



Weekly Legislative Update

2.4.22

It was an eventful week in the Volunteer State's education policy and politics realm with Governor Bill Lee's fourth annual [State of the State Address](#) Monday night in the House chamber, the final of his inaugural term. Touting the theme "Tennessee: America At Its Best," Governor Lee outlined significant investments in public education within his proposed budget. Proposed items include \$1 billion in recurring K-12 and CTE spending, \$750 million of which would be earmarked for the [forthcoming student-weighted school funding formula](#) as well as a nearly \$125 million contribution toward the teacher pay component of the BEP. In higher education, Governor Lee made a pledge of no tuition increases at public colleges and universities with a \$90 million investment in our state's outcomes-based funding formula, more than \$75 million to increase [HOPE Scholarship](#) awards, and a historic \$250 million commitment to Tennessee State University's campus infrastructure, an important down payment toward [the state's chronically underfunded public HBCU](#).

Despite these encouraging items included in the Governor's [recommended budget](#), many questions and concerns remain around Lee's announcement of a planned partnership with Hillsdale College, a private, conservative-leaning Christian institution in Michigan [known for its K-12 "1776" civics curriculum and affiliated charter schools](#). On the school funding front, there are outstanding queries on the specific local match components of the imminent revised formula, which would detail the expected fiscal contributions required of local school districts. On Thursday, Governor Lee and Commissioner Schwinn went on the record to preview that legislative language and additional details of the revised formula should debut in mid-February, under the auspices of a bill entitled the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement, or TISA.

Many education-related bills with significant implications for both P-12 and higher education were considered in legislative committees this week. An amendment to [HB1516](#) - sponsored by House Education Instruction Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Scott Cepicky - that would have granted additional school district takeover powers to the state Commissioner of Education [failed in full committee](#) on a bipartisan 9-6 vote. A separate bill, [HB1681](#), also sponsored by Rep. Cepicky along with Sen. Briggs in the upper chamber, that prompts the Tennessee Board of Regents to establish a pilot grant program for non-credit workforce training programs advanced in both the Senate Education and House Education Administration Committees. There was also [significant discussion](#) in Senate Education on [SB1815](#), sponsored by Sen. Brian Kelsey, which would require the state's public four-year colleges and universities to obtain college entrance exam scores from applicants during the admissions process. The legislation comes as a majority of U.S. institutions of higher education have opted to implement test-optional policies in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Knoxville, Martin, and Chattanooga campuses of the University of Tennessee System and Vanderbilt University. The bill advanced out of committee on a 7-2 vote.

Bill filing deadlines passed on February 2nd for the House and February 3rd for the Senate, bringing a large influx of education bills this week with major implications for equity, access, and student achievement. To see all of the legislation up for consideration next week as well as the key bills Ed Trust is actively tracking, please be sure check out the "On Our Radar" section, our updated bill tracker, and the committee calendars each linked below.



Reggie Nash
External Relations Manager for Tennessee



On Our Radar

[HB1648 / SB2597](#)

Rep. Griffey / Sen. Hensley
Authorizes an LEA or public charter school to deny enrollment to students who are unlawfully present in the U.S., eliminates state funding for specified students, and requires LEAs and charter schools who enroll financial students to bear sole financial responsibility.

[HB1944 / SB1944](#)

Rep. Cepicky / Sen. Hensley
Prohibits an LEA or public school from making obscene materials or materials harmful to minors available to students in school libraries controlled by an LEA or public school.

[HB0982 / SB1384](#)

Rep. Gillespie / Sen. Kyle
Requires LEAs to implement an adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) program; creates a process to refer students who have experience four or more ACEs to appropriate mental and behavioral health providers.

[HB0800 / SB1216](#)

Rep. Griffey / Sen. Niceley
Prohibits LEAs and public charter schools from adopting or using textbooks or materials that promote, normalize, support, or address lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, or transgender issues or lifestyles.

[Review Our Bill Tracker](#)



What's Happening

House Higher Education Subcommittee
Tuesday, 2/8/22, 12:00pm
House Hearing Room III [Subcommittee Homepage](#)

House Education Instruction Subcommittee
Tuesday, 2/8/22, 3:00pm
House Hearing Room II [Subcommittee Homepage](#)

House K-12 Education Subcommittee
Tuesday, 2/8/22, 4:30pm
House Hearing Room II [Subcommittee Homepage](#)

House Education Instruction Committee
Wednesday, 2/9/22, 11:00am
House Hearing Room I [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Education Committee
Wednesday, 2/9/22, 3:00pm
Senate Hearing Room I [Committee Homepage](#)

House Education Administration Committee
Wednesday, 2/9/22, 3:30pm
House Hearing Room I [Committee Homepage](#)

[House Committee Calendars](#)

[Senate Committee Calendars](#)



Noteworthy

Thrive Fellows and Community of Practice

The Education Trust in Tennessee is proud to announce the [recipients of the Thrive Fellowship](#), a cohort of 10 college students who will participate in a year-long program that will equip them to advocate for change, and [recipients of the Thrive Community of Practice](#), a group of 5 organizations who will spend the next year developing or expanding programs to increase access and opportunity for high school students.

[Learn more](#)

Event: The Debate Over Critical Race Theory and Why Students Should Care About It

[The EmpowerEd Network](#) invites students from across Tennessee to the first session of a two-part series to learn about the raging national debate over Critical Race Theory in schools, and the current and proposed laws that ban certain concepts in classrooms in Tennessee. Join us Tuesday, February 8th, at 5:00pm CT.

[Register here](#)

Ed Trust TN Responds to Governor Lee's State of the State

The Education Trust in Tennessee issued the following statement in response to key education elements within Governor Lee's State of the State Address and Budget Proposal for FY2023.

[Read here](#)

FundEd Tool

The Education Trust has completed an update of FundEd, a tool created by EdBuild, that aggregates and standardizes information regarding each state's K-12 education funding laws by providing easy access to policy descriptions, state-by-state comparisons, and national snapshots to support advocates with the knowledge and tools to help advance funding equity.

[Learn more](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Check Out Our Policy Agenda](#)



The Education Trust