



Weekly Legislative Update

3.31.23

Dear {{FirstName or 'Supporter'}},

Hearts were heavy and emotions were high at the State Capitol and across Tennessee amid a very busy legislative week following the tragic loss of life at Nashville's Covenant School. Our hearts remain with the Covenant School community, its families, and all of the students, educators, and individuals across our state and nation still grieving and feeling the weight of this moment while collectively advocating for meaningful, common-sense policy change. We are in solidarity with you.

Tuesday evening, The Education Trust-Tennessee hosted our first annual awards reception and legislative mixer to recognize our 2023 [Ten for Tennessee](#) honorees, which served as a precursor to Wednesday's Tennessee Alliance for Equity in Education Day of Education Advocacy. Nearly 100 Alliance advocates held meetings with state legislators, joined in and testified at committee hearings, and weighed in on critical policy discussions during an impactful day of collective action. As a backdrop, the remaining education committees in both chambers continued their march toward wrapping up their bill calendars this year with lengthy meetings and sometimes heated debates.

A censorship bill opposed by Ed Trust TN, [HB1377/SB1141](#), which would have [allowed any school district resident to file a complaint](#) about perceived violations of the Prohibited Concepts Law, failed in the Senate Education Committee on a 5-4 vote. As a result, the bill's House sponsor, [Representative John Ragan](#) (R - Oak Ridge), rolled the legislation in the lower chamber to the first House Ed. Admin. Committee calendar of 2024. [SB0466](#), another harmful bill opposed by Ed Trust TN and many of its advocacy partners that would allow teachers to disregard students' preferred pronouns, advanced out of Senate Ed on an 8-1 party line vote. The bill will now be routed to the Senate Calendar Committee for further debate and vote scheduling.

In House Ed. Admin., there was significant discourse between legislators and the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) on Memphis Democratic Rep. Antonio Parkinson's [HB0692](#), which would significantly reorganize aspects of the Achievement School District. Despite TDOE opposition to the bill, in a show of vocal bipartisan disapproval with the ASD's performance, committee members advanced the legislation on a 13-3-2 vote. The Senate Education Committee deferred discussion on the proposal until its first calendar of the 2024 session. Also in the House, [HB276](#), a bill supported by Ed Trust TN which would expand and improve the state's Minority Teaching Fellowship program, was rolled a week following a lengthy discussion on student teaching requirements upon receiving the scholarship award as well as applicant racial/ethnic group eligibility.

Next week, the amended third and fourth-grade retention bill, [HB0437](#), from House Ed. Admin. [Chairman Mark White](#) (R - Memphis), will be heard on April 3rd before the Government Operations Committee. The House Education Administration Committee will continue its review and debate on its [final calendar](#) of 35 bills, while the Senate Education Committee [convenes to discuss a school safety/threat assessment bill \(SB274\)](#) brought by Republican leadership. To see all of the education-related bills Ed Trust is actively tracking and other important information on movement at the Tennessee General Assembly, 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 for Tennessee



On Our Radar

[HB1202 / SB1325](#) Rep. Williams / Sen. Bailey

As introduced, authorizes a faculty or staff member of a school to carry a concealed handgun on school grounds subject to certain conditions, including obtaining an enhanced handgun carry permit and completing annual training.

[HB0785 / SB0750](#) Rep. White / Sen. Massey

As introduced, requires the department to create and implement a promising futures program to provide scholarships to children who are not school age to assist them in developing early language and literacy skills in a high-quality early care and learning program; redirects, from the lottery for education account to an account administered by the department to provide funding for the promising futures scholarship program, a certain percentage of the privilege tax collected from sports wagering licensees for certain fiscal years.

[HB1295 / SB0884](#) Rep. Camper / Sen. Akbari

As introduced, requires the commissioner of education to report on the academic performance of historically underserved student groups to the education committee of the senate and the education administration and education instruction committees of the house of representatives by January 31 of each year.

[HB0276 / SB0231](#) Rep. McKenzie / Sen. Yarbro

As introduced, changes the amount of a minority teaching fellowship award for a recipient who is enrolled in a degree program leading to licensure as a teacher in an institution of higher education with an approved educator preparation program from \$5,000 to the cost of tuition and fees at the respective institution.

[Review Our Bill Tracker](#)



What's Happening

House Government Operations Committee

Monday, April 3rd, 1:30pm CT
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Floor Session

Monday, April 3rd, 4:00pm CT
Senate Chamber | [Senate Homepage](#)

House Floor Session

Monday, April 3rd, 5:00pm CT
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

House Criminal Justice Subcommittee - Final Calendar

Tuesday, April 4th, 10:30am CT
House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Judiciary Committee

Tuesday, April 4th, 1:00pm CT
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Finance Ways & Means Subcommittee

Wednesday, April 5th, 10:30am CT
House Hearing Room III | [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Education Committee

Wednesday, April 5th, 1:00pm CT
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Education Administration Committee

Wednesday, April 5th, 1:00pm CT
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Floor Session

Thursday, April 6th, 8:30am CT
Senate Hearing Room I | [Senate Homepage](#)

House Floor Session

Thursday, April 6th, 9:00am CT
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

[House Committee Calendars](#)

[Senate Committee Calendars](#)



Noteworthy

[Award: Ten for Tennessee 2023](#)

The Education Trust – Tennessee launched the 2023 Ten for Tennessee award, which recognizes and celebrates the top ten policy proposals that best advance educational equity and justice in the state. Check out the proposals [here!](#)

[Article: Joint Letter in Opposition to Corporal Punishment](#)

Check out [this letter](#) from The Education Trust, the National Women's Law Center, and more than 100 organizations calling on federal, state, and local policymakers to eliminate the practice in schools. [Read more.](#)

[Article: WKRN, Bill allowing special education students to be handcuffed by SSOs dies in committee](#)

Check out [this article](#) on the bill that died in committee last week. The legislation would have allowed school security officers to use "mechanical restraints" on students with disabilities in schools. [Read more.](#)

[Article: Chalkbeat TN, Nashville school shooting prompts Capitol protest, and a fresh look at Tennessee gun policies](#)

Check out [this article](#) from Chalkbeat TN about the protests that erupted in response to the Nashville school shooting at the Tennessee Capitol. [Read more.](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Check Out Our Policy Agenda](#)