



1 THE TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (TNGA)

FIND YOUR LEGISLATOR

The Tennessee General Assembly (TNGA), the state’s legislative branch, has 33 members of the Senate and 99 members of the House of Representatives. Voters elect Senators for 4-year terms and Representatives for 2-year terms. The Senate and House of Representatives each elect a Speaker who appoints one chair and one vice-chair to each [legislative committee](#) for 2-year terms.

WHAT THEY DO

- Enacts, amends, and repeals the laws of Tennessee
- Approves the annual state budget
- Meets for 90 session days over a two-year period, convening each year mid-January through late April or May. They may also convene for [special sessions](#) called by the Governor or if two-thirds of the members elected to each house petition to meet
- House members can file no more than 15 bills during each annual session of the General Assembly, except that a chair of a standing committee may file an additional 5 bills on subjects that pertain to the committee they chair
- Confirms members of all State Boards and Commissions, including the State Board of Education (SBE) and Public Charter School Commission (TPCSC)
- Appoints three members of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC)
- Committees over education are updated on the General Assembly website: [Senate](#), [House](#), and [Joint](#)

2 TENNESSEE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

The Governor is elected by the public to serve a 4-year term. The Governor can choose to run for reelection but is not eligible to serve more than eight years in any twelve-year period.

WHAT THEY DO

- Oversees the operations of the state’s executive agencies
- Influences law through executive orders, the budget, the annual State of the State address, and calling special legislative sessions
- Sets statewide policy agenda and proposes a budget
- Appoints members of state-level agencies with authority to implement education laws, mandates, and programs including Commissioner of the TN Department of Education (TDOE) and members of the State Board of Education (SBE), Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) and the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission



3 TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (TDOE)

The TN Department of Education (TDOE) is supervised by the **Commissioner**, appointed by the Governor to serve for the duration of their term or until a successor is appointed.

WHAT THEY DO

- Oversees the operation of P-12 schools in the state and provides guidance to ensure laws and regulations are followed
- Grants licensure to educators
- Manages the Tennessee education budget, including acting as pass-through for state and federal funding, and allocates money to school districts
- Implements laws passed by the General Assembly and policies set by the State Board of Education
- Populates and publishes the **TN State Education Report Card** which includes pertinent annual data on districts and schools
- Conducts public comment periods and has rulemaking authority for statewide policies and laws
- Oversees administration of statewide assessments

4 STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION (SBE)

The Tennessee State Board of Education (SBE) consists of **11 members** who serve five-year terms and are unpaid, appointed by the Governor and General Assembly and confirmed by the legislature: one from each congressional district, plus a student member who serves a one-year term, and the executive director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) who serves as non-voting ex-officio member.

WHAT THEY DO

- Serves as governing and policy making body for Tennessee's pre-K-12 public education system, touching all facets of education from accountability and evaluation to standards and teacher preparation
- Approves academic standards, sets accountability designations, and oversees educator preparation, licensure and misconduct claims
- **Meets quarterly**
- Develops and maintains a **master plan** that sets five-year goals and annual policy priorities to ensure policies and systems are in place so that all students are prepared for success after graduation. This plan includes recommendations to the executive branch, general assembly, local education agencies (LEAs), and directors of schools regarding the use of public funds for education



5 TENNESSEE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION (TPCSC)

The Tennessee Public Charter School Commission (TPCSC), established in 2019, is a **nine-member** body that consists of three members from each of Tennessee’s Grand Divisions (East, Middle, West). The TPCSC members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the General Assembly.

WHAT THEY DO

- Governs the appellate process for the new start, revocation, renewal and amendment of charter schools in Tennessee
- Serves as the local education agency (LEA) that manages oversight of charter schools they approve
- **Meets quarterly** in addition to various committee meetings

6 TENNESSEE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION (THEC)

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) consists of nine voting members who serve six-year terms, representing the Tennessee Grand Divisions (East, Middle, West) equally. Of these nine members, three are appointed by the General Assembly and six are appointed by the Governor. The state Constitutional Officers (Comptroller of the Treasury, State Treasurer, and Secretary of State) serve as ex-officio voting members. Additionally, one voting student member serves a one-year term and the Executive Director of the State Board of Education serves as an ex-officio non-voting member.

WHAT THEY DO

- Serves as the state’s higher education coordinating board
- Administers the outcomes-based funding formula
- Conducts postsecondary research and serves as hub for data analysis and research on higher education issues in the state
- Develops and maintains a **master plan** for higher education institutions, to reach their mission of increasing the number of Tennesseans with a post-secondary credential
- Approves all new academic degree programs and veteran education benefits
- **Meets quarterly**
- Regulates all proprietary institutions



7 TENNESSEE BOARD OF REGENTS (TBR)

The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) is governed by **19 board members**: 12 lay citizens are appointed for six-year terms by the Governor, with one each from the state's nine congressional districts and three grand divisions; two faculty members from among the system institutions appointed by the governor for a two-year term; one student from among the system institutions appointed by the governor for a one-year term; and four ex-officio members--the Governor of Tennessee, the Commissioner of Education, the Commissioner of Agriculture, and the Executive Director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), who is a non-voting member.

WHAT THEY DO

- Establishes, governs, and manages the college system of Tennessee which is the state's largest public higher education system, with more than 140 community college and colleges of applied technology teaching locations and the online TN eCampus
- Provides support services and establishes uniform policies and guidelines that govern all TBR institutions
- Focuses on student success, workforce development, and access to meet TN **Drive to 55** goals
- **Meets quarterly** with additional meetings as needed

8 LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES (LEAS)

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are more commonly known as school districts, and are governed by elected school boards.

WHAT THE LEA (SCHOOL DISTRICT) DOES

- Has all administrative oversight over all facets of P-12 schools in the district
- Implements policies from their local Board of Education, and from the State and Federal governments
- Adopts local educational curriculum and textbooks
- Serves as authorizer for public charter schools, overseeing progress monitoring, amendments, revocations or renewals

WHAT THE SCHOOL BOARD DOES:

- Is responsible for proposing and passing a budget annually
- Proposes, amends, passes or revokes policies for the LEA
- Is responsible for the hiring, evaluation, and termination of the Director of Schools/Superintendent
- Works with the Director of Schools/Superintendent to propose and adhere to a strategic plan and measureable goals