



Weekly Legislative Update

2.17.23

Dear {{FirstName or 'Supporter'}},

Budget hearings kicked off in Cordell Hull this week as entities such as the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE), Charter School Commission, higher education institutions, and other entities with education-related responsibilities highlighted their fiscal priorities before legislative committees. You can listen in to video coverage of the past week's education budget hearings [here](#), beginning with TDOE at the 19:40 mark. Budget hearings for the upcoming fiscal year will continue next week, with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), East Tennessee State University, and the Tennessee Board of Regents each scheduled to appear before the Senate Education Committee on Wednesday.

Several bills with significant implications for education moved through committees and in some cases, onto the floor this week. In the Senate, [SB12](#), a bill introduced by [Sen. Todd Gardenhire \(R - Chattanooga\)](#), which expands Tennessee's education savings account (ESA) program to include students zoned in a district with at least five schools identified in the bottom 10 percent -- notably, which would include Hamilton County Schools -- cleared the upper chamber in a 19-6-4 vote, with four Republicans (Sens. [Briggs](#), [Massey](#), [Walley](#), and [Yager](#)) essentially abstaining as PNV (present, not voting). Its House companion is calendared for the House K-12 Subcommittee on Feb. 21st. In the lower chamber, [HB29](#), a bill from [Chairman Scott Cepicky \(R - Culleoka\)](#) that would allow public four-year institutions of higher education to offer remedial coursework, cleared the House Education Instruction Committee with a minor [amendment](#) and is scheduled for a floor vote next Thursday. Another bill Ed Trust is closely monitoring, [HB276](#) from [Rep. Sam McKenzie \(D - Knoxville\)](#) that would increase the award for the Minority Teaching Fellowship Program, had a [robust discussion](#) in House Higher Education Subcommittee, with the bill being rolled for two weeks for additional improvements to be considered by THEC and other stakeholders.

Next week, we anticipate a significant discussion and several presentations on the issue of 3rd and 4th grade retention in the House Education Administration Committee on February 22nd at 1:30pm CT. Committee members will hear from TDOE, the UT Reading Research Center, ExcelinEd, and several other notable stakeholders. The chamber's education leadership switched gears and delayed previously scheduled consideration of retention-related bills, now pushing those bills to calendars next month. The Education Trust in Tennessee continues to remain engaged on the issue of retention, and we encourage you to review our regularly-updated [retention legislation tracker](#) and [Cost of Retention memo](#). To see all of the education-related legislation Ed Trust is actively tracking and other key information, please be sure to check out the "On Our Radar" section, our updated bill tracker, and the committee calendars each linked below.

In partnership,



Reggie Nash
Assistant Director, External Relations - Tennessee



On Our Radar

[HB1034/SB0809](#)
Rep. Shaw / Sen. Walley

Makes various changes to the Voluntary Pre-K for Tennessee Act of 2005; requires, instead of authorizes, an LEA to provide a pre-kindergarten program that is open to any child who is four years of age on or before August 15 and who resides within the geographic area served by the LEA; removes all application requirements for pre-kindergarten programs; removes the requirement for a community pre-k advisory council; requires this state to fund 100 percent of the costs required for an LEA to provide a pre-kindergarten program.

[HB0251/SB1305](#)
Rep. Haston / Sen. Bailey

Enacts the "Tennessee Special Educator Scholarship Act."

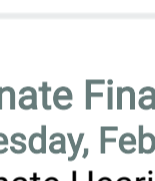
[HB0736/SB0872](#)
Rep. Love / Sen. Akbari

Changes from urges to requires the standards recommendation committee to include certain academic standards regarding the civil rights movement in the committee's final recommendation of academic standards in the subject of social studies for students in grades nine through 12.

[HB0995/SB0972](#)
Rep. Stevens / Sen. Powers

Clarifies that a communication made in an electronic format in which a parent of a child with a disability gives permission for the use of corporal punishment against the child constitutes permission given in writing such that the chief administrative officer, or the chief administrative officer's designee, may administer such corporal punishment to the child in accordance with the LEA's discipline policy.

[Review Our Bill Tracker](#)



What's Happening

Senate Finance, Ways, and Means Committee

Tuesday, February 21st, 8:30am CT
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Education Instruction Committee

Tuesday, February 21st, 9:00am CT
House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Civil Justice Subcommittee

Tuesday, February 21st, 1:30pm CT
House Hearing Room III | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Education Instruction Subcommittee

Tuesday, February 21st, 3:00pm CT
House Hearing Room III | [Committee Homepage](#)

House K-12 Subcommittee

Tuesday, February 21st, 4:30pm CT
House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Departments & Agencies Subcommittee

Wednesday, February 22nd, 9:00am CT
House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Transportation and Safety Committee

Wednesday, February 22nd, 10:30am CT
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Education Administration Committee

Wednesday, February 22nd, 1:30pm CT
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Education Committee

Wednesday, February 22nd, 3:00pm CT
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Floor Session

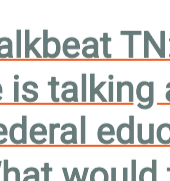
Thursday, February 23rd, 8:30am CT
Senate Chamber | [Senate Homepage](#)

House Floor Session

Thursday, February 23rd, 9:00am CT
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

[House Committee Calendars](#)

[Senate Committee Calendars](#)



Noteworthy

Article: Chalkbeat TN: Tennessee is talking about rejecting federal education funding. What would that mean for kids?

Check out this article from Chalkbeat TN to learn more about [House Speaker Cameron Sexton's](#) recent suggestion to reject federal funding for K-12 education. It details potential implications on school funding, federal mandates, and civil rights protections, highlighting stakeholders' voices of support, criticism, and concern surrounding the proposal from legislators as well as education and disability rights advocates, including Ed Trust TN and Tennessee Disability Coalition!

Event (Memphis): 3rd Grade Retention Town Hall

Join MICAH, Stand or Children, Memphis Education Fund, and Momentum Memphis Coalition on Wednesday, February 22nd, from 5:00-7:00pm CT for a town hall on 3rd grade retention in Memphis, TN. Food and childcare will be provided! Register [here](#).

Event (Virtual): Understanding Tennessee's Education Budget with the Sycamore Institute

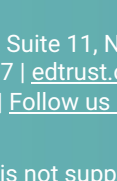
[Register](#) to join The Education Trust in Tennessee and Mandy Spears Pellegrin, Deputy Director of [The Sycamore Institute](#), on February 27th at 1:00 pm CT to learn more about Governor Lee's proposed budget and the important education implications it has for our students and school communities.

Youth-Only Event (Virtual): Become a Legislative Pro: Tracking Bills and Taking Action

Are you a student that is looking to deepen your legislative knowledge and explore resources to support your advocacy efforts? Join The Education Trust in Tennessee as we review pressing educational legislative issues we will encounter during the 113th TN General Assembly, and ways to take action and stay engaged! Registration link coming soon [here](#).

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Check Out Our Policy Agenda](#)



The Education Trust