The Legislative Session continues to unfold with various legislative efforts. One significant development includes the advancement of several bills, including HB 1655 and HB 1630, which have received favorable votes, passed out of subcommittee, and are now moving towards the House for further consideration. This indicates a concerted focus on legislative initiatives that aim to impact educational policies and practices.

For educators and advocates, the ability to identify key legislators for advocacy efforts is crucial. The webinar titled "Effective Legislator Engagement: A Webinar on How to Meet the Requirements of Your State's Law" offers valuable insights. By participating in this webinar, attendees will learn strategies to navigate the legislative process, meet with legislators, and build meaningful relationships that can influence educational outcomes.

Advocacy efforts are a cornerstone of effective policy making, especially during the legislative session. The webinar will cover practical skills and knowledge needed for successful advocacy, making it an essential resource for anyone involved in the educational community.

Additionally, there is a call to action for Tennessee Disability Law Center’s "Stand Against Gerrymandering, Racism, and Religious Discrimination" webinar. This event, scheduled for 2/24 at 12:00 PM CT, promises to provide deep insights into navigating the complexities of these issues within the legislative framework. It is a unique opportunity to understand the intersection of law and social justice, and how these concepts influence policy decisions.

With the legislative session ongoing, there is a sense of urgency and determination among stakeholders to bring about meaningful change. The combination of legislative activity, advocacy resources, and educational opportunities demonstrates a collective commitment to shaping policies that benefit all students.

As the legislative week comes to a close, the Senate Education Committee will hear OER's latest evaluation of the Tennessee Promise Report. This evaluation will highlight findings related to student retention, achievement, and the impact of the Promise program on educational outcomes. The Senate Education Committee’s role in this context is critical, as they will analyze the bill language and provide recommendations for potential legislative changes.

The House members appointed to the Joint Education Administration Committee will also convene for the week. This committee is tasked with reviewing and making recommendations on educational policies for both local districts and the state of Tennessee. The gathering will culminate in the consideration of three bills—HB 1644, HB 1630, and HB 1655—which are expected to be passed into law. These bills are expected to create major educational changes, reflecting the evolving nature of educational needs and challenges.

A noteworthy bill is HB 0670/SB 0712, which is proposed to establish a first-grade entry assessment. This assessment aims to evaluate students' readiness for first-grade entry, ensuring that they are adequately prepared to meet academic standards. The bill requires that a student must be seven years of age or older before May 1 of the calendar year in which the student reaches the age of eight years and complete the assessment on or before August 15. Failure to pass the assessment will result in the student being promoted to the first grade, with the possibility of repeating the assessment before promotion.

As the legislative session progresses, it is evident that education reform continues to be a top priority. With the collective efforts of lawmakers, advocates, and educators, there is hope for meaningful progress towards improving the educational landscape in Tennessee.

Hope you have a restful weekend!

AWAKE
Kelli Nowers
Executive Director
MaKenzie L. Mosby, MPP
Hope you have a restful weekend!