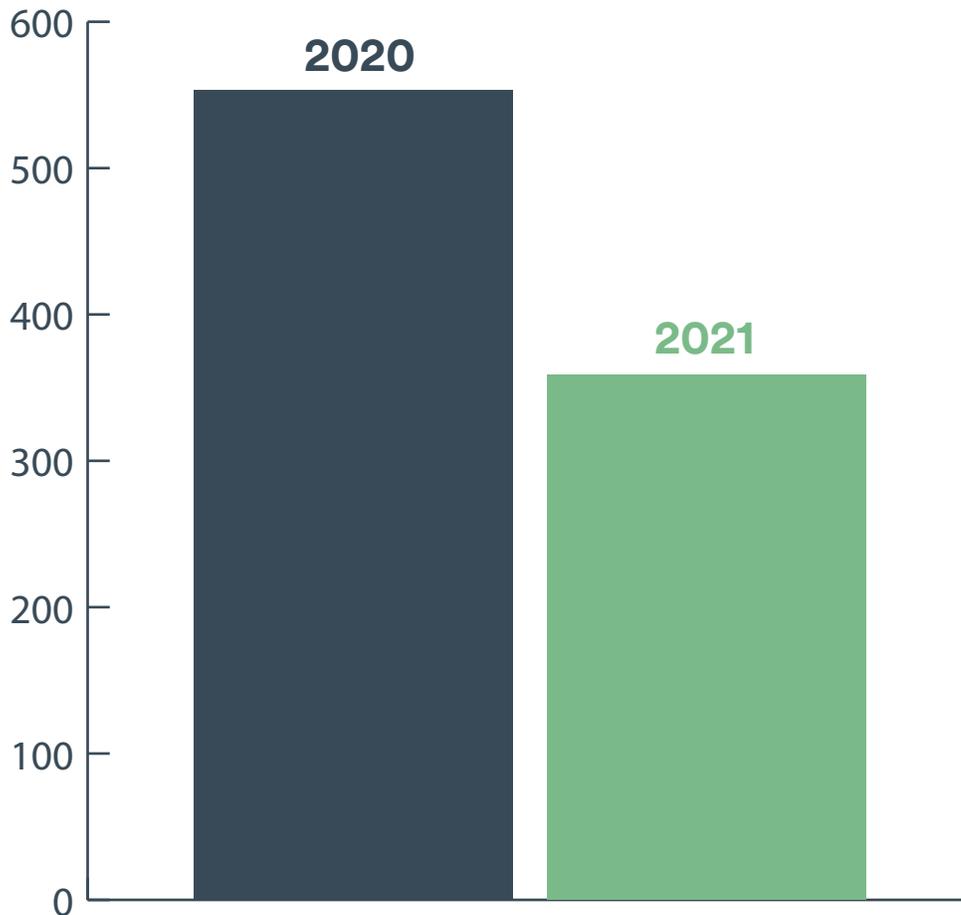




2021 School Leaders Survey

RESPONDENTS:

359 total respondents - compared to 553 last year - with a 79% completion rate.



KEY TAKEAWAYS:

1

School leaders are frustrated with the state of education in their district and in the state as a whole.

- The percentage of school leader respondents who believe the state of education in their district is “Excellent” or “Good” decreased 44.56% compared to last year. Likewise, the percentage of school leader respondents who believe the state of education in their districts needs some or dramatic improvement increased 35.3%.
- The percentage of school leader respondents who believe the state of education in Tennessee is “Excellent” or “Good” decreased 37.36% compared to last year. Likewise, the percentage of school leader respondents who believe the state of education in Tennessee needs some or dramatic improvement increased 29.1%.



2

School leaders increasingly are feeling alienated from district-level programming and policy decisions (up 23.75% from last year).

3

Similar to district leader respondents, more school leaders are confident in their ability to obtain quality materials and equipment. In other words, only 5.88% - an 18.7% drop from last year - are unsure about their ability to obtain quality materials and equipment.

4

Zero respondents wish to leave the BEP formula as is and 20% fewer respondents compared to last year want to make small changes to the BEP. Most importantly, almost 59% of respondents believe that BEP should be overhauled completely to make way for a new funding formula.





RESPONSES:

What type of school do you lead?

Traditional District Run School: 90.25% (+0.01%)¹

Charter School: 3.90% (+1.19%)

Magnet School: 1.11% (-1.06%)

Optional School: 0.84% (+0.30%)

Alternative School: 3.06% (-0.19%)

Turnaround School: 0.84% (-0.24%)

¹ +/- numbers show 2021 compared to 2020 results, reflected as a percent increase or decrease year over year.

How many years have you been a school leader?

1-3 years: 10.86% (+1.64%)

10-19 years: 45.68% (+4.18%)

4-9 years: 35.65% (-2.51%)

20+ years: 7.80% (-3.23%)

How many years did you teach prior to leading a school?

1-4 years: 4.74% (+0.76%)

11-15 years: 27.02% (+1.52%)

4-7 years: 16.71% (+1.16%)

16-20 years: 16.71% (+0.44%)

7-10 years: 24.51% (-2.25%)

20+ years: 10.31% (-1.62%)

Were you educated and trained in a traditional or alternative preparation program?

