



Weekly Legislative Update

02.02.24

Dear {{FirstName or 'Friend'}},

This week we reached the second major milestone of the 2024 legislative session: bill filing deadline for both the House and Senate. We now have a comprehensive understanding on the education issues that will be taken on this year. Our amazing government relations fellow, Ariel Keller, will be updating our bill tracker next week to ensure that you have a one-stop shop to track education legislation this session.

On Monday, Senate Majority Leader Jack Johnson filed the [highly anticipated bill language](#) for Governor Lee’s universal private school voucher program. Notably absent from the voucher bill were accountability measures, discrimination protections, and a clear funding mechanism. However, several hours later, the bill disappeared from bill tracking websites, including the Tennessee General Assembly website. On Thursday, Republican party leadership filed [HB2468/SB2787](#). This bill is a caption bill and will be used as a vehicle for Governor Lee’s universal private school voucher program. It is expected that Governor Lee will share more about his universal private school voucher program during the [State of State Address](#) on Monday, February 5th at 6pm CT/7pm ET.

The House K-12 subcommittee convened on Tuesday to hear their calendar, including the controversial [HB1605](#), which bans certain flags in public schools, and [HB1632](#), which gives parents the right to sue public schools over the enforcement of the [Age Appropriate Materials Act of 2022](#), both of which are by Rep. Bulso. After emotional witness testimony and [committee discussion](#) of additional amendments on the bill, [HB1605](#) remains in the K-12 subcommittee and will be heard on the subcommittee’s February 6 calendar. Questions of a potential conflict of interest kicked off the debate on [HB 1632](#) as legislators probed Rep. Bulso’s [involvement](#) in a lawsuit mentioned in the [bill’s fiscal note](#). Despite requests for additional amendments for school protections, HB 1632 passed out of the K-12 subcommittee and will be heard in the House Education Administration Committee next week.

As we move further into session and begin to engage in advocacy campaigns, I invite you to join The Education Trust - Tennessee to learn more about [Effective Legislator Engagement through our Gearing Up for the Legislative Session](#) series on Monday, February 5 at 4-5 PM CT/5-6 PM ET. Attendees will learn how to identify key legislators for advocacy efforts, effectively schedule and plan legislative meetings, and build meaningful relationships with legislators. Attendees will learn how to “power map”, meaning to identify who has power to influence a specific issue at the local & state level in Tennessee. Hope to see you there.

I hope you have a restful weekend!

In partnership,



MaKenzie L. Mosby, MPP

Senior Manager of Government Relations for Tennessee



On Our Radar

[HB1633 / SB1721](#)
Rep. Ragan / Sen. Hensley

As introduced, requires the department of safety to create de-escalation training for teachers, administrators, and other school personnel; requires LEAs and public charter schools to ensure that the LEA’s or public charter school’s teachers, administrators, and other school personnel annually receive the de-escalation training.

[HB1644 / SB1715](#)
Rep. Warner / Sen. Hensley

As introduced, authorizes a law enforcement agency to assign a law enforcement officer to serve as a school resource officer at a school within a local board of education’s control that has not entered into a memorandum of understanding with a law enforcement agency to assign a school resource officer to the school.

[HB1660/ SB2351](#)
Rep. Ragan / Sen. Hensley

As introduced, prohibits certain institutions of higher education from defining discriminatory practices in their anti-discrimination policies in a manner inconsistent with the definition of discriminatory practices in state law; prohibits certain institutions of higher education from establishing or recognizing forms of discrimination in their anti-discrimination policies in a manner inconsistent with the forms of discrimination recognized as legally actionable by this state; requires the Tennessee higher education commission to establish a process for persons to file a complaint alleging that an institution is not complying with such prohibitions.

[HB1899/ SB2025](#)
Rep. Rudd / Sen. Reeves

As introduced, authorizes LEAs and public charter schools to employ retired law enforcement officers who are retired from a federal, state, or local law enforcement agency and honorably discharged veterans of the United States armed forces to serve as school resource officers on school premises.

[Review Our Bill Tracker](#)



What’s Happening

House Higher Education Subcommittee

Monday, 2/5/24, 3:00pm
House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Floor Session

Monday, 2/5/24, 5:00pm
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

House Education Instruction Committee

Tuesday, 2/6/24, 9:00am
House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

House K-12 Subcommittee

Tuesday, 2/6/24, 4:30pm
House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Education Instruction Subcommittee

Wednesday, 2/7/24, 12:00pm
House Hearing Room III | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Education Administration Committee

Wednesday, 2/7/24, 1:30pm
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Education Committee

Wednesday, 2/7/24, 3:00pm
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

[House Committee Calendars](#)

[Senate Committee Calendars](#)



Noteworthy

Webinar: Effective Legislator Engagement

Join The Education Trust - Tennessee on Monday, February 5th from 4:00 - 5:00 PM CT / 5:00 - 6:00 PM ET for a Gearing Up Advocacy Training on how to identify key legislators for advocacy efforts, effectively schedule and plan legislative meetings, and build meaningful relationships with legislators. [Kelli Nowers](#), Executive Director of [AWAKE](#) (Advocates for Women’s & Kids’ Equality) will share best practices and example scenarios of engaging with legislators at the TN General Assembly based on their advocacy experiences navigating Tennessee’s political context.

[Register here](#)

Article: Art therapy creates safe space for North Nashville children: 'It's magical'

Check out [this piece](#) in The Tennessean about art therapist, Devon Billions-Gomez, who gathers kids weekly to coach them and challenge them to think of alternatives to negative reactions.

[Read more](#)

Resource: Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids TN Advocate Toolkit

Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Tennessee is a group of organizations and people passionate about expanding access to healthy school meals for all kids in our state. This resource was created to help you advocate for no cost school meals for all Tennessee kids. Use these tools when communicating with your legislators, your community, and other advocates.

[Learn more](#)

Article: Memphis superintendent search nears close with final set of candidate interviews

Read [this article](#) in Chalkbeat as the search for the new superintendent of Memphis-Shelby County Schools nears a close. The article includes what the interview process entails, and what the new superintendent will be up against once they begin on July 1.

[Read more](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Legislative Advocacy Hub](#)

