



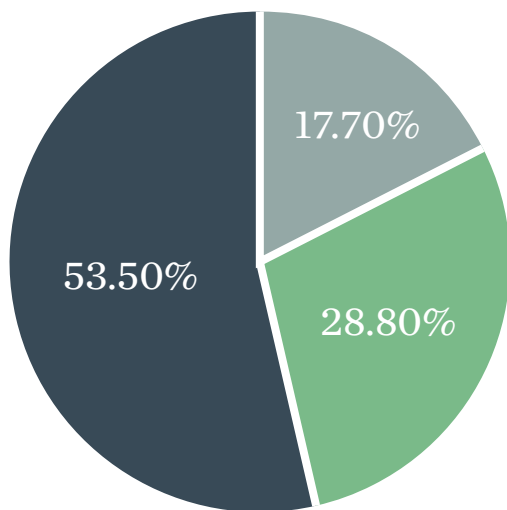
2020 School Leaders Survey

RESPONDENTS:

1,720 surveys were administered in August 2020 via an emailed survey to all current Tennessee school principals, including public charter school principals.

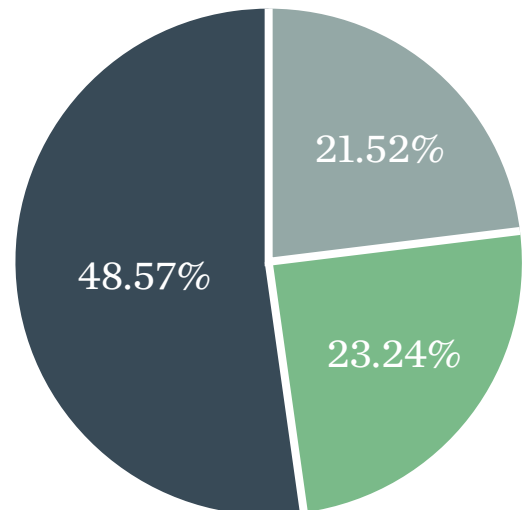
- 553 out of 1,720 answered the survey (32.15%/+2.7%)¹
- 1,720 emails found | 57 emails bounced-back | 13 opted out

Tennessee



- High School
- Middle School
- Elementary School

Survey Respondents



- High School
- Middle School
- Elementary School

¹+/- numbers show 2020 compared to 2019 results, reflected as a percent increase or decrease year over year.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

1

Even in a global pandemic, school leaders are hopeful about the state of education in their district.

- Almost 67% of school leaders perceive the state of education in their district to be strong (excellent or good), a slight increase from last year.
- As for the state of education in the state of Tennessee, only 42.9% of school leaders reported that same sentiment.
- Nearly all respondents - nearly 94% - believe that state policy and lawmaking is outside of their influence.

2

School leaders are eager to put the best educators in front of their students - whether in the classroom or virtually - and need to know where students are academically, especially given the new and diverse set of educational delivery models.

- When assigning students to classrooms, 81.66% of school leaders give consideration to the student's individual achievement levels from the previous year relative to the teacher/classroom performance where they will be assigned. This percentage is roughly the same as last year.
- When asked about which limitations or constraints hinder their ability to improve student outcomes, 64.5% of school leaders reported staffing to be a limitation or constraint. Many reflected on the struggle to recruit candidates from proven teacher prep programs into their districts and the struggle to retain their best teachers because of salary constraints and the increased work and time expectations placed on them.

3 School leaders are making spending decisions that are in response to wildly different needs from previous years, yet the current funding model that grants the money for those spending decisions is identical to prior years.

- When asked about which limitations or constraints hinder their ability to improve student outcomes, 63.8% of school leaders reported budgeting to be a limitation/constraint, while many reflected on the spending inflexibility in their budgets to spend on what their students and teachers need this year.
- Over 42% of school leaders feel they have an adequate amount of school funding, a 3-percentage point increase from 2019.
- Almost half of school leader respondents report not having completed school finance and budgetary training. Those that reported having been trained were trained on compliance with federal spending. Most of these training sessions were conducted by their CFO.
- Over 56% of school leaders believe that BEP needs to be altered or overhauled completely, though 26% of respondents were unsure whether changes were needed. Less than 8% of principals believe the formula should remain as is.





RESPONSES:

What type of school do you lead?

