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LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION

State Capitol 700 Capital Avenue Frankfort KY 40601

502-564-8100

Capitol Fax 502-564-2922

Annex Fax 502-564-6543

legislature.ky.gov

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MEMORANDUM

**TO:** President Robert Stivers, Co-Chair  
 Speaker David W. Osborne, Co-Chair  
 Legislative Research Commission

**FROM:** Senator Michael Nemes, Co-Chair *MN by JHC*  
 Representative Kim Banta, Co-Chair *KB by JHC*  
 School Funding Task Force

**SUBJECT:** Task Force Co-Chair's Report

**DATE:** December 2, 2024

The Efficient and Effective School District Governance Task Force convened ten times during the 2024 Interim to carry out the charge of reviewing the efficient and effective governance of school districts with student enrollment greater than 75,000 students. Testimony was provided by the Jefferson County Public Schools; the Jefferson County Teachers' Association; the Kentucky Department of Education; the Auditor of Public Accounts; the Southern Regional Education Board; the Council of the Great City Schools; the Education Commission of the States; the Kentucky State Data Center; the Kentucky Center for Statistics; the Council on Postsecondary Education; the Legislative Research Commission's Office of Education Accountability; Prismatic Services, Inc.; Civic Solutions Group; and parents, students, teachers, and other community members.

Upon considering the testimony and information provided, the Co-Chairs, after consultation with the task force members, recommend that the General Assembly and the Legislative Research Commission extend the task force through the 2025 interim while retaining the current membership. More detailed information is needed to develop a set of recommendations to improve district efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, due to the pending selection of a new district superintendent and potential changes at the federal level, additional time would ensure the recommendations would have an impact.

During the 2025 interim, the task force should do the following as it relates to a school district with enrollment greater than 75,000 students:

1. Review the responsibilities and resources of the Kentucky Department of Education in supporting the districts.
2. Consider obtaining an outside consultant with expertise in best practices of large, urban school districts to assist in evaluating the efficient and effective district operations to improve student outcomes, such as:
  - a. determining the top causes of chronic absenteeism and developing recommendations to reduce chronic absenteeism;
  - b. evaluating current student discipline policies, including suspension policies, based on accurate and complete student discipline data, and developing policy recommendations to improve outcomes while complying with federal guidance;
  - c. evaluating the identification of students in need of additional support to identify areas of improvement;
  - d. identifying policies and procedures that serve as roadblocks to teachers' classroom instruction and proposing alternatives;
  - e. reviewing efforts in serving students with limited English proficiency, including curriculum, to improve student outcomes; and
  - f. recommending possible changes within statute or regulation that would support these efforts.
3. Explore the implementation of cell phone bans.
4. Investigate the possible reorganization of the local board of education with expanded membership.
5. Develop improved training requirements for the local board of education members.
6. Review the current committee organization of the local board of education and the use of consultants to develop recommended changes.
7. Investigate central office organization, positions, and salaries and the central office responsibilities and relationship to the local board of education to develop recommendations to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
8. Explore ways to streamline and remove barriers in the process for hiring education professionals, including improving recruitment efforts, shortening the timeline, evaluating the effectiveness of certification exams, and reviewing the use of stipends.
9. Investigate the use of strategic plans that implement accountability within the district to improve student outcomes.
10. Explore the district's focus on reading and mathematics, the class time dedicated to these critical contents, and the possible use of a district-wide platform for interventions.
11. Propose a schedule of regular instructional, operational, and fiscal audits and a timeline within which the district must adequately address and resolve all outstanding audit findings.
12. Explore the implementation of regional administration within the district.