

**EDUCATION ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW  
SUBCOMMITTEE  
Minutes  
October 18, 2023**

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

The October meeting of the Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee was held on October 18, 2023, at 9:00 AM in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Scott Lewis, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

**Present were:**

Members: Senator Stephen West Co-Chair; Representative Scott Lewis Co-Chair; Senators Matthew Deneen, and Mike Wilson; Representatives Kim Banta, Tina Bojanowski, and Steve Riley.

Guests: Dr. Deborah Nelson, Education Accountability Research Analyst, Office of Education Accountability; Dr. Bart Liguori, Research Division Manager, Office of Education Accountability; and Christopher Riley, Education Accountability Research Analyst, Office of Education Accountability.

LRC Staff: Yvette Perry, Lauren Busch, Joshua Collins, Peter Wright, and Maurya Allen.

**Approval of Minutes - July 18, 2023**

Representative Riley made a motion, seconded by Representative Banta, to approve the minutes of the July 18, 2023, meeting. The motion passed by voice vote.

**Office of Education Accountability Report: A Review of Effectiveness and Efficiency of School Districts in Affecting Student's Academic and Postsecondary Outcomes**

Dr. Bart Liguori, Research Division Manager, Office of Education Accountability (OEA); Chris Riley, Research Analyst, OEA; and Dr. Deborah Nelson, Research Analyst, OEA; were present to share the report *A Review of Effectiveness and Efficiency of School Districts in Affecting Student's Academic and Postsecondary Outcomes*. A draft copy of the report was available in members' packets and posted on the meeting materials webpage.

The presenters explained that higher spending districts, on average, have higher-need populations and lower outcomes, but there are a wide range of variables. Small districts face problems related to efficiencies of scale and are difficult for school administrators to

resolve as the factors are largely beyond their control. The most recent data shows that salaries and benefits are the majority of district expenditures and were an important focus of the analysis. The report uses two model districts for comparison that do not represent any specific district but are composite models using data from all districts in the state. For additional detail on the model districts and the data used, members were directed to the full report available online and in their packets.

Effective districts were those that scored above what would be predicted based on demographic and other data. The report also identified contextual challenges that are beyond administrators' control. Per-pupil expenditures in Kentucky and the United States from 1970 through 2019 were highlighted, and showed a steep increase over time. However, increases in spending have slowed in more recent years. Dr. Nelson also illustrated Kentucky's proficiency rate in reading and mathematics compared to the nation as reflected by NAEP scores. The data illustrated a decline in proficiency in Kentucky and the nation, and a pronounced negative impact by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Efficiency challenges were outlined and include higher-need populations, small size (defined as student membership of 1,000 or less), geographic dispersion, and higher-cost labor markets. Dr. Nelson also illustrated the revenue sources associated with each efficiency challenge and whether there are dedicated funding streams to address specific challenges. As district per-pupil spending increases, so does the number of economically disadvantaged students on average. Many higher-spending districts are also small and have larger higher-needs populations.

Mr. Riley spoke to the relationship between district spending and outcomes. As spending increases, outcomes decrease and outcomes vary little by district-spending once student and community demographic characteristics are considered. Districts were grouped based on performance on reading and mathematics assessments and per-pupil spending and illustrated graphically. He again utilized the model districts to illustrate how students in higher performing schools compare to demographically similar students. Mr. Riley then explained the methodology used to determine district impact scores and discussed how demographic factors influenced student performance.

Characteristics of higher- and lower-impact schools were discussed. Higher-impact districts have revenues similar to other districts and have outcomes that are higher than similar districts. It was also noted that more effective districts also tend to have better working conditions for teachers, as reflected in teacher surveys. In contrast, lower-impact districts have higher teacher turnover rates. However, the presenters stated that there are

many things that contribute to reduced teacher satisfaction and teacher turnover and may not have been captured in the survey data used.

In response to a question from Representative Bojanowski, Dr. Nelson said the data was non-identified by district, but the trend showed that the impact on effectiveness was most apparent in small districts. Data for the report can be found in the report itself and in the 2023 District Data Profiles presented at an earlier meeting and available on the LRC website.

Responding to a question from Senator West, Dr. Liguori said they looked at the Kentucky Impact Survey and took the lowest 40 percent of schools from that survey. Dr. Nelson said that Chapter Three of the report lists the survey categories and what questions were associated with 'less favorable working conditions.' She cautioned that individual districts are unique and any meaningful change in a district to improve working conditions will need to be tailored to meet local needs.

Representative Riley made a motion to accept the report. Representative Banta seconded the motion, and it passed by voice vote.

### **Other Business – 2024 OEA Research Agenda Proposed Topics**

Chair Lewis announced that at the next meeting of the committee the members will need to approve the research agenda for 2024. The Senate members have already approved a research topic and a proposed research topic from Chair Lewis was included in the members packets for consideration. No action was necessary on this item at this time.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business to come before the committee the meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m. The next meeting of the committee will be Wednesday, November 1, 2023.