Traditional District Run School: 90.24% (+0.36%)²

Charter School: 2.71% (-0.79%)

Magnet School: 2.17% (+1.00%)

Optional School: 0.54% (-0.04%)

Alternative School: 3.25% (+0.33%)

Turnaround School: 1.08% (-0.87%)

²+/- numbers show 2020 compared to 2019 results, reflected as a percent increase or decrease year over year.

How many years have you been a school leader?

1-3 years: 9.22%

10-19 years: 41.50%

4-9 years: 38.16%

20+ years: 11.03%

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

1-4 years: 3.98% (+0.45%)

11-15 years: 25.50% (-0.18%)

4-7 years: 15.55% (-3.52%)

16-20 years: 16.27% (+0.32%)

7-10 years: 26.76% (+1.86%)

20+ years: 11.93% (+0.14%)

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

Traditional: 92.77% (-0.03%)

Alternative: 7.23% (+0.03%)

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

Yes: 76.31% (+1.41%)

No: 14.83% (+0.04%)

Unsure: 8.86% (-1.45%)

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

YES: 17.52% (+1.52%)

NO: 82.48% (-1.52%)

What grade level does your school currently serve?

Elementary: 48.57% (-0.23%)

Middle: 23.24% (-0.56%)

K-8: 12.19% (-0.61%)

High School: 21.52% (-0.48%)

K-12: 5.52% (+2.92%)

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

Excellent: 19.83% (+3.35%)

Needs some improvement: 16.99% (-3.45%)

Good: 52.51% (+1.96%)

Needs dramatic improvement: 3.27% (-0.91%)

Neutral: 6.75% (-0.94%)

Unsure: 0.65% (-0.01%)

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

Excellent: 1.53% (-0.01%)

Needs some improvement: 34.20% (+2.55%)

Good: 41.39% (-2.01%)

Needs dramatic improvement: 8.93% (-0.52%)

Neutral: 13.29% (-0.12%)

Unsure: 0.65% (-0.01%)



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

Budget: 63.83% (-3.20%)

Staffing: 64.49% (-3.18%)

Scheduling: 27.45% (-0.46%)

Transportation: 8.06% (+0.15%)

Curriculum Quality: 17.21% (-6.97%)

Other: 30.72% (+6.10%)

Some of the most common “Other” responses included:

- inadequate support for special education students; chronic absenteeism especially with virtual learning; access to technology; inadequate social and emotional support for students.



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

State-level policy and law: 93.46% (-0.99%)

State-level programming: 83.88% (+4.10%)

District-level policy: 25.05% (+2.63%)

District-level programming: 17.86% (+2.70%)

Other: 3.05% (+0.41%)



How often do you contact or interact with elected officials?

Never: 22.66% (+2.82%)

Once or twice a year: 53.16% (-5.30%)

Once a month: 15.47% (+1.84%)

Multiple times per month: 8.71% (+0.58%)

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

YES: 83.44% (+3.66%)

NO: 6.97% (-1.60%)

Unsure: 9.59% (2.06%)

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

YES: 62.53% (-2.96%)

NO: 26.80% (+0.43%)

Unsure: 10.68% (+2.55%)

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

YES: 60.78% (+0.34%)

NO: 14.60% (+1.63%)

Unsure: 24.62% (-1.97%)

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

<\$50,000: 27.45% (+0.20%)

\$51,000-\$100,000: 9.80% (-0.31%)

\$101,000-\$250,000: 5.66% (+0.61%)

\$251,000-\$500,000: 3.27% (+0.03%)

>\$500,000 (I need a new building): 6.10% (+1.26%)

Unsure: 47.71% (-1.74%)

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

YES: 19.83% (-4.79%)

NO: 63.83% (+6.69%)

Depends: 16.34% (-1.90%)

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

YES: 35.95% (-4.93%)

NO: 64.05% (+4.93%)

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

YES: 49.46% (-2.85%)

NO: 50.54% (+2.85%)

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

YES: 48.80% (-9.22%)

NO: 51.20% (+9.22%)