Traditional: 92.48% (-0.29%)

Alternative: 7.52% (+0.29%)

Do you feel that your leadership preparation program prepared you to be an effective school principal?

Yes: 72.98% (-3.33%)

No: 14.76% (-0.07%)

Unsure: 12.26% (+3.40%)

Have you ever taught or been a school leader at a school in another state?

YES: 17.68% (+0.16%)

NO: 82.32% (-0.16%)

What grade level does your school currently serve?

Elementary: 44.06% (-4.51%)

Middle: 26.38% (+3.14%)

K-8: 14.78% (+2.59%)

High School: 26.09% (+4.57%)

K-12: 3.19% (-2.33%)

Are you a school leader at a public charter school?

YES: 5.22% (-0.53%)

NO: 94.78% (+0.53%)

What is your current perception of the state of education in your school district?

Excellent: 0.00% (-19.83%)

Needs some improvement: 38.89% (+21.90%)

Good: 27.78% (-24.73%)

Needs dramatic improvement: 16.67% (+13.40%)

Neutral: 16.67% (+9.92%)

Unsure: 0.00% (-0.65%)

What is your current perception of the state of education in TN as a whole?

Excellent: 0.00% (-1.53%)

Needs some improvement: 55.56% (+21.36%)

Good: 5.56% (-35.83%)

Needs dramatic improvement: 16.67% (+7.74%)

Neutral: 22.22% (+8.93%)

Unsure: 0.00% (-0.65%)



What limitations or constraints do you feel hinder your ability to improve student outcomes?

Budget: 72.22% (+8.39%)

Staffing: 72.22% (+7.73%)

Scheduling: 16.67% (-10.78%)

Transportation: 11.11% (+3.05%)

Curriculum Quality: 27.78% (+10.57%)

Other: 16.67% (-14.05%)

Some of the most common “Other” responses:

- All had in common a frustration with district compliance and too many “initiatives” and “strategies” from the district with no additional funding or staffing to execute them.



Which levels of policymaking do you feel are outside your influence?

State-level policy and law: 94.44% (+0.98%)

State-level programming: 83.88% (-0.55%)

District-level policy: 33.33% (+8.28%)

District-level programming: 33.33% (+15.47%)

Other: 2.51% (+2.51%)



How often do you contact or interact with elected officials?

Never: 44.44% (+21.78%)

Once or twice a year: 50.00% (-3.16%)

Once a month: 0.00% (-15.47%)

Multiple times per month: 5.56% (-3.15%)

Do you feel that teachers in your district are prepared to be effective teachers?

YES: 27.67% (-55.66%)

NO: 33.33% (+26.36%)

Unsure: 38.89% (+29.30%)

Do you have the capacity and resources to recruit, hire, and support teachers?

YES: 61.11% (-1.42%)

NO: 33.33% (+6.53%)

Unsure: 5.56% (-5.12%)

Do you have the resources and support to get quality materials and equipment?

YES: 70.59% (+9.81%)

NO: 25.53% (+8.93%)

Unsure: 5.88% (-18.74%)

If known, what is the approximate level of deferred maintenance funding for your current school building?

<\$50,000: 5.88% (-21.57%)

\$51,000-\$100,000: 11.76% (+1.96%)

\$101,000-\$250,000: 17.65% (+11.99%)

\$251,000-\$500,000: 0.00% (-3.27%)

>\$500,000 (I need a new building): 17.65% (+11.55%)

Unsure: 47.06% (-0.65%)

Would you support removing class-size mandates in order to receive more funding flexibility?

YES: 35.29% (+15.46%)

NO: 52.94% (-10.89%)

Depends: 11.76% (-4.58%)

Do you agree that teachers and schools have enough time in their day to meet the needs of our students?

YES: 29.41% (-6.54%)

NO: 70.59% (+6.54%)

Do you agree that teachers and schools have enough time in the year to meet the needs of our students?

YES: 52.94% (+3.48%)

NO: 47.06% (-3.48%)

Would you support an extended school year or school day given the necessary resources and state support?

YES: 70.59% (+21.79%)

NO: 29.41% (-21.79%)



When hiring new instructional staff, which primary factors do you consider to determine qualification?

*Survey participants asked to rank in order with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.

Prior experience in relevant grade/subject area:	Prior performance on evaluations/observations:	Prior performance on standardized assessments:
1: 33.33% (-0.27%)	1: 11.11% (0.00%)	1: 5.56% (-3.81%)
2: 22.22% (-7.85%)	2: 22.22% (+3.48%)	2: 22.22% (+11.11%)
3: 27.78% (+8.39%)	3: 16.67% (-9.26%)	3: 27.78% (+9.92%)
4: 11.11% (+1.31%)	4: 16.67% (-13.40%)	4: 27.78% (+0.98%)
5: 5.56% (+1.42%)	5: 33.33% (+19.17%)	5: 16.67% (-18.19%)
Character and personality shown during interview:	Shared attributes with student population (e.g. similar demographics):	
1: 44.44% (+6.53%)	1: 5.56% (+0.55%)	
2: 22.22% (-5.01%)	2: 11.11% (-1.74%)	
3: 5.56% (-10.56%)	3: 22.22% (+1.52%)	
4: 16.67% (+7.30%)	4: 27.78% (+3.81%)	
5: 11.11% (+1.74%)	5: 33.33% (-4.14%)	

When assigning students to classrooms for the upcoming year, do you consider the effectiveness of the teacher/classroom the student had the previous year relative to the effectiveness of the teacher/classroom you would place them in for the coming school year?

