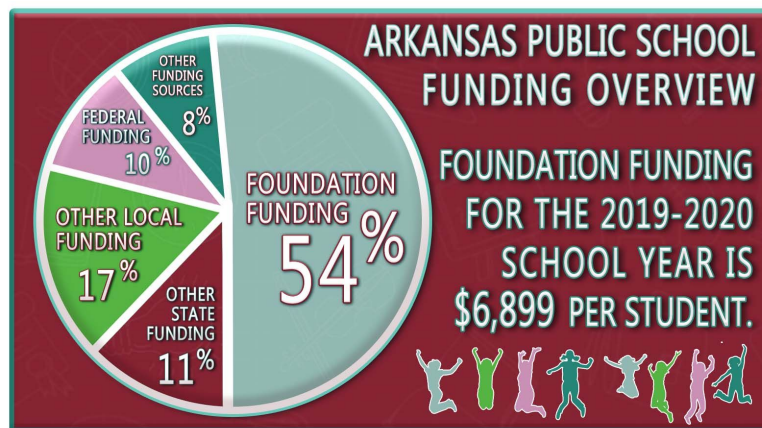




Arkansas House Newsletter

June 14, 2019

Funding Education in Arkansas



There are now more than 460,000 students enrolled in Arkansas public schools. And an additional 18,000 attend an open-enrollment charter school.

School districts range in size from less than 300 students to nearly 22,000 students. The median size is about 900 students. Charter schools range from about 60 students to more than 3,000.

How we fund education in our ever growing schools and provide for changing needs is through a process that begins in Education Committee meetings.

The House and Senate Education Committee met this week to begin that process for the next biennium. Arkansas schools receive many different types of funding totaling nearly 5.9 billion in 2017-18. Generally speaking, about half of school district/charter school operating revenue comes from state sources, about 40% is generated locally and about 10% comes from the federal government.

Foundation Funding primarily consists of local property tax revenues and the state aid portion of foundation funding. To determine the amount of foundation funding, Arkansas uses a specific formula, known as the matrix. The matrix calculates the per-student funding based on the cost of personnel and other resources needed to operate a prototypical school of 500 students. Legislators involved in the biennial Adequacy Study determine the resources included in each line of the matrix and the dollar amount needed to fund it.

In the most recent legislative session, we increased the per-student funding from \$6,713 to \$6,899 per student for the 2019-2020 school year. It increases funding to \$7,018 per student the following school year.

The committee was also presented with information on student outcome measures. In 2016, the state began administering the ACT Aspire assessment. The 2018 ACT Aspire scores show a decrease in 4th-grade students scoring ready or above in math and an increase in the 8th-grade math scores.

Arkansas's high school graduation rate has increased since 2011 to 88% of high school students. While the overall increase mirrors the national trend, Arkansas has consistently achieved higher 4-year graduation rates than the national rates.

The committee is scheduled to meet again on August 19. You can watch all Joint Education Committee meetings online at www.arkleg.state.ar.us OR www.arkansashouse.com.