



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF TENNESSEE**

**PO Box 158369  
Nashville, TN 37215  
[www.lwvtn.org](http://www.lwvtn.org)**

## **SUPPORT STATEMENT FOR ADEQUATE STATE FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN TENNESSEE**

The League of Women Voters of Tennessee has a long history of advocating for adequate funding to provide quality education for all of Tennessee's students. We know that our government officials share our sense of urgency in making education a priority for ensuring the state's continued vitality.

An important tool for determining actual costs of funding a quality K-12 education is the annual report prepared by the BEP Review Committee. When the BEP formula was first approved by the General Assembly, the enabling statute created a BEP Review Committee, convened by the State Board of Education, charged with developing an annual report with "recommendations on needed revisions, additions and deletions to the formula, as well as an analysis of the instructional salary disparity" among school systems. The BEP formula identifies a funding plan for Tennessee schools based upon the *actual* cost of various components of an educational program such as textbooks.

While current state revenue sources have not been sufficient to address all of the identified needs, the BEP Review Committee has been wise to carry forward in its annual report the extended priorities, which are needed to fund Tennessee schools fully and to continue improving student academic achievement. For example, the 2014 BEP Report included as extended priorities:

- the continued phase-in of BEP 2.0;
- new components for professional development;
- reduced class size ratios in grades 7-12;
- additional school nurses, technology coordinators, assistant principals, psychologists, counselors;
- and increased teachers' supplies.

The League of Women Voters is concerned to learn that the 2015 Report approved by the BEP Review Committee by conference call on October 28, 2015 deleted *all* of the extended priorities. While the report identified four immediate and worthy priorities for funding including increased teacher salaries, elimination of the perverse incentive for schools to prevent qualified students from graduating early, additional funding for technology, and the twelfth month of health insurance for teachers, we remain deeply concerned by the omissions.

The Committee's report must now be approved by the Commissioner of Finance and Administration, Commissioner of Education, and the State Board of Education before it is submitted to the House and Senate Education Committees, General Assembly, and Governor.

The League of Women Voters of Tennessee, a non-partisan organization, respectfully asks that the extended priorities listed in the 2014 report be restored to the 2015 Basic Education Review Committee Report before the report is sent on to the General Assembly for approval.