YES: 66.67% (-11.13%)

NO: 22.22% (+8.81%)

Not applicable/I do not make student assignment decisions: 11.11% (+2.32%)

Alternatively, when assigning students to classrooms, do you give consideration to the student's individual achievement levels from the previous year relative to the teacher/classroom performance where they will be assigned? (Ex: Student X is somewhat behind from the past year so they should be placed in one of your higher performing classrooms in the coming year.)

YES: 66.65% (-8.73%)

NO: 22.22% (+5.52%)

Not applicable/I do not make student assignment decisions: 11.11% (+3.20%)

I think parental involvement in my school...

Needs Dramatic Improvement: 38.89% (+29.86%)

Needs Improvement: 33.33% (-8.52%)

Is Adequate: 11.11% (-21.05%)

Is Above Expectations: 16.67% (+0.59%)

Is Overly Involved and Negatively Affects School: 0.00% (-0.88%)





What control (as a %) do you have over your school operating budget?

<5%: 11.76% (+4.86%)

26-50%: 35.29% (-20.58%)

5-15%: 11.76% (+2.56%)

>50%: 29.41% (-24.15%)

16-25%: 11.76% (+3.25%)

Do you receive an adequate amount of school funding?

YES: 29.41% (-12.66%)

NO: 52.94% (+12.94%)

Depends: 17.65% (-0.28%)

Has your district provided school finance and budgetary training to you?

YES: 58.82% (+15.37%)

NO: 29.41% (-19.79%)

Depends: 11.76% (+4.40%)

If yes, was your finance and budgetary training focused more on budgetary compliance or how to use dollars to impact student achievement?

Compliance: 57.14%

Both, but mostly compliance: 21.43%

Strategy: 7.14%

Both, but mostly strategy: 14.29%

Do you receive an equitable amount of school funding based on the population of students you serve? (Ex. economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, special education students, etc.)

YES: 41.18% (-19.74%)

NO: 52.94% (+23.74%)

Depends: 5.88% (-4.01%)

Would you support the state weighting per pupil funding based on student need (ex. economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, special education students, etc.) rather than dispersing an average per pupil amount regardless of individual student needs?

YES: 76.47% (+32.33%)

Depends: 5.88% (-0.56%)

NO: 11.76% (-13.30%)

Unsure: 5.88% (-18.49%)

Many policymakers, including Governor Bill Lee, have stressed the need to reform our state's school funding formula, the BEP. How should our state handle the BEP funding formula going forward?

Leave it as is: 0.00% (-7.82%)

Make small changes or tweaks to improve the BEP: 11.76% (-20.42%)

Overhaul the BEP completely and create a new school funding formula: 58.82% (+34.22%)

Unsure: 29.98% (+3.43%)

What resources are available for your students if they require remote learning in the 2021-22 school year?

Laptops/tablets: 70.59%

Access to internet (i.e. at home wifi, hotspots, etc.): 52.94%

Content packets: 41.18%

Enrollment in a virtual academy: 11.76%

We are not offering remote learning opportunities in the 2021-22 school year.: 41.18%

Tennessee public schools are receiving over \$4.5 billion in federal relief funding for use between spring 2020 and fall 2023-- an historic influx of federal funding to support K-12 schools and students across the state. How much input did you have in developing the ESSER plan for your district? *check all that apply*

I did not have any input into our district's ESSR plan: 23.53%

I was asked/surveyed for my input but am unsure whether or not my input influenced the plan: 23.53%

I was asked/surveyed for my input and I am sure my input influenced the plan: 23.53%

I actively participated in developing our ESSR plan: 29.41%



Is your school offering any of the following strategies to combat learning loss? *check all that apply*

After-school programming: 41.18%

Summer learning camp (a six-week summer educational program): 82.35%

Learning loss bridge camp (a four-week educational program conducted each year before the beginning of the school year): 47.06%

Tutoring: 64.71%

Other: 17.65%



How did you measure student progress in response to the above strategies?

State-adopted benchmark assessment: 17.65%

Pre-test/post-test developed by educators in my school and/or district: 47.06%

Pre-test/post-test developed by outside vendor: 23.53%

How were these progress reports messaged to parents/guardians?

Weekly personalized reports: 23.53%

Daily personalized reports: 0.00%

Pre-test assessment and post-test assessment reports: 47.06%

Other: 29.41%

- “Other” responses mirrored periodic personalized reports.

For More Information on the 2021 School Leaders Survey, visit:
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