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: 36.60% (+5.61%)	1: 11.11% (+2.32%)	1: 9.37% (-0.52%)
2: 30.07% (-2.46%)	2: 18.74% (+0.06%)	2: 11.11% (-5.81%)
3: 19.39% (+1.15%)	3: 25.93% (-4.84%)	3: 17.86% (-6.10%)
4: 9.80% (-2.29%)	4: 30.07% (-0.26%)	4: 26.80% (+2.18%)
5: 4.14% (-2.01%)	5: 14.16% (+2.73%)	5: 34.86% (+10.24%)
Character and personality shown during interview:	Shared attributes with student population (e.g. similar demographics):	
1: 37.91% (-4.29%)	1: 5.01% (-3.12%)	
2: 27.23% (+6.79%)	2: 12.85% (+1.42%)	
3: 16.12% (+3.37%)	3: 20.70% (+6.41%)	
4: 9.37% (-5.58%)	4: 23.97% (+5.95%)	
5: 9.37% (-0.03%)	5: 37.47% (-10.66%)	

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: 77.80% (-2.92%)

NO: 13.41% (+1.98%)

Not applicable/I do not make student assignment decisions: 8.79% (+0.94%)

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: 75.38% (+0.04%)

NO: 16.70% (-0.12%)

Not applicable/I do not make student assignment decisions: 7.91% (+0.06%)

I think parental involvement in my school...

Needs Dramatic Improvement: 9.03% (+2.53%)

Needs Improvement: 41.85% (-2.29%)

Is Adequate: 32.16% (-0.27%)

Is Above Expectations: 16.08% (-0.81%)

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





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

<5%: 6.90% (-4.33%)

26-50%: 14.71% (-1.57%)

5-15%: 9.20% (-0.43%)

>50%: 53.56% (-1.26%)

16-25%: 8.51% (+0.48%)

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

YES: 43.45% (-2.65%)

NO: 49.20% (+4.70%)

Depends: 7.36% (-2.04%)

Do you receive an adequate amount of school funding?

YES: 42.07% (+2.16%)

NO: 40.00% (-2.20%)

Depends: 17.93% (-0.04%)



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: 60.92% (+2.43%)

NO: 29.20% (-2.68%)

Depends: 9.89% (+0.26%)

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: 44.14% (-1.27%)

Depends: 6.44% (+0.94%)

NO: 25.06% (+3.04%)

Unsure: 24.37% (-2.69%)

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: 7.82% (+1.17%)

Make small changes or tweaks to improve the BEP: 32.18% (+1.22%)

Overhaul the BEP completely and create a new school funding formula: 24.60% (-2.69%)

Unsure: 25.98% (-0.40%)

Other: 9.43% (+0.17%)

Some of the most common “Other” responses included:

- Additional support for special education students and economically disadvantaged students
- Ensuring rural districts are treated equitably
- More spending flexibility
- Additional support to hire the best teachers



Are you a school leader at a public charter school?

Yes: 5.75%

No: 94.25%

Is there currently a reopening plan in place for your school for the 2020-2021 school year?

Yes: 100%

No: 0.00%

At this moment, how will your school reopen for the 2020-2021 school year?

All students physically on campus: 0.00%

Hybrid; partially on campus, partially virtual education: 45.83%

All virtual education: 54.17%

Other: 0.00%

Do you feel prepared to open your school this fall?

Yes: 70.83%

No: 20.83%

Unsure: 8.33%

Who has been involved in creating the reopening plan?

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

State Leaders: 29.17%

District Leaders: 70.83%

School Administration: 95.83%

Teachers: 66.67%

Parents: 45.83%

Local Health Officials: 50.00%

Has there been discussion about what will happen if your school must re-close this fall?

Yes: 79.17%

No: 20.83%

Unsure: 0.00%

What resources are available for all of your students regarding virtual education?

Laptops/tablets: 100.00%

Access to internet (i.e. at home wifi, hotspots, etc.): 75.00%

Content packets: 54.17%

Other: 0.00%

Has your school district provided professional development for teachers regarding virtual education?

Yes: 95.83%

No: 0.00%

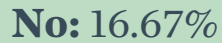
Unsure: 4.17%

Has there been discussion about what will happen if your school must re-close this fall?

Yes: 83.33%



No: 16.67%




Unsure: 0.00%

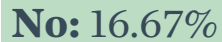


Has your school received CARES Act funding?

Yes: 75.00%



No: 16.67%



Unsure: 8.33%



For More Information on the 2020 School Leaders Survey, visit:
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