



Weekly Legislative Update

03.22.24

Dear {{FirstName or 'Friend'}},

Tempers flared in the House Government Operations Committee as debate resumed on [HB1183](#), a proposal for universal private school vouchers. In between call for order and parliamentary inquiries, [legislators questioned](#) the success of voucher programs in other states, the differences between and the comparability of assessments required for public and private schools, the cost of the proposed voucher program, and which students are likely to be accepted in private schools. In a voice vote, [HB1183](#) recommended a positive recommendation from the House Government Operations Committee and has been referred to the House Finance Ways, and Means Subcommittee. The Senate proposal for universal private school vouchers was not heard in committee this week and waits to be scheduled to be heard in the Senate Finance, Ways and Means Committee.

On Thursday, the House Majority Leader William Lamberth withdrew [HB2468](#), the vehicle holding Governor Lee’s proposal for universal private school vouchers, from consideration. This means that only the House and Senate proposals remain for consideration. For updates on the universal private school voucher proposals, please check out The Education Trust Tennessee’s [voucher amendment tracker](#) and our voucher resource hub [here](#).

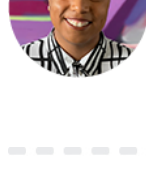
Turning from one controversial issue to another, the House Government Operations Committee attached an amendment to [HB1739](#), initially intended to vacate Tennessee State University’s entire board of trustees. Rather than vacate TSU’s entire board, the [amendment would vacate only three trustees](#), whose term expires in June 2025, and extend the life of the board through June 2026. [SB1596](#), the Senate companion to [HB1739](#), [passed the Senate floor on Thursday \(25-6\)](#) with the original intent to vacate the entire board. HB1739 is scheduled to be discussed on the House Floor next Thursday, March 28. If HB1739 is passed as amended, the bills will go to a conference committee where select members of both chambers will negotiate the final bill.

The Senate Education Committee [closed this week](#) after hearing its last calendar which included passage of:

- [SB2183](#), which allows a 4th grade student who does not meet adequate growth on an ELA TCAP and was promoted to 4th grade via an alternative pathway to initiate a parent-teacher conference to decide next steps for the student. This provision will be repealed July 1, 2025.
- [SB1858](#), which as [amended](#) allows a parent, student, or employee of a school, as opposed to any person who has children who are “eligible to attend”, to sue a school district over the enforcement of the Age Appropriate Materials Act of 2022.

On a bittersweet note, The Education-Trust Tennessee is sending congratulations to [Breanna Sommers](#), our P-12 Senior Policy Analyst, as she transitions to her new role as the Director of Policy at the Tennessee State Board of Education. Breanna has been an instrumental part of the Ed Trust Tennessee team providing vast policy expertise and a deep commitment to students. We wish her success in her next chapter!

In partnership,



MaKenzie L. Mosby, MPP
Senior Manager of Government Relations for Tennessee



On Our Radar

[HB1664 / SB01715](#)
Rep. Warner / Sen. Hensley

As introduced, authorizes a law enforcement agency to assign a law enforcement officer to serve as a school resource officer at a school within a local board of education's control that has not entered into a memorandum of understanding with a law enforcement agency to assign a school resource officer to the school.

[HB2826 / SB1726](#)
Rep. Camper / Sen. Lamar

As introduced, requires the department, using existing resources, to develop a conflict resolution program that may be adopted and implemented by LEAs and public charter schools to assist students in any of the grades K-12 in developing the skills necessary for nonviolent conflict resolution.

[HB1183 / SB0503](#)
Rep. Lamberth / Sen. Johnson

As introduced, extends from October to November, the time within which a public institution of higher education that receives funds from the distribution of credit cards to students or any percentage from the use of cards bearing the college or university name or logo must report the amount of such funds or percentage received as well as how the funds were expended during the previous fiscal year to the education committee of the senate and the education administration committee of the house of representatives.

[HB2184 / SB1783](#)
Rep. White / Sen. Lundberg

As introduced, reallocates 5 percent of the privilege tax collected from licensees that offer sports wagering in this state from the lottery for education account to a new Tennessee Promise completion grant special account created to assist the commission in awarding completion grants to certain Tennessee Promise scholarship students; makes the four-year pilot program established by the commission to award completion grants to certain Tennessee Promise scholarship students permanent.

[Review Our Bill Tracker](#)



What’s Happening

House Floor Session
Monday, 3/25/24, 3:00pm
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

House K-12 Subcommittee
Tuesday, 3/26/24, 4:30pm
House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Higher Education Subcommittee
Wednesday, 3/27/24, 9:00am
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Education Administration Committee
Wednesday, 3/27/24, 1:00pm
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Floor Session
Thursday, 3/28/24, 9:00am
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

[House Committee Calendars](#)



Noteworthy

Article: TN Senate votes to vacate Tennessee State University board despite House compromise

The Tennessee Senate passed a bill Thursday that would vacate the board of Tennessee State University and leave it to Gov. Bill Lee to appoint new members. Check out [this article](#) in The Tennessean to find out more.

[Read more](#)

Report: Child Mental Health Programs and Services in Tennessee

An increasing number of children are experiencing mental health struggles. Which state agencies offer services for them and their families? Check out The Sycamore Institute’s [new report](#) that explains what programs are available and where.

[Read more](#)

Event: Linking Arms for Change

Join [Voices for a Safer Tennessee](#) on Wednesday, March 27th from 5:30-7:30 PM CT at their event, [Linking Arms for Change](#). Wear red and link arms as we mark the anniversary of one of our community’s darkest days and honor the memory of the hundreds of Tennessee lives lost to preventable firearm tragedies over the last year. Their goal is to form a chain of 13,000 people from Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt through Centennial Park and up Charlotte Avenue to our state capitol.

[Register here](#)

Article: Tennessee bill to ease reading law’s retention policy for 4th graders clears first hurdle

State lawmakers advanced legislation Tuesday that would put being fourth graders that would put being held back this year under Tennessee’s 2021 reading law. In [Chalkbeat’s article](#), it discusses the proposed legislative fix that comes as projections show thousands of struggling fourth-grade readers could have to repeat the grade, even after participating in state-funded tutoring and summer learning programs.

[Read more](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Legislative Advocacy Hub](#)

