submit their suggestions for research topics for next year to Lauren Busch, lead analyst for the subcommittee, or to the co-chairs for discussion next month.

Adjournment

The next meeting of the subcommittee will be Tuesday, November 1, 2022. With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.