



# Weekly Legislative Update

1.6.23

Dear {{FirstName or 'Supporter'}},

Happy New Year! Now that the holiday season is concluded, we are gearing up for an eventful year in Tennessee with the 2023 legislative session. Per our state constitution, next Tuesday, January 10th, at 12 noon CT, a brand-new 113th Tennessee General Assembly will gavel in for business in the first meeting of a two-year session. Our 2022-2023 Public Policy Fellow, [Ruth Boyajian](#), will support The Education Trust in Tennessee team as we engage with legislators, track bills, attend committee hearings, analyze key policy proposals, and stay informed on all things pre-K through postsecondary education. As always, you can expect to receive this legislative update each Friday afternoon during session.

The first order of business in the legislature's organizational period will be the swearing in of the new members-elect in both the House and Senate. Following last November's general elections, Tennessee Republicans maintain their supermajority in both chambers, increasing their seats by two to hold a 75-24 advantage in the House and keeping a 27-6 party split in the Senate. In total, there will be [20 new legislators](#) in the 113th, with 17 new [Representatives](#) and three new [Senators](#). Legislators will also adopt their official rules of procedure, elect each chamber's presiding officers -- all but guaranteed to remain House Speaker [Cameron Sexton](#) of Crossville and Lt. Governor & Speaker of the Senate [Randy McNally](#) of Oak Ridge -- and also elect the three constitutional officers: the [Secretary of State](#), the [Comptroller of the Treasury](#) and the [State Treasurer](#).

Among the most significant tasks of the organizational period will be the establishment of standing legislative committees, and the accompanying appointment of committee and subcommittee chairs, vice-chairs, and membership rosters by each chamber's respective Speaker.

- **The Senate:** The upper chamber historically has one standing committee with education jurisdiction, the Senate Education Committee, generally with nine members serving. In the most recent General Assembly, Republicans enjoyed an 8-1 partisan advantage, with [Senator Jon Lundberg](#) of Bristol serving as chairman.
- **The House:** The House has had a variety of education committee structures in the past, at times having one large education "supercommittee" with a host of subcommittees and most recently, two standing committees with their own unique subcommittees. Last session, Chairman [Mark White](#) of Memphis led the full House Education Administration Committee and [Rep. Debra Moody](#) of Covington chaired the House Education Instruction Committee.

With a mass of retirements and departures from the legislature since last session and 20 new lawmakers in the mix, there are rumors floating among Cordell Hull watchers on what committee structures and chairmanships will look like. In the first week of business, this will be of utmost importance to watch, as who controls the flow of bills and has power to weigh in on education policy has heavy implications for Tennessee's students.

Upon the conclusion of the organizational period, members will adjourn and reconvene in regular order for legislative business in the 113th General Assembly. Historically, each chamber will recess for a short period before returning for the Governor's inauguration on January 21st and full return of the legislature before month's end. At this point, all of the machinations of the Tennessee General Assembly will be up and running to conduct the business of the state, with floor sessions, committee meetings, and bill filings fully underway. The Senate bill filing deadline will be February 6th, with the House bill filing cutoff likely around that date as well. According to previous rules of order, this would be required by the 10th legislative day of the full session.

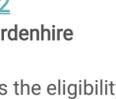
Lawmakers have approximately a month left to file bills, with some inputting [pre-filed bills](#) as early as last month. Within education, legislation has been introduced thus far on a variety of topics including proposals to [expand the criteria for the state's controversial education savings account \(ESA\) program](#), [authorizing public colleges and universities to offer developmental and remedial coursework](#), and [extending eligibility for the Tennessee HOPE scholarship toward graduate studies for students completing their bachelor's degrees earlier than anticipated](#). State-level education advocates and stakeholders will also be closely watching for legislative filings and debates around potential changes to the third-grade retention policy, increasing postsecondary access and affordability, strengthening pathways into the teaching profession, improving educator diversity, charter school authorization and facilities access, and more.

To stay up-to-date on key legislation Ed Trust is tracking, please be sure to check out the "On Our Radar" section, our updated 2023 bill tracker, and the legislature's meeting agendas and calendars linked below. As always, should you have any questions about education developments as we navigate the 113th Tennessee General Assembly, please don't hesitate to reach out.

In partnership,



**Reggie Nash**  
External Relations Manager for Tennessee



## On Our Radar

### [SB0012](#)

Sen. Gardenhire

Expands the eligibility criteria for an education savings account to include students zoned to attend a school in an LEA with at least five schools, instead of at least 10, identified as being in the bottom 10 percent of schools in 2017 and identified as priority schools in the 2015, 2018, and 2021 priority school cycles.

### [HB0029](#)

Rep. Cepicky

Authorizes a public institution of higher education to offer remedial or developmental courses or coursework to address student remedial needs, instead of prohibiting an institution from doing so.

### [HB0007/SB0024](#)

Rep. Cepicky / Sen. Hensley

Increases, from \$200 to \$500, the amount each LEA and public charter school is required to pay each teacher in kindergarten through grade 12 for the purchase of instructional supplies for the 2023-2024 school year.

### [HB0027/SB0074](#)

Rep. Lamberth / Sen. Watson

Allows a student who earns the student's first baccalaureate degree in less than the projected completion time to continue to receive the Tennessee HOPE scholarship in pursuit of an advanced degree.

[Review Our Bill Tracker](#)



## What's Happening

### Senate Floor Session

Tuesday, January 10, 2023, 12:00pm CT

Senate Chamber

### House Floor Session

Tuesday, January 10, 2023, 12:00pm CT

House Chamber

### Senate Floor Session

Wednesday, January 11, 2023, 9:00am CT

Senate Chamber

### House Floor Session

Wednesday, January 11, 2023, 9:00am CT

House Chamber

### Joint Convention

Wednesday, January 11, 2023, 9:30am CT

House Chamber

### House Floor Session

Thursday, January 12, 2023, 9:00am CT

House Chamber

### Senate Floor Session

Thursday, January 12, 2023, 9:30am CT

Senate Chamber

[House Committee Calendars](#)

[Senate Committee Calendars](#)



## Noteworthy

### [2023 EmpowerED League Leader Application Now Live](#)

The Education Trust in Tennessee is excited to announce the launch of our [2023 application](#) for students to join our EmpowerED Network as a League Leader. The EmpowerED Network seeks to elevate the experiences of underrepresented students from across the state to influence policy that impacts students and deepen their advocacy skills. We are actively seeking youth who want to have a leadership role within this dynamic network of other youth advocates.

*This application will close on January 17, 2023 at 11:59 pm CST.*

### [BRIEF: 5 Things State and District Leaders Can Do to Advance Strong and Diverse School Leadership](#)

Students and teachers deserve to have access to strong School Leaders from diverse backgrounds. Ed Trust's new brief highlights 5 things district & state leaders can do to advance & diverse school leadership.

### [Check Out This Helpful Glossary of Terms from the Tennessee General Assembly](#)

Visit the [Tennessee General Assembly Glossary of Terms](#) in preparation for the 113th Tennessee General Assembly. As the session kicks off, this helpful resource will help you familiarize yourself with important legislative language and terminology.

### [5 Things Equity Advocates Should Know... the 2021-2022 TN State Report Card](#)

The [State Report Card](#) is an interactive data tool for stakeholders to learn how Tennessee schools and districts perform on various accountability and other indicators. Read more about the 5 things equity advocates should know, written by our new P-12 Policy Fellow [Juliana Hoover Potash](#).

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Check Out Our Policy Agenda](#